

**Bodies, Health, and Environments Unconference
+ Critical Geographies Mini-Conference 2026**

**ALL EVENTS ARE IN GLADFELTER HALL (GH)
Temple University, Philadelphia, PA**

Friday, April 24

1:00 PM	Reception Table Open – outside GIS Studio, GH mezzanine floor
2:00-3:30 PM	Concurrent Sessions 1
	Session 1.A. Precarious Lives, Grounded Methods – GH 247 Session 1.B. Embodied Geographies of Food and Land – GIS Studio
4:00-5:30 PM	Keynote Address by Dr. Caroline Faria – GH 107
5:30 PM	Reception

Saturday, April 25

8:30 AM	Reception Table Open – outside GIS Studio, GH mezzanine floor
9:00-10:30 AM	Concurrent Sessions 2
	Session 2.A. The BioSocial Body, Power, and Health – GH 247 Session 2.B. Institutions and their Paradoxes – GIS Studio Session 2.C. Contested Boundaries and Violent Environments – GH 10 th Floor
11:00-12:30 PM	Concurrent Sessions 3
	Session 3.A. Contested Urban Spaces – GH 247 Session 3.B. Technoscience, Knowledge, and the Limits of Knowing Landscapes – GIS Studio Session 3.C. Extraction, Finance, and Capitalist Contradiction – GH 10 th Floor Session 3.D. Critical geographies of, and for, the future – GH 764
12:30-1:30 PM	Lunch Break (<i>Undergraduate attendees: pizza lunch meetup, GUS Lounge 3rd Floor</i>)
1:30-3:00 PM	Concurrent Sessions 4 - Alternate Format
	Session 4.A. Theorizing the Materiality of Biology [Fishbowl Roundtable] – GH 310 Session 4.B. Rationing Life: Criminalization of care in U.S. housing policy – GH 10 th Floor Session 4.C. Body-territory Mapping – GIS Studio
3:30-4:45 PM	Concurrent Sessions 5 - Alternate Format
	Session 5.A. Practicing Cross Epistemological Scholarship [Fishbowl Roundtable] – GH 310 Session 5.B. Between Carceral and Therapeutic Space – GH 10 th Floor Session 5.C. Practicing Pedagogies: A Participatory Convening [Roundtable] – GIS Studio
5:00-6:15 PM	Plenary Panel – Confronting this Political Moment as Critical Geographers – GH 107
6:15 PM	Reception

Sunday, April 26

8:30 AM	Reception Table Open – outside GIS Studio, GH mezzanine floor
9:00-10:30 AM	Embodied Practices
	Option 1: Theatrical Vocabularies as Research Tools – GIS Studio Option 2: Urban Walk – meet outside GIS Studio
11:00-1:00 PM	Co-thinking, Co-writing Retreat Space with Boxed Lunch – GIS Studio

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

FRIDAY

Session 1.A. Precarious Lives, Grounded Methods

Experiential Scoring as Method: Performing Practical Knowledge of Urban Precarity

Natalia Martini Caitlin

ABSTRACT: My current work examines the embodiment of urban precarity, with a focus on street homelessness, through the development of an arts-based, performative methodology called experiential scores. This approach seeks to facilitate the transfer of embodied knowledge from lived experiences of precarity to broader audiences. In this paper, I present an experiment in method grounded in my long-standing empathetic scholarly engagement with embodied homelessness. The experiment draws on three key elements: the adaptation of dance scores as sets of instructions that guide performance; James C. Scott's theorization of *mētis* as practical, situated knowledge crucial to understanding of how we are and become with the world, that resists easy articulation yet may be partially elucidated through performative instruction; and the power of performance-based evocation as an affective mode of knowledge production activated through embodied improvisation. My motivation for developing experiential scores stems from a conviction, shared with Catherine Robinson and others, that such methodologies are urgently needed to foreground the felt dimensions of homelessness. As Robinson argues, attention to "felt evidence" can foster public recognition of and responsibility for homelessness by opening those not in pain to those who are. This paper outlines the methodological design of experiential scoring and examines the forms of knowledge it produces, with particular attention to what can be perceptively felt. **KEYWORDS:** experiential scores, *mētis*, arts-based evocation, felt evidence, homelessness

