GCSC Seminar Series

Tuesday, September 22, 2020
4:00-5:00 PM

Julie Sze
Professor, American Studies, University of California, Davis

“Interdisciplinarity, Intersectionality and Environmental Justice: The Time is Now”

What role can colleges and universities in particular, and specific fields (sustainability, environmental policy, etc.) play in addressing climate and other crises?
Abstract
Drawing on sociologist John Foran’s questions from "Transforming the University to Address the Climate Crisis," I ask what role can colleges and universities in particular, and specific fields (sustainability, environmental policy, etc.) play in addressing climate and other crises? How can we draw on social movements and systemic alternatives to create a different kind of university, fit for the purpose? Drawing from 25 years working with environmental justice movements as an engaged, interdisciplinary scholar, and from 16 years teaching and engagement at the University of California, I argue that intersectionality, interdisciplinarity and institutional contexts matter in unfolding and interconnected crises, now more than ever. The moment demands a reckoning and environmental scholars and institutions more broadly, can and should engage proactively.

Bio
Julie Sze is the author of Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice (MIT Press, 2007), Fantasy Islands: Chinese Dreams and Ecological Fears in an Age of Climate Crisis (University of California Press, 2015), and, most recently, Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger (University of California Press, 2020). She edited the collection Sustainability: Approaches to Environmental Justice and Social Power (NYU Press, 2018) and has written over 50 articles and book chapters. Across a wide geographical terrain (New York, California and Shanghai) and scales and issues, Sze’s research holds constant a sustained focus on political ecology, urbanization, and planning, including links and interactions between the political economy of spatial form and social relations with nature.