



# FREE PUBLIC LECTURE

SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND  
THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES

## Patricia Burke Wood

Professor of Geography, York University

*The Geography of the Crown:  
Law and the Political Geography  
of Settler Colonialism*

**Thursday, October 17**  
**3:00 – 4:00 PM**  
**AH100 (Andy's Place)**



The Crown, its honour and its duties, are all inventions of British and Canadian law. They are best understood in their specific historical-geographic context, particularly settler-colonialism. They emerged for strategic purposes and are not universal concepts, even among settler societies formerly part of the British Empire. Imperial actors employed legal discourse to secure geography, to render the Crown's largely unpracticed and abstract claims more real. This assertion was, and continues to be, challenged by pre-existing Aboriginal political geographies. In its efforts to address these tensions in cases of Aboriginal title and rights claims, the Court makes use of the Crown, its honour and duties, but avoids fundamental

questions of political geography, most notably in the recent decision of Mikisew Cree (2018). The unresolved point of tension in Mikisew Cree and other cases is the origin and legitimacy of the Crown's assertion of territorial sovereignty. Through a geographic critique of the legal history of Aboriginal title, this presentation will argue that in the context of settler colonialism in Canada, "the Crown" is a land claim and should be treated as such.

University of  
**Lethbridge**