Fragile Privilege: Racialized Mobility and Belonging in Black American Migration to Mexico

Queenie Collins

ABSTRACT: This paper examines Black American migration to Mérida, Mexico as a case of racialized mobility, where legal and economic privilege coexist with embodied vulnerability within a spatial order shaped by *mestizaje* and global racial capitalism. While scholarship on lifestyle and privileged migration has centered white, middle-class mobility from the Global North, this project decouples privilege from whiteness by foregrounding how Black Americans experience privilege as fragile, contingent, and unevenly recognized across everyday spaces. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and digital ethnography, the research traces how migrants negotiate belonging, safety, and misrecognition through housing markets, language use, bureaucratic encounters, and online community formations. Methodologically, the project treats movement across physical and digital spaces as a grounded experiment in method, attending to the affective and embodied dimensions of mobility alongside political-economic structures. Rather than assuming mobility as empowerment, the analysis shows how privilege is spatially produced and repeatedly tested through encounters with racialized visibility, erasure, and surveillance. The paper contributes to critical geographic debates by advancing a race-conscious theory of privileged migration that foregrounds Black geographies of movement, recognition, and world-making. In doing so, it pushes critical geography beyond critique toward reparative analysis that accounts for how mobility both unsettles and reproduces racialized spatial hierarchies in the Global South. **KEYWORDS:** Racialized mobility, Digital-everyday geographies, *Mestizaje* and racial capitalism, fragile privilege, Belonging and misrecognition

Research as Showing Up: Making Knowledge Through Shared Struggle

Sterling Johnson

ABSTRACT: Community geographies, scholar activism, and movement scholarship are research traditions that engage communities as co-producers of knowledge rather than objects of study (Derickson, 2015; Shannon et al., 2020; Martinez, 2023). Across these traditions, scholars have pushed against narrow conceptions of scientific method, developing pragmatic and relational research practices rooted in mutual aid, archiving and memory work, community organizing, walking and listening, crafting, and citizen science (Baker et al., 2025; Jones, 2019). While many have called for moving "beyond critique," what this entails methodologically, ethically, and politically remains contested. I examine how new research practices are being crafted within homeless activism and homelessness policy work, rejecting binaries between inquiry and action, scholar and organizer. Rather than treating homelessness primarily as a problem of structural abstraction or state policy failure, I understand research as a collective practice of showing up, embedded in mutual aid, activism, organizing and everyday struggles over survival. I also argue that this work is theoretical rather than anti-theoretical. Knowledge production is treated as

relational and accountable, oriented toward building livable worlds rather than refining detached explanatory models. **KEYWORDS:** Community Geographies, Movement scholarship, Scholar Activism, Housing Policy, Community Organizing

Depraved Social Reproduction: Immigration Policy as Welfare-State Infrastructure in Quebec

Jessie Stein

ABSTRACT: Migrants are increasingly recruited to resolve crises in Quebec's austerity-ridden infrastructures: staffing childcare and eldercare, cleaning hospitals and long-term care facilities, and building and maintaining housing, yet many migrants without precarious status are denied access to the social goods and utilities they produce. This talk theorizes this contradiction as 'depraved social reproduction': a regime in which immigration policy functions as an infrastructure of the contemporary welfare state, producing a workforce indispensable to collective life while structurally kept at arm's length from its benefits. Drawing on a five-year ethnography and labor migration data, I trace how this regime consolidates across education/childcare, healthcare/long-term care, and housing/construction. I show how migrants' labor is mobilized as a "solution" to systemic breakdown, while post-pandemic blame narratives recode the crisis as one of "capacity" and population pressure. These narratives both scapegoat immigrants and sustain narratives of state innocence in decades of neoliberal disinvestment, foreclosing durable solutions to real social problems by displacing responsibility on to newcomers. Immigration status thus operates as a temporal-spatial technology that truncates mobility and the right to a future, constrains everyday geographies of work and care, and cycles people back into the lowest-paid social reproductive jobs. I conclude by arguing that depraved social reproduction is not a pandemic anomaly but an emergent feature of capitalist governance which demands analytic clarity and political refusal. **KEYWORDS:** social reproduction, migrant labor, welfare state, immigration policy, Quebec

