

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

**Connecting Paths:
The 15th National Conference on Critical Perspectives
in Criminology and Social Justice**

**Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario
May 20 – 22, 2026**

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: January 25, 2026

The Department of Sociology & Criminology at Brock University and the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies' Centre for Research into the Processes, Outcomes, and Impacts of Incarceration (CRPOI), in collaboration with the National Steering Committee of Critical Perspectives, will host the **15th National Conference on Critical Perspectives in Criminology and Social Justice** in May 2026. The conference is free, and everyone is welcome to attend in person at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

We invite proposals for individual papers, thematic panels, artistic or creative and visual submissions, workshops, roundtables, and poster submissions that address the theme described below **or engage more broadly with the critical study of criminalization, punishment, and social justice.**

This year's theme, **Connecting Paths**, highlights encounters that shape our social worlds and influence how we understand safety and justice. These meetings may be spontaneous or deliberate, fleeting or sustained, but are always capable of being generative. Our paths may converge in solidarity, diverge in tension, or lead to new directions for justice, healing, and transformation.

To *cross paths* is to acknowledge connection, coincidence, and sometimes conflict. To *connect paths* is to emphasize what comes after: the intentional building of solidarity and kinship. For this conference, centred on criminology and social justice, we invite connections across disciplines, professions, struggles, and lived experiences. While there are paths we hope never to walk down again, particularly those shaped by the criminal legal system, there are others we wish to return to: those lined with community, creativity, and care.

On the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, where the conference will be held, the land is marked by several paths. From Indigenous routes, such as the Iroquois and Mohawk Trails, to the Underground Railroad, the Bruce Trail, the Welland Canal, the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, major routes for migrating birds, the colonial border between Canada and the United States, and the Global Irish Famine Way, these pathways tell stories of a layered history of movement, stewardship, struggle, and liberation. The Niagara Region is also shaped by the legacy of abolition. During the 1850s, [Harriet Tubman lived in St. Catharines](#), where she supported freedom seekers and helped establish a vibrant Black community shaped by strength, resilience, and mutual aid. [Salem Chapel](#) was (and remains) a hub for worship and organizing, and stands as a reminder to residents and visitors of the courage, community, and abolitionist commitments that once converged here and continue to shape movements for justice today. Histories such as this remind us that paths are never neutral: they can mark oppression and exclusion, but they can also create space for resistance, healing, and freedom. This conference is itself a connection of many paths: a gathering of people, ideas, and movements that may not otherwise meet, but in doing so, can generate new directions toward justice and liberation for all.

Through its subthemes, *Connecting Paths* highlights the importance of dialogue across disciplines, communities, and diverse lived experiences to confront the exclusionary power of the carceral state and envision alternative responses to harm rooted in care, healing, solidarity, and reciprocity. In this spirit of connection, we invite contributions from academics, practitioners, students, artists, activists, and especially those with lived experience of criminalization and incarceration.

Connecting Experiences

This subtheme connects the voices and knowledge of people whose lives are regularly impacted by carceral systems and punitive processes. We invite contributions that examine, for example:

- the criminalization of poverty and homelessness;
- the policing of protest and dissent;
- the intersections of punishment with healthcare, disability, and mental health;
- the embodied experiences of imprisonment, surveillance, and re-entry.

By centring lived experience and community-driven knowledge, this subtheme foregrounds what is often erased in dominant discourses: the voices of those most impacted. It is also a space for thinking about how carceral experiences are resisted, documented, and transformed into sites of knowledge production and social change.

Connecting Struggles

This subtheme highlights how systems of criminalization are interconnected across geographies and struggles. We invite contributions that focus on, for example:

- borders, mobilities, and crimmigration;
- state crime, corporate crime, and crimes of the powerful;
- solidarity with Indigenous communities, Palestine, and other anti-colonial struggles;
- intersections of ecological harm, land dispossession, and environmental racism with carceral power;
- technological and data-driven systems of punishment and surveillance, or scholarship and activism rooted in data justice;
- global and transnational movements that resist racial capitalism and settler-colonialism.

Indigenous, Black, and Southern Criminologies, as well as other frameworks that unsettle Eurocentric knowledge production, are especially welcome. This subtheme positions the conference as a site where local and global justice struggles connect paths, revealing patterns of oppression and solidarity.

Connecting Creatives

This subtheme is dedicated to the connective power of art, storytelling, and pedagogy in disrupting carceral logics. We invite contributions that:

- use storytelling, art, film, theatre, humour, poetry, or music as modes of resistance and critique;
- engage with creative community projects and artistic interventions inside or outside carceral institutions (jails, prisons, detention centres, psychiatric hospitals, youth custody facilities, shelters, halfway homes, etc.);
- explore engaged pedagogies that confront injustice and foster transformative learning.

By foregrounding creativity, this subtheme highlights that social justice work is not only analytical but also imaginative, embodied, and culturally informed. These creative interventions break dominant narratives, disrupt the status quo, and open space for alternative ways of knowing, feeling, and relating.

