

**The Politics of Life
CHID 390**

**Fall 2022
T/Th, 10:30-12:20
CHID Lounge (Padelford C101)**

Professor María Elena García
Email: meg71@uw.edu
Office: Padelford B103
Office Hours: By appointment

For there are no new ideas. There are only new ways of making them felt, of examining what our ideas really mean (feel like) on Sunday morning at 7am, after brunch, during wild love, making war, giving birth; while we suffer the old longings, battle the old warnings and fears of being silent and impotent and alone, while tasting our new possibilities and strengths.

--Audre Lorde, "Poetry is not a Luxury," 1985

Course Description

This seminar invites students to explore the politics of life and death (human and other-than-human) in the contexts of migration, settler colonialism, racial violence, slaughter, extraction, indigeneity, and extinction. Drawing on scholarly, literary, and visual texts, we will think together about rage, grief, memory, love, and more. How are we entangled with histories of coloniality, slavery, patriarchy? Why and how should we think "beyond the human" in a world where so many continue to *deny* the humanity of Black, Brown, Indigenous, Queer and disabled bodies? What happens when we consider the possibility that plants can be elders, rocks might listen, and "earth-beings" (such as rivers and glaciers) speak? It is my hope that our rigorous examination of these and other questions will serve as windows through which we can view the workings of alterity, marginalization, and vulnerability, as well as survey pathways to alternative and better futures.

As the Junior Colloquium in the Comparative History of Ideas, CHID 390 emphasizes intentional engagement with the politics of knowledge: How do we come to know what we know? What counts as knowledge? Whose knowledge matters? To what end? Throughout the quarter we will consider these questions, placing them in conversation with the thematic concerns that anchor this class.

A note on consenting to learn in public

As this is a small seminar, during our time together we will engage with each other in thoughtful and sometimes intimate discussion on sometimes difficult topics. This makes learning together a vulnerable act. To this end, we will spend the quarter practicing what Cherokee scholar Adrienne Keene calls “consenting to learn in public.” Consenting to learn in public is a risk-filled, consensus-based process that leaves the learner open, often vulnerably, to criticisms and rejections. But it is also an Indigenous feminist practice that unsettles the individualistic and privileged mode of Western knowledge production. With that in mind, we need to be mindful of how we behave and treat each other. I expect that you will:

- Put forth your best effort on a daily basis;
- Be respectful of each other’s ideas, beliefs, and questions;
- Maintain an open mindset to new challenges and experiences;
- Arrive prepared with course materials every day;
- Communicate with me (and if appropriate, with your peers) about any concerns or challenges with the class.

A note on Covid contingencies

We continue to live through a global pandemic that has laid bare the brutality of our current political and economic systems. Our lives, including our time together in the classroom, will undoubtedly be impacted by this moment, some more than others. As always, but perhaps especially during this time, we need to be generous with ourselves and one another, and to engage with care and thoughtfulness. A few things to keep in mind as we enter our journey together:

- Please **do not come to class if you are sick** or helping a family member/friend who is sick. As soon as you are able to let me know and I will help you make up any missed work.
- I will wear my mask throughout class and encourage you to do the same.
- It is my hope that we will meet in person during this quarter but depending on circumstances we might shift online.
- Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me about any concerns you might have.

Course Requirements

I. Participation in Seminar. 25% of grade. Your thoughtful participation in class is perhaps the most significant component of the seminar. My job as course instructor is not to give you answers but to facilitate a space of collaborative thinking and learning. In other words, much of the success of the seminar depends on your collaborative curiosity, energy, and work. Seminars are important opportunities for thinking out loud and listening actively; they are important spaces for us to learn together.

II. Weekly critical essays. 25% of grade. During the quarter you will be expected to engage directly and critically with class materials, including books, articles, films, podcasts, and websites. Approximately once each week you will write a short essay (about 500 words) engaging with some of the major points raised in

the texts that week. These short essays should not summarize, but rather raise questions, address interesting connections, expand or unpack arguments, think with the authors and texts. The point of these papers is for you to explore the topics for that week's discussion, so please do not write about texts we have discussed in previous weeks unless you are putting those in conversation with materials assigned for that day. You will post your first response paper on the second week of the quarter.

III. Peer feedback. 15% of grade. Throughout the quarter you will engage with your peers in a thoughtful, detailed, and constructive manner. **You are expected to respond to your peers' critical essays at least three times during the quarter** (posted as replies on Canvas). These comments should be approximately 250 words in length and engage directly with the points or questions raised in the post (or during conversation in class).

