



# **Call for papers: EASA LAWNET workshop**

written by Allegra  
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## **From Critique to Political Practice**

**12 May 2023, University of Sussex**

Dear colleagues,

We are delighted to invite you to submit a paper abstract for the workshop 'From



Critique to Political Practice' organised by the [European Association of Social Anthropologists' \(EASA\) Network on Anthropology of Law, Rights, Politics and Governance \(LAWNET\)](#) in collaboration with [Allegra Lab](#).

This one-day workshop will take place at the University of Sussex on 12 May 2023, but online participation is also possible. The event will be open to the public and will be broadcast online on Allegra Lab.

Thanks to funding from the University of Sussex and EASA, we are in a position to contribute to travel and accommodation costs for up to eight early career / precarious / unemployed colleagues travelling within Europe. You do not need to be an EASA member to participate in the workshop, but we will ask that you [join the LAWNET mailing list](#).

Please send your paper abstract (max 250 words) to [easalawnet@gmail.com](mailto:easalawnet@gmail.com) by 1 February 2023. Kindly specify whether you would like to apply for funding to contribute to your travel and accommodation costs in your submission.

Warmest regards,

The LAWNET convenors: Agathe Mora, Julie Billaud and Judith Beyer

## **Workshop rationale**

What is the role of researchers in articulating critique in a time of heightened political, social, economic and environmental upheaval? What kind of critique is necessary, possible, and useful in our current times, when the very idea of critical thinking seems threatened by authoritarian, illiberal power and post-truth politics? As such, we ask: What are the moral implications of a social science that remains mostly concerned with critique? What are the limitations of such a framing outside the walls of academia? What alternatives do we have?

Linked to this conceptual preoccupation is a practical one. In a time when critical perspectives are often not welcomed by institutionalised power, ethnographers face ever more difficulties in gaining and maintaining access to legal and



governance institutions. What does increasing institutional closing down mean for political and legal anthropology as a field of research, but also of practice?

Brought together, these ethical and methodological dynamics in many ways reflect the balancing act between pragmatism and utopianism we also witness in our interlocutors' experiences. These experiences, which chart a delicate track between utopia and dejection can serve as a yardstick for our own reflexive practice, beyond the intellectual double impasse of cynicism and relativism. As such, we encourage participants to reflect on the positionality of political and legal anthropologists as researchers-in-the-world and, through this, on the future of research on legal and political processes.

Featured image by [Thom Milkovic](#) on [Unsplash](#)