

California's Racial Ecologies

This workshop aims to further critical conversations about race, environment, and cultural production in the settler state of California. Although California has long been a hot spot for the environmental humanities and critical race studies, scholars have only begun to interrogate the intersections and frictions between these lines of interrogation. By bringing together scholars working on the racial ecologies of colonization, im/migration, extraction, infrastructural labor, agriculture, urban redevelopment, mass incarceration, suburbanization, automobility, militarization, environmental catastrophe, and the US-Mexico border, we hope to build deeper cultural histories and theoretical accounts of the overlaps and divergences between the apparently disparate processes that have built, sustained, and challenged the settler state.

Questions we hope to explore include: how have California's biopolitical experiments—with immigration regulation, spatial segregation, mass incarceration, and racially-hierarchized agriculture—produced a range of racial ecologies, and how have racialized authors addressed these processes? how do historical and political tensions between settlers and Natives—as well as between diverse racial groups—manifest in environmental cultural politics? how has literary and cultural production contributed to the discourses and practices of Environmental Justice? how have writers, artists, and activists built on Indigenous environmental epistemologies to imagine and sustain alternative futures?

Format: Participants will share brief bios and 5-page position papers or reflections on their work-in-progress. We will also select 3-5 short common readings (approximately 50 pages). These readings could include excerpts from Ray's *The Ecological Other*, Marez's *Farm Worker Futurism*, or Gilmore's *Golden Gulag*. While we will spend the bulk of the 4 hours discussing participants' papers, the readings will help ground our discussions.

Hsuan L. Hsu is the author *Geography and the Production of Space in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge, 2010) and *Sitting in Darkness: Mark Twain's Asia and Comparative Racialization* (NYU, 2015). Hsuan has written journal articles on race and environmental politics in California, curated an online exhibit on *Representing Environmental Risk in the Landscapes of US Militarization* for the Carson Center for Environment and Society, and co-edited a special issue of *Discourse on Race, Environment, and Representation*. He is currently writing a book about olfactory aesthetics and environmental violence that includes chapters on California-based authors such as Helena María Viramontes and Edith Maude Eaton (Sui Sin Far).

Sarah D. Wald is the author of *The Nature of California: Race, Citizenship and Farming since the Dust Bowl* (UWashingtonP, 2016). She has published multiple essays on the intersections of race and ecology in California, including on novels by Viramontes and Karen Tei Yamashita. Her current work on racial ecologies includes an anthology, *Latinx Environmentalisms: Place, Justice, and the Decolonial* (co-edited with David J. Vázquez, Priscilla Solis Ybarra, and Sarah

Jaquette Ray), and a monograph focused on diversity initiatives launched by public lands agencies and advocates.