Connecting Solutions

This subtheme focuses on connecting communities through transformative and abolitionist visions of justice. We invite contributions that explore:

- transformative justice responses to harm, violence, and conflict;
- abolition in practice—what it looks like in communities, organizations, or institutions;
- culturally grounded justice initiatives led by Indigenous and other racialized people and communities;
- projects that connect incarcerated people with communities, fostering solidarity and repair;
- relational approaches to justice that extend to nonhuman animals and ecologies.

This subtheme reflects the hopeful, future-oriented, and grassroots aspect of *Connecting Paths*. It asks: how can we chart new directions away from punitive institutions toward practices of care, accountability, and collective flourishing?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We welcome scholarly, artistic, creative, and visual submissions representing legal, socio-legal, criminological, feminist, philosophical, or historical perspectives. *Connecting Paths* aims to showcase work from people with lived experience of criminalization and incarceration, researchers, educators, advocates, activists, students, practitioners, and others interested in engaging in dialogue on these themes.

Proposals may be submitted in French or English and must be received via this [Form](#) by **January 25, 2026**: <https://forms.office.com/r/TtKhAKBPTC>

All proposals must include:

- An email address and affiliation for each participant, including any students, early career researchers, and experts with lived experience on the authorship team.
 - For submissions with multiple contributors, we will request the name and email address of a single contact person.
 - Please note that individuals who do not want their name made public may use a pseudonym or choose not to include their name at all in the submission.
- A title and abstract of no more than 500 words for workshop, panel, and roundtable submissions, which should include the session title and short individual abstracts.
- A title and abstract of not more than 300 words for individual presentations, including: paper presentations, works-in-progress, and poster presentations.
- A title and description of not more than 500 words for creative contributions.
- Up to five keywords associated with your proposal.

We especially welcome presenters with lived experience of the justice system, undergraduate and graduate students, emerging scholars, and presentations speaking directly to conference themes. In reviewing submissions, the organizing committee will prioritize a diverse range of voices, perspectives, and presentation types in the program. Submissions whose authors are already represented in the program may receive lower priority to maximize participation.

To support all participants, we have prepared a brief guide explaining the different types of possible submissions for the conference. You can access it here: [Submission Types](#).

We are also open to contributions beyond the examples listed here. Please do not hesitate to contact us (criminology@brocku.ca) if you have any questions before submitting your proposal. We are committed to ensuring a safe environment for criminalized and formerly incarcerated people to engage in the conference. We ask all presenters to use non-stigmatizing language and uphold the humanity of incarcerated and criminalized people in all aspects of their work. No one is expected or required to reveal lived experience with the criminal legal system – such stories belong to the individuals who hold them, and disclosure is always a personal decision.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent by the end of February 2026, and the official program and registration details will be released soon after on the [CRPOI website](#).

Please email criminology@brocku.ca with any questions about this call or the submission process.

Additional resources:

- [The Basics about Conference Abstracts](#)

LOCATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The conference will be held in-person at Brock University (1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way, St. Catharines, Ontario) from May 20 – 22, 2026.

A limited number of rooms have been reserved at two nearby hotels. We recommend booking early to secure the conference rate.

- [Four Points by Sheraton](#) (3530 Schmon Pkwy Building 9 401, Thorold, ON L2T 1W2)
- [Holiday Inn](#) (327 Ontario Street Building 1, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 5L3)

Staying in Brock University's Residence Accommodations is an affordable and convenient option. If there is enough interest (please indicate your preference on the registration form), we can make this option available to conference attendees. Booking links will be made available in February if there is sufficient interest.

- Please note that while this option is the most convenient and affordable, the design and layout of these rooms might not be desirable for individuals who have experienced incarceration. We encourage attendees to consider this when booking accommodations. Please watch this video to get a sense of what the residence rooms look like:
https://youtu.be/cLKTF_kX9io

Other accommodation options:

- [Capri Inn](#)
- [Hampton Inn by Hilton](#)
- [Best Western](#)
- Airbnb / Vrbo

We look forward to welcoming you to Brock University in May 2026!

Critical Perspectives/Perspectives Critique Guiding Principles

- Striving to reduce and ultimately end the use and harms of criminalization;
- Preserving and promoting a critical criminological perspective while allowing for healthy, respectful, and productive exchange between those who define themselves as more radical and/or abolitionist and those who are concerned with trying to reform the criminal legal system to make it more humane;
- Making the conference open to and inclusive of wider communities, especially those with lived experience of criminalization and those who experience various dimensions of marginalization such as race, gender identity, poverty, sexuality, disability;
- Cherishing lived experience as a form of knowledge as well as means of producing scientific/academic knowledges and providing a platform for these types of knowledges to be shared in a respectful environment;
- Being conscious of power relations in how the conference is conducted. Acknowledging that all knowledge production and dissemination is political and carries with it inequalities and oppressions. We request all participants be cognizant of this and intentional in their presentations, comments and all other forms of exchanges with those present;
- Keeping the conference open, inclusive, and free of registration fees;
- Promoting access and participation for graduate students;
- Maintaining a bilingual event and providing translation as much as financially possible;
- Maintaining diversity and a broad geographical representation on the national committee and at the conference;
- Preserving and promoting collaboration between the national committee and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Justice Studies at the University of Winnipeg and its Justice series;
- Working towards publishing some of the proceedings;
- Increasing the visibility of critical criminology across the country and internationally.