IV. Cultural Artifact. 15% of grade. Throughout the quarter, each student will share a cultural artifact that relates to course materials and discussions. You should think about public artifacts or texts—such as social media projects, blogs, photographs, songs, novels, artistic interventions, physical objects, or films—that could pair well with the more traditional academic readings we will be discussing. In addition to sharing your artifact in class, you will offer brief reflections about your chosen artifact and how it speaks to the issues we are discussing that week via writing or through a video or audio post on Canvas. I'll send a schedule of presentations and more details by week 2.

V. Final Essay. 20% of grade. Each student will work on a short essay that expands on one of the themes discussed in class (e.g., relations, extraction, settler capitalism, migration, borderlands, slaughter, extinction, racial capitalism, grief). Ideally, you will put the texts from class in conversation with another text (or two) of your choice. These can be academic texts, podcasts or films, artistic interventions, or other alternatives. I'll offer more details in class. **Essays will be due on Wednesday December 14th via Canvas.**

Important Information for Students

Student Technology Loan Program

As a UW student you can borrow laptop and tablet computers for the duration of the academic quarter. The STLP offers no contact appointments as well as shipping. Email stlp@uw.edu or call 206-685-6090.

Housing & Food Insecurity

The Doorway Project offers resources specific to the U District, links to Emergency Food Resources Map and connections to Mutual Aid Solidarity Networks. The ROOTS Young Adult Shelter provides overnight shelter to people ages 18-25. Any Hungry Husky offers a UW food pantry. If you know other resources, please share them with me and I'll post them for everyone.

Emergency Aid

Emergency Aid at UW-Seattle is also there to support students for emergency need. In addition to connecting students to resources, they offer short term fund loans and counseling.

Library Resources for Remote Learning

You can find resources for research support and additional library needs [here](#).

Writing support

Students are encouraged to use the [Interdisciplinary Writing Studio](#) on campus. This studio is located in Smith Hall 303F and offers tutoring sessions for students working on projects in CHID, GEOG, GWSS, and UW HONORS. All kinds of projects are welcome, and the center's experienced tutors can help you with all aspects of your writing and research. Two other options are the [CLUE Writing Center](#) and/or [Odegaard Writing and Research Center](#), both of which offer support with writing assignments.

Alternative Learning and Disability Accommodations

If you would like to request formal academic accommodation due to learning differences or disability (visible or invisible), please contact Disability Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8924. If you have a letter from Disability Student Services indicating a need for academic accommodations, please show me this letter as soon as possible.

Religious Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). ***Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course*** using the Religious Accommodations Request [form](#).

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to be familiar with the principles outlined in the Student Code of Conduct as regards academic integrity (i.e., submitting work that is substantially your own). I understand that there can be confusion about what constitutes "plagiarism" so please do talk to me if you have questions. Of course, you will be using sources and other peoples' ideas—the trick is to credit them properly when you do so. Have a look at the UW resources on [academic integrity](#). If I suspect you have knowingly cheated, or plagiarized, I will need to report your work to the [office for student conduct](#).

Classroom environment: While no environment is ever guaranteed to be safe at all times, I am committed to ensuring as much as possible that the classroom is a welcoming space for you irrespective of background, and identity including but not limited to religious belief, ability, race and ethnicity, language, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation. If anyone does or says something that hurts you, please let me (and the class) know so we can correct ourselves. I reserve the right to ask an extremely disruptive individual to leave the room, and that individual has the right to meet with me afterwards to talk it through and appeal. This applies to online "netiquette" too. Don't say anything online that you wouldn't defend in person. And of course, be considerate of others when using electronic media.

Required Texts

As this is an advanced seminar, the reading this quarter will be significant both in terms of the number of pages and in the quality of the writing. All works are available electronically, so you do not have to purchase these texts (although they are certainly worth owning).

1. Alex Blanchette. 2020. *Porkopolis: American Animality, Standardized Life, and the Factory Farm*. Duke University Press.
2. Nick Estes. 2019. *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. Verso.
3. Timothy Pachirat. 2013. *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*. Yale University Press.
4. Juno Parreñas. 2018. *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation*. Duke University Press.
5. Alexis Pauline Gumbs. 2020. *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*. AK Press.
6. Harsha Walia. 2021. *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism*. Haymarket Books.

