Meet the Department’s Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation Award Recipients

**Trudeau Scholars** are outstanding students who are interested in growing in a multidisciplinary learning environment and in addressing important questions for Canada and the world. This prestigious $180,000 national scholarship is awarded to up to 15 candidates in Canada each year in the humanities and social sciences. **Trudeau Fellows** are university faculty members in the humanities and social sciences who are outstanding researchers studying creative solutions to important issues and are recognized for their ability to inform public debate beyond the academic sphere. Each year, up to five individuals across Canada receive this highly competitive $225,000 award.

**Tammara Soma - 2014 Trudeau Scholar**

Tammara is a food system planner and a Doctoral candidate in urban planning with a specialization in food waste. She has worked with organizations such as Sustain Ontario and FoodShare Toronto, with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Greenbelt Section and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Her community service includes serving as a member of the steering committee of Food Secure Canada, and she was one of the founding members of the Toronto Youth Food Policy Council. Tammara blogs for the Huffington Post and is the Co-founder of the International Food Loss and Food Waste Studies group (serving as its Vice-Chair from 2009 to 2010).

With support from the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, Tammara launched Canada’s first Social Innovation Lab on Food Waste and Food Insecurity in 2016, which will determine policy options to address one of the century’s biggest challenges: preventing food waste. A Social Innovation Lab approach will be used, which strategically brings together a variety of stakeholders to gain a deep understanding of the system, then identify and prototype innovations and opportunities that can address root causes of challenges.

**Cynthia Morinville - 2016 Trudeau Scholar**

Cynthia is a third year PhD student in Human Geography working with Rajyashree N. Reddy, Deborah Cowen and Scott Prudham. Her research explores the lived experiences of informal workers in the global South earning their livelihoods from discarded electronic waste. E-waste is the fastest growing stream of waste worldwide. An estimated 20 to 50 million tons of electronics are discarded globally every year. E-waste contains both valuable components and extremely harmful substances, posing significant environmental and human exposure risks when recycled in uncontrolled informal settings. Her research explores the persistence of e-waste, in economies, communities and bodies, and seeks to shed light on the ways in which rare metals embedded deep within our electronics are valued, extracted, and returned to markets. Using ethnographic methods, Cynthia looks at several sites of transport and dismantling: Accra, Ghana; Delhi, India; and Singapore. These locations, although very different, are juncture points where e-waste is the object of extensive manual labour and multiple economic transactions. It is these links and the social relationships therein that direct the movements of e-waste – its harmful effects and the potential re-extracted profits. A focus on agency and representation threads through this work as she seeks to offer alternative narratives around the global e-waste crisis.

**Deborah Cowen - 2016 Trudeau Fellow**

An Associate Professor in the department, Deborah looks at how conflicts over infrastructure have come to define our political landscape. As reported in the U of T News, she will use the fellowship to pursue an ambitious three-year project entitled Reassembling the Infrastructures of Citizenship. “Infrastructure is arguably at the centre of political life today,” says Cowen. “When they work, infrastructures bring us food, water, power, resources, consumer goods, information, security, and connections to loved ones. But the same structures and systems that enable greater mobility for some also often disconnect and dispossess others.” One clear example is the Alberta tar sands. Industry pressure to get bitumen to transnational markets has provoked controversial pipeline construction with social, environmental and Indigenous groups fighting the projects. At the centre of these struggles are questions of competing sovereignties on lands that remain unceded or contested. With an ultimate goal of finding ways toward a more just and sustainable future, Cowen’s project aims to rethink policy and political community from precisely the points of conflict, injury, and difference that lie at the heart of infrastructure crises in Canada. Central to her approach is engagement and learning from the communities whose lives are profoundly affected by infrastructure decisions but who are often at the margins of contemporary political life.