Session 1.B. Embodied Geographies of Food and Land

A narrative analysis to understand the (intangible/many) values of wild foods in Alaska

Bronwen Powell

ABSTRACT: Wild foods continue to be consumed, sometimes in large quantities, in many high-income country settings. In Alaska, where wild foods are central to daily life for many, research has largely focused on nutrition. This paper looks at the myriad of other motivations for sustained consumption, including the intangible values attached to wild food that contribute to health and wellbeing. We use qualitative text analysis of an extensive body of stories written by Alaskans (e.g. newspaper and magazine articles) to examine narratives and values attached to wild foods. Our findings show important connections between wild foods and the culture and identity of people who harvest and consume them. Alaskans express pride in being able to procure food from their environment, allowing them to, at least partially, resist and circumvent globalized industrial food systems. Especially for Alaska Native people, wild foods play an important role in the maintenance of connections to family, community, culture, and identity. Wild foods are highly prized for their beauty, quality, taste, and uniqueness; they are seen as highly nutritious and superior to store-bought alternatives. Wild foods practice is an opportunity for Alaskans to enjoy their environments and connect people to place. The values attached to wild food, which motivate continued harvesting and consumption, highlight the ways intangible values of wild foods have embodied benefits for health and wellbeing well beyond diet quality and nutrition. **KEYWORDS:** wild food, food values, food culture, embodied health benefits.

Visceral food environments: An embodied political ecology of Indigenous Pgaz K'Nyau nature foods

Lilly Zeitler

ABSTRACT: Indigenous Pgaz K'Nyau Peoples in the highlands of Northern Thailand are experiencing food environment transitions. Despite increasing market use, Indigenous Pgaz K'Nyau Peoples continue to prefer their highland nature foods. Pgaz K'Nyau Peoples conceptualize nature foods (ahaan thamachaat) as foods acquired directly from nature that are safe, delicious and filling. In focus groups and interviews, Pgaz K'Nyau women expressed distrust and fear of market foods, mainly due to concerns about agrochemical contamination. In contrast, nature foods are valorized as safer and more flavorful, and women care-fully cultivate their natural food environments. Women center their experiences of food environments in their bodies. Itchy skin, aches and pains, diseases, satiety, tastes and other embodied experiences are all associated with particular food environments. Food environments become strongly affective places that may inspire nostalgia, affection, love, care or fear. Cross-scalar power relations with corporate agribusinesses further shape women's perceptions and embodied food environment

experiences. Studies of food environments often tend towards descriptive, cross-sectional and apolitical analyses of market food environments. Indigenous Pgaz K’Nyau women invites us to examine more closely the ways in which food environments, including natural ones, are experienced as affective, embodied, visceral and political.

KEYWORDS: food environments, embodied political ecology, feminist political ecology, wild foods, Indigenous food sovereignty

