

GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Monthly reading group – Thursdays 12-1pm

Kingston Braybrook seminar room unless otherwise stated

The ICLC invites colleagues and students to join the 2026 ICLC Reading Group. This in-person reading group provides a space for sustained collective engagement with foundational and cutting-edge scholarship in international and comparative law, broadly conceived, and its intersections with political economy, critical theory, socio-legal studies, and science and technology studies.

The theme for 2026, **Global Transformations**, foregrounds law as both a terrain and an instrument of struggle in moments of profound political, economic, epistemic, and ecological change. Across the year, the reading group will explore how global orders are made and unmade through transformations in capitalism, infrastructure, governance, knowledge production, and relations between the human and the non-human. Transformation is approached not as a linear process or policy aspiration, but as a contested, uneven, and conflict-laden phenomenon, shaped by crisis, resistance, and institutional experimentation.

The programme deliberately zigzags across historical conjunctures and intellectual traditions, placing texts from moments of systemic rupture into conversation. Canonical works such as Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*, written amid the collapse of the liberal international order, and Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto*, produced in the late Cold War context of technoscientific expansion and feminist critique, are treated as reference points within a wider critical archive rather than as fixed origins. Read alongside contemporary interventions such as Newell's *States of Transition*, which engages directly with the present conjuncture of ecological breakdown, democratic strain, and institutional exhaustion, the programme examines the state as a contradictory arena of struggle and explores how different configurations of state power enable, displace, or foreclose deeper social and ecological transformation.

Organised around two linked strands – **Political Economy as a Site of Struggle** (Semester 1) and **Knowledge as a Site of Struggle** (Semester 2) – the reading group brings classic texts and critical new work into conversation to reflect on how global transformations are lived, governed, resisted, and narrated, and on the role of law in both stabilising and unsettling emerging orders.



The reading group meets in person at La Trobe Law School (Bundoora campus) and is open to staff, postgraduate students, and interested colleagues across the University.

Semester 1: Political economy as a site of struggle

26 February

Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (1944) Introduction

12 March (MB244)

Benedict Kingsbury and Nahuel Maisley, 'Infrastructures and Laws: Publics and Publicness' 2021 (17) *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* (353-373)

16 April (MB244)

Donna Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century' (1987) 2(4) *Australian Feminist Studies* 1-43

14 May (MB244)

Peter Newell, *States of Transition: From Governing the Environment to Transforming Society* (2025, Cambridge University Press) Introduction

18 June

Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (2018, University of Minnesota Press) Excerpts

Semester 2: Knowledge as a site of struggle

23 July

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (2018 (1970), Routledge) Excerpts

20 August

Michael Richardson, *Nonhuman witnessing: War, Data, and Ecology after the End of the World* (2024, Duke University Press) Introduction: Nonhuman Witnessing

24 Sep (Luis celebration)

Michael Fakhri, 'Food sovereignty' in Anghie et al (eds) *Research Handbook on Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL)* (2025, Edward Elgar Publishing) 397-407

22 Oct

Zinaida Miller, 'Temporal Governance: The Times of Transitional Justice' (2021) 21 *International Criminal Law Review*

19 Nov

Elizabeth Povinelli, 'The Will to be Otherwise/The Effort of Endurance' (2012) 111(3) *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 453-475