

Monday, 10.10.2022; 4:15 - 6:00 pm CEST

Stefanie Hunt-Kennedy, University of New Brunswick, Canada:

### **Disability and Slavery in the Caribbean**

#### Abstract:

This talk derives from Stefanie Hunt-Kennedy's award-winning book, *Between Fitness and Death: Disability and Slavery in the Caribbean* (University of Illinois Press, 2020), which explores the historical relationship between disability, antiblack racism, and slavery in the British Caribbean and the Atlantic World from the 16th to the abolition of the slave trade in the early 19th century. Employing disability as an analytic lens and a topic, this lecture shows how the experiences of the enslaved depended both on how their bodies responded to the material conditions of slavery and the ideas enslavers imposed on their bodies. It traces the ways in which the British utilized disability as a powerful trope to justify African dispossession in the Atlantic World, and how such rhetoric facilitated the embodied, physical, emotional, and psychological impairments produced by the institution of slavery and endured by the enslaved. This talk will illustrate the integral role of Caribbean enslaved laborers to our understandings of labor, disability, and modernity and that Caribbean plantation slavery should be considered among one of history's most disabling systems of exploitation. Lastly, it demonstrates that the study of disability in the context of Atlantic slavery engenders possibilities to read disability among the enslaved in multiple ways, not only as a sign of victimization and 'lack,' but of power and possibility.

#### Bio:

Stefanie Hunt-Kennedy an Associate Professor of Caribbean, Atlantic World, and Disability History at the University of New Brunswick. She is the author of *Between Fitness and Death: Disability and Slavery in the Caribbean* (University of Illinois, 2020), which received the 2021 Disability History Association Outstanding Book Award. She is also the primary investigator of The Anglo-Atlantic Slave Law Project, a website that will provide worldwide access to the British Atlantic slave laws from the earliest slave codes of the seventeenth century to the laws that governed emancipation the nineteenth century. Stefanie's currently working on an edited collection with Jenifer Barclay entitled *Crippling the Archive: Disability, History, and Power*. She lives in New Brunswick with her husband and three young children.