Jugando en la tierra: Ethnographic approaches to body-mapping

Kara Anderson

ABSTRACT: Drawing on collaboration with agricultural promoters from the Women’s Association for the Development of Sacatepéquez in Guatemala, this paper explores Maya women’s experiences jugando en la tierra (playing on the land), where women enact alternative spatial practices through their agricultural work. Jugando en la tierra speaks to practices of seeding, planting, and gathering that constitute forms of occupational therapy and interrupt gendered paradigms of sacrifice inherent to the current food crisis. Drawing on Lorena Cabnal’s (2010) concept of cuerpo-territorio (body-territory), I illustrate how women and land constitute key terrains of colonial occupation, where claims to land must be enacted (King, 2016). Thinking with Native feminists’ understanding of the body as a powerful geography (Goeman, 2017) and cuerpo-territorio’s engagements with body mapping to leverage this power, I explore how women’s embodied experiences of jugando en la tierra constitute a sort of territorial re-mapping that interrupts gendered dispossession. I propose a body mapping practice drawing on insight from ethnographic fieldwork, where I bear witness to how women enact territorial transformation through acts of seeding, planting, and gathering. An ethnographic approach offers a more ethical engagement with cuerpo-territorio for non-Indigenous scholars like me by leveraging a desire-centered framework (Tuck, 2009) rooted in healing.

KEYWORDS: Cuerpo-territorio; body mapping; food insecurity; ethnography; Indigenous feminisms

Stressor source as a new dimension of emotional political ecologies: The case of corn belt farm stress in the United States

Carly Nichols

ABSTRACT: Emotional political ecology unpacks the ways power is negotiated via emotions in struggles around the environment. Although scholars have outlined critical “dimensions” of emotion in environmental conflict, they pointedly leave their framework open to further theorization. This presentation proposes greater attention to the forces (i.e., stressors) that propel emotional responses in struggles over the environment. I take the example of farm stress in the U.S. Midwest as a case to advance this point and focus on an underresearched group—Iowan conventional row-crop farmers. Conceptualizing stress as an affective and emotional bodily disposition, I demonstrate how stressors emanate from political economic structures, representational and discursive politics, and the materiality of everyday human-environment relations. I argue that although the materiality of weather causes in-the-moment anxiety, and discursive critiques of industrial agriculture cause frustration and anger, commodity farmers have established emotional and economic coping tools. These stressors are concomitant to more private feelings of grief, sadness, and confusion about how to navigate the changing political economy of agriculture, which respondents have less idea how to address. I conclude by drawing out how stressor–emotion–action responses yield insights on how to grapple with farm stress and struggles over the environment more broadly. **KEYWORDS:** political ecology, materiality, industrial agriculture, emotion, feminist geographies,

Keynote Address: Omwavu Wakuffa, “The poor must die”: intersectional power, climate crisis, and the floodwaters of urban development in Kampala, Uganda

Dr. Caroline Faria

DESCRIPTION: In the streets, alleyways, markets, and homes of Kampala, Uganda, the water is rising. Climate change is commonly cited as the cause – decried by international development agencies, environmental groups, and scholars, along with the Ugandan government itself. But the murky floodwaters conceal more complex political ecologies of land and water, including their gendered, racio-colonial, and neoliberal sediments. Residents make sense of the city’s devastation with the words “Omwavu Wakuffa”, the poor must die. A Lugandan refrain, it reflects on the fall out of power in the country: colluding elite national and international exploitation and land theft, enabled by overt militarism and quiet, threatening, persuasion. In this article, we engage this turn of phrase to better understand climate crises in global south cities like Kampala. To do so, we examine the drivers and devastating impacts of flooding in Ntinda/ Nakawa and connected sites across the city, linking the clearly monumental impacts of planetary warming with the grounded politics of land speculation, wetland destruction, and governmental tensions between environmental protection and elite control. These dovetail with seemingly conflicting, but often colluding, international dictates of economic growth and environmental sustainability. A story unfolding across the global

south, our work connects political ecologies of flooding with interventions from feminist urban geography and global racial capitalism, pushing for attention to the ways capitalist destruction relies on, and entrenches, gendered and racialized logics, and their colonial past-presents: logics of human and environmental disposability, devaluation, waste, and inevitable death. Disrupting these logics, these framings also demand intersectional, anti-racist, and feminist attention: seeking out everyday life-sustaining and place-making as the city's floodwaters rise.

