

**Department of Geography
Health Geography Research Seminar**

**Research Agendas for Critical Health Geographies
of Drug Use and Addiction**

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Monday February 19th, 2018

10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Burnside Hall, Room 426

Abstract: In this presentation, I describe my past, present, and future research on the geographies of drug addiction, policy, and treatment. The presentation is organized around three themes. First, the politics of drug policy, in which I examine the contentious debates around harm reduction, a treatment approach that attempts to reframe drug use in terms of public health rather than criminal justice. Drawing on my research on Vancouver, BC's Insite supervised injection site, I argue that the politics of health care for drug users must be understood as an ambivalent compromise between benevolent attitudes towards drug users and enduring, hostile desires to control and punish them. Second, I discuss my work on qualitative methods for working with drug users, where I consider the psychosocial dimensions of fieldwork, as well as the political necessity—and epistemological challenges—of listening to people who are marginalized. Finally, I describe my research on drug addiction, offering critical theorizations of addiction that centre on addiction as a question of people's social bonds with one another and as a response to traumas that are both socially produced and geographically specific.