Reading/Meeting Schedule

****PLEASE FOLLOW READING SCHEDULE ON CANVAS FOR LATEST DETAILS ABOUT MATERIALS, MEETINGS (IN PERSON OR VIRTUAL) AND ASSIGNMENTS****

RELATIONS

Week 1

Thursday, September 29

- Introductions (to course and each other)
- Expectations (individual and communal)
- Positionality
 - Poem, “Children of the Age,” by Wislawa Szymborska
 - Joy Harjo on Words as Maps, and a Poem by Craig Santos Perez
- Before our class meeting, please listen to Robin Wall Kimmerer, “The Intelligence in all Kinds of Life,” Interview in *On Being*

Week 2

Tuesday, October 4

- Alexis Pauline Gumbs. 2020. *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*. AK Press. Read preface, foreword, intro, and chapters 1-3. Feel free to keep reading or pick up the book at different moments during the quarter, open to any page, and dive in. eBook available via UW Libraries.
- This week, consider taking the Indigenous Walking Tour of campus, or/and explore A Peoples' Landscape: Racism and Resistance at UW

Thursday, October 6

- Faith Kearns. 2017. "Water is life, relationality, and tribal sovereignty: An interview with Melanie K. Yazzie." Read Part 1 and part 2 of this interview.
- Zoe Todd. 2017. "Fish, Kin, and Hope: Tending to Water Violations in Amiskwaciwaskahikan and Treaty Six Territory." *Afterall*, 43 (1): 102-107.
- Recommended:
 - Amitav Ghosh. 2021. "Brutes: Meditations on the myth of the voiceless." *Orion Magazine*.

Week 3

Tuesday, October 11

- Nick Estes. 2019. *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*. Verso. Read prologue ("Prophets"), chapter 3 ("War") and chapter 7 ("Liberation"). If you have time read/skim other chapters. eBook available via UW libraries.
- Dina Gilio-Whitaker. 2019. *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, From Colonization to Standing Rock*. Beacon Press. Read Introduction ("The Standing Rock Saga"). eBook available via UW Libraries.
- Watch Máxima. Available via UW libraries.
- Recommended:
 - Listen to "Abolition on Stolen Land" with Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Nick Estes, Charles Sepulveda and many others: <https://challengeinequality.luskin.ucla.edu/sanctuary-spaces/> Click on "events" at the top right of the screen, then scroll down to find a video of the conversation. Please be sure to listen to Professor Sepulveda's opening comments. If you have time, you might engage with other events in the series.

Thursday, October 13

- J. Weston Phippen. 2016. "Kill Every Buffalo You Can! Every Buffalo Dead is an Indian Gone." *The Atlantic*, May 13.
- María Elena García. 2022. "Killing kin/haunting life: towards Indigenous vocabularies of loss and repair." In *Indigenous research design: Conscientization, decoloniality, and methodological possibility*, edited by Dr. Elizabeth Sumida Huaman and Dr. Nathan D. Martin. Manuscript under review.
- Watch *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*: <https://vimeo.com/44819444>
- Recommended:

- Susan McHugh. 2013. "A flash point in Inuit memories': Endangered Knowledges in the Mountie Sled Dog Massacre." *English Studies in Canada* 39 (1): 149-175.
- Susan McHugh. 2019. "Arctic Nomadology: Inuit stories of the Mountie Sled Dog Massacre." In *Love in a Time of Slaughters: Human-Animal Stories Against Genocide and Extinction*. Penn State University Press.

MIGRATION/BORDERS

Week 4

Tuesday, October 18

- Harsha Walia. 2021. *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism*. Haymarket Books. Read Foreword (by Robin D. G. Kelley), Introduction, Chapter 1 ("Historic Entanglements of US Border Formation"), and Afterword (by Nick Estes).
- Melanie Yazzie et al. 2021. "[Burning Down the Bordertown](#)." *The Baffler*, Feb 11
- Shannon Speed. 2016. "States of Violence: Indigenous Women Migrants in the Era of Neoliberal Multicriminalism." *Critique of Anthropology*, 36 (3): 280-301.

Thursday, October 20

- Watch [Sleep Dealer](#) (2008, Alex Rivera)
- Listen to "['Sleep Dealer' and the Border Politics of Tech](#)," with Alex Rivera.