SATURDAY

Session 2.A. The BioSocial Body, Power, and Health

Appetite For Suppression: Ozempic and the Profitable Governance of Hunger

Gabrielle Reagan

ABSTRACT: Ozempic arrived with a tightly scripted promise: a clinically proven treatment for type 2 diabetes, and later “obesity management.” Yet its most consequential cultural life has unfolded elsewhere, in the ordinary realm of appetite suppression, where feeling less hungry is not incidental but rather the desired outcome. This work examines the rapid rise of Ozempic as a mass appetite technology, tracing its movement from a bounded medical indication into a sprawling ecosystem of off-label prescribing, telehealth platforms, and direct-pay models that rebrand appetite suppression as self-care. Drawing on feminist theory and critical food studies, I argue Ozempic’s contemporary uptake cannot be explained through efficacy metrics or individual demand alone. Rather, its profitability hinges on its capacity to travel across moral registers from disease treatment to lifestyle optimization; from obesity intervention to the intimate governance of pleasure and desire. Appetite thus becomes the site of intervention as Ozempic converts hunger into a signal that can be muted, stabilized, and priced, with the drug then functioning as an infrastructural intervention into embodied desire itself. By tracing Ozempic’s transformation, this work illuminates how this new pharmacology reshapes not only bodies, but the cultural meaning of hunger, pleasure, and the right to appetite. **KEYWORDS:** GLP-1, health, bodies, pleasure, hunger

Expanding the scale of analysis for harm reduction and substance use

Halie Kampman

ABSTRACT: Geographic scholarship on substance use and harm reduction has long examined how drug users are shaped as political subjects, oscillating between portrayals of empowered, agentic individuals and reponsibilized neoliberal subjects. Much of this work, however, operates at the level of policy, discourse or population, leaving less attention to how these politics logics are lived across other scales – like at the scale of the body. Building on feminist political ecology and the political ecology of the body, this paper argues that empowerment and responsabilization are not opposing political positions but co-experienced conditions. Drawing on qualitative interviews completed with treatment navigators and service providers, we use methadone treatment as an empirical lens to show how care, discipline, relief, burden, stability, and risk are experienced at once. Methadone emerges as both enabling survival and work, while also producing fatigue, overmedication and moral tension, revealing how political projects of care and control are jointly lived rather than sequentially imposed. By situating embodied experience within broader political-ecological processes, this paper advances an affective, multi-scalar analytic for understanding how drug governance is negotiated, endured and sometimes resisted in everyday life. **KEYWORDS:** political ecology of the body, substance use, harm reduction, multi-scalar analysis, feminist political ecology

Computation and the Archive: On Power and Health Under Racial Capitalism

Darius Scott

ABSTRACT: Given quantification's role in reducing life experiences to measurable variables, critical geography has long defined itself against the positivist impulse to enumerate, classify, and abstract. At the same time, emerging calls for cross-epistemological health research (Nichols, Johnson, and Hayes-Conroy 2025) insist that epistemological friction generates sharper accounts of how structural conditions become embodied. This presentation approaches that friction at a particularly uncomfortable juncture: the use of natural language processing to trace the embodied toll of structural abandonment across archival materials. Text computation enables structural reading across archival sources that were never produced in conversation with one another, surfacing patterns of governance-produced harm that no single document reveals on its own. Drawing on archival letters written by housing-insecure residents to the New Orleans mayor's office (1964–1978), I, a qualitative researcher by every measure, paired NLP with close reading to trace how market-driven urban governance produced racially circumscribed populations whose health burdens were foreseeable outcomes of segregationist displacement and

intergovernmental retrenchment. The presentation also interrogates the social and environmental costs of the computational infrastructure itself, asking whether tools embedded in extractive economies can serve scholarship committed to dismantling them. **KEYWORDS:** Archival Methods; Urban Governance; Racial Capitalism; Health Geographies; Computational Text Analysis

