

Disability and Illness in International Studies: Practising a Feminist Ethic of Care

Wednesday, 5 June 2024 13:15 (1h 30m)

The early days of the Covid-19 pandemic in some ways foregrounded issues of illness and disability in international relations and in the academy, raising questions around what we owe to the disabled and clinically vulnerable; equity and coloniality in the distribution of risk and care(giving); how to balance conflicting access needs; the use of the carceral state to enforce public health measures; and the propensity of racial capitalism to disable and kill in the pursuit of profit – including in the neoliberal university. However, the urgency with which these questions gained prominence has been matched by an equally insistent push to get ‘back to normal’. Acts of solidarity with disabled and chronically ill people gave way to the eugenic logic that ‘the vulnerable will fall by the wayside’; accommodations for which disabled people had fought for many years once again became ‘unreasonable’ once lockdowns ended and abled people no longer needed them; and questions of disability and illness are once again marginalised when considering how we research and teach and international studies. This roundtable will explore how disability and illness shape the discipline of International Relations: in the classroom, in our research, in our disciplinary spaces and our wider engagements with global politics. Centring the experiences of disabled, chronically ill and neurodivergent scholars, we will ask how we can practice a feminist ethic of care that has disability justice at its heart.

Track Classification: Gendering International Relations Working Group