Week 5

Tuesday, October 25 (Guest Speaker: Professor Diana Flores Ruiz, CMS)

- Watch [The Infiltrators](#) (2019, Alex Rivera). Film available via UW libraries.
- Diana Flores Ruiz. 2019. "[By Radical Means Necessary: Interview with Cristina Ibarra and Alex Rivera](#)." *Film Quarterly*, 73 (1).
- Lauren Heidbrink. 2021. "[Delia's Return: The Detention and Deportation of an Unaccompanied Child](#)." *American Anthropologist* 123 (3): 685-702.
- Caitlin Dickerson. 2022. "['We Need to Take Away Children': The secret history of the U.S. government's family-separation policy](#)." *The Atlantic*, September.
- Recommended:
 - Podcast: [Solomon's Sword](#), *This Land*
 - Explore [La Resistencia's](#) work
 - Explore Jason De León's work: [Undocumented Migration Project](#) and [Hostile Terrain 94](#)
- Additional recommendations:
 - Jason De León. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. University of California Press.
 - Wendy Vogt. 2018. *Lives in Transit: Violence and Intimacy in the Migrant Journey*. University of California Press.
 - Radiolab Border Trilogy: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#)
 - [Border South](#) (Raúl Paz Pastrana, 2019)
 - Natalie Scenters-Zapico, "[Pledge Allegiance](#)"

SLAUGHTER

Thursday, October 27

- Timothy Pachirat. 2011. *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*. Yale University Press. Read chapters 1 (“Hidden in Plain Sight”) and 2 (“The Place Where Blood Flows”)

Week 6

Tuesday, November 1

- Finish Pachirat’s book
- Jan Dutkiewicz. 2018. “Transparency and the Factory Farm: Agritourism and Counter-Activism at Fair Oaks Farm.” *Gastronomica*, 18 (2): 19-32.
- Recommended:
 - Kathryn Gillespie. 2018. *The Cow with Ear Tag #1389*. The University of Chicago Press.

Thursday, November 3: NO CLASS, but use the time to watch/read

- Watch [Okja](#) (2017, Bong Joon-ho)
- Kathryn Gillespie. 2014. “Sexualized violence and the gendered commodification of the animal body in Pacific Northwest US dairy production.” *Gender, Place and Culture: a journal of feminist geography*, 21 (10): 1321-1337.
- Begin reading Blanchette’s *Porkopolis* (try to read at least the preface and Introduction)

Week 7

Tuesday, November 8

- We will begin class by discussing *Okja* and Gillespie’s essay
- Alex Blanchette. 2020. *Porkopolis: American Animality, Standardized Life, and the Factory Farm*. Duke University Press. Read Preface, Introduction, chapters 1, 4, 6, and epilogue.
- Watch [The Last Pig](#) (2017, Allison Argo) and/or [Gunda](#) (2020, Viktor Kosakovskiy)
- Recommended:
 - Cameron Oglesby. 2021. “[Hogwash](#).” *Grist*, Feb. 5
 - María Elena García. 2019. “[Death of a Guinea Pig: Grief and the Limits of Multispecies Ethnography in Peru](#),” *Environmental Humanities* 11 (2): 351–372.

Thursday, November 10: NO CLASS

EXTINCTION

Week 8

Tuesday, November 15

- Thom van Dooren and Deborah Rose. 2013. “[Keeping Faith with Death: Mourning and De-Extinction](#).”

- Sam Anderson. 2021. "[The Last Two Northern White Rhinos on Earth](#)." *New York Times*, Sunday January 10. You can also listen to the story

Thursday, November 17

- Watch [Albatross](#) (2017, Chris Jordan)
- Recommended:
 - Thom Van Dooren. 2014. *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction*. University of Columbia Press.

Week 9 (11/22-24)—No class. Please use the time to read Juno Parreñas, *Decolonizing Extinction*.

Week 10

Tuesday, November 29

- Juno Parreñas. 2018. *Decolonizing Extinction: the work of care in orangutan rehabilitation*. Duke University Press. Please read the introduction, chapters 2, 3, 6, and the conclusion. Warning: there is some difficult content describing sexual violence, particularly in chapter 3.

Thursday, December 1

- Watch [Nénette](#) (2011, Nicolas Philibert). Film available via UW libraries.

RELATIONS/REFLECTIONS

Tuesday, December 6

- Sophie Chao. 2018. "In the Shadow of the Palm: Dispersed Ontologies Among Marind, West Papua." *Cultural Anthropology* 33 (4): 621-649.
- Anna Tsing. 2011. "Arts of Inclusion, or, How to Love a Mushroom." *Australian Humanities Review*, Volume 50.
- Listen to "[Fracture](#)," by Ellen Bass.
- Watch [My Octopus Teacher](#) (2020, Pippa Ehrlich and James Reed)
- Recommended:
 - Sophie Lewis. 2021. "[My Octopus Girlfriend: on erotophobia](#)." *N+1 Magazine*.

Thursday, December 8: Final reflections/evaluations

Final essays due Wednesday December 14 by 5pm