Twin Phenomenology: tracing the material emergence of visceral sameness

Allison and Jessica Hayes-Conroy

ABSTRACT: Over 15 years ago, we sought to engage the concept of difference through the lens of the visceral body by describing how food and feeling coalesce differently in different bodies. In this paper, we take up the concept of visceral sameness through the lens of twinship and shared neurodivergence, specifically ADHD, asking what can we learn from visceral experiences that seem similar, parallel, or almost identical? We argue that visceral sameness, like visceral difference, emerges through material-relational processes. Whereas “visceral difference” invited us to consider multiplicity and biosocial divergence, “visceral sameness” presses on the limits of genetic identity, particularly when that sameness is presumed to be rooted in shared biology. Given that identical twins are almost always employed in a biomedical context to *reinforce* the nature-nurture binary, we use our own status as identical twins as the inciting force of this provocation, refusing to let our genetic sameness tell the whole story. What emerges is a twin phenomenology of sorts—an exploration of what can happen when you restitch some of the “cuts” (Barad 2007) that biomedicine, often understandably, requires in its own sense-making. In doing so, we aim to demonstrate at least two things: One, that a relational approach to etiology can, at least some of the time, help us to reconfigure the available opportunities for effective health intervention. And two, that a relational outlook is itself materially productive in the promotion of (the thing we call) health. **KEYWORDS:** twin phenomenology, Biosocial, bodies, health, adhd

Session 2.B. Institutions and their Paradoxes

Abolitionist Parenting, Carceral Safety, and the Politics of Mothering in the Age of School Shootings

Jenna Christian

ABSTRACT: This qualitative, mixed-method research project examines how mothers understand and navigate competing visions of “protecting children” in the contemporary United States, with particular attention to how concerns about school shootings influence support for—or resistance to—school securitization. Building on preliminary interviews conducted in 2025 with mothers in Nashville, Tennessee—a city that has experienced two major school shootings in the past three years—the project explores how school security measures have expanded in the aftermath of violence and how these changes are unevenly experienced by families. Mothers are a critical focus of this research because they continue to perform a disproportionate share of caregiving and decision-making related to children’s education and safety. Additionally, recent years have seen the rise of highly visible mother-led political movements organized around competing visions of “protecting children,” ranging from those advocating for gun control to those advancing book bans, anti-vaccination, and anti-trans policies. My feminist geographic analysis advances a framework of abolitionist parenting, which critically examines how mothers may turn toward carceral forms of safety (e.g., school policing and surveillance) while also envisioning the radical potential of expansive, anti-carceral approaches to collective care, safety, and parenting. **KEYWORDS:** education, school shootings, parenting, abolition, carcerality

Institutional Harms and the Abolition of Risk Assessment Tools in the Criminal Punishment System

Vanessa Massaro

ABSTRACT: Risk assessment algorithms are built on mythologies of public safety that situate risk at the individual - they label some people “high risk” and others “low risk.” Individualized risk assessment justifies human rights abuses, mistreatment, and an overall deterioration of physical and mental wellness for incarcerated people while obfuscating institutional harms. This paper draws on abolitionist and carceral geography frameworks to change the scale of risk analysis by assessing the harms institutions pose to individuals rather than presuming individuals are risky. This paper argues for an abolition of individualized risk assessment in the criminal punishment system. We make our critique of individualized risk assessment through attending to the in-prison experience and the careful navigation by people who are incarcerated. To make this case, the paper counters the notion of risky individuals with an analysis of harmful institutions. In so doing, we quantify the differences between institutions and attend to the risks of the in-prison experience for people who are incarcerated using Pennsylvania as a site of study. This analysis of prisons as purveyors of harm combines an analysis of quantitative data from the Pennsylvania

Department of Correction (PADOC) with accounts of formerly incarcerated people. This paper establishes that the analytic site of harm is the prisons through an attention to the landscape of harms embedded in the experience of incarceration.

KEYWORDS: Carceral geography, abolition geography, criminal punishment system, algorithms, risk assessment

Where the Plantation Lingers: Literature, Memory, and the Undercommons in Higher Education

Calissa Brown

ABSTRACT: This project offers a theoretically grounded literature review that interrogates the plantation university as a persistent spatial and epistemic formation. Drawing on Black