

Call for Papers

1st Conference and Workshop of the IOWC Network for Slavery, Bondage, and the Environment in the Indian Ocean World

In September 2022, the Indian Ocean World Centre (IOWC) of McGill University founded the first global [network](#) dedicated to researching the intersections of slavery, bondage, and the environment in the Indian Ocean World (IOW). The intention was, and remains, to build a global community of scholars from the social sciences and humanities who may collectively develop projects and share resources related to two of the IOW's most pressing challenges: climate change and 'unfree' labour. Both historical and contemporary analyses suggest that these phenomena are highly inter-related, with labour exploitation becoming more brutal and widespread during periods of environmental stress. Thus, systematically addressing these themes is of particular urgency today, as climate breakdown accelerates, which may increase the vulnerability of the most socially marginalized to conditions of slavery and other forms of bondage.

Bearing these large themes and aims in mind, this call for papers is necessarily exploratory. Although original research papers are welcomed, we also invite scholars to present broad overviews of their ongoing or recent research (since 2018) into the ways in which the themes of the Network intersect.

Questions of relevance include, but are not limited to:

- What methods are you using to investigate the links between slavery/bondage/the environment, and with what disciplinary training/interdisciplinary collaborations?
- What questions are you asking of your sources, whether historical or contemporary?
- What ethical issues are you encountering, and how are you navigating them?
- How are you linking your research to contemporary policy as it pertains to confronting the contemporary challenges of climate change and slavery/bondage in the IOW?

We hope that by asking these questions, the conference and workshop will:

- Introduce members of the IOWC's Network on Slavery, Bondage, and the Environment in the IOW to each other.
- Enable the sharing of ideas related to the intersections of slavery, bondage, and the environment across global regions, institutions, and disciplines.
- Foster interdisciplinary collaborations for future projects.

- Lay the foundations for an open-access working bibliography of research published since 2018 on slavery, bondage, and the environment in the IOW.

The practicalities

- This is an **online-only** conference and workshop, which will ensure accessibility to the maximum number of interested scholars from across the world.
- It will take place across **3 mornings ET (8am-12pm) on 24-26 May 2023**.
- It will comprise of **panels of accepted papers** and a number of **discussions and reflections in breakout rooms** on the wider themes being discussed.
- Scholars are invited to submit paper proposals to Dr Philip Gooding (philip.gooding@mcgill.ca) and the IOWC (iowc@mcgill.ca) by **Tuesday 31 January 2023**. Submissions should take the form of a 150-250-word abstract and a 100-word scholarly bio.
- Scholars who are not prepared to present a paper but who would like to participate in the conference and breakout rooms should also submit a bio to the same addresses.
- All participants are encouraged to join the IOWC's Network on Slavery, Bondage, and the Environment in the IOW, which they can do (for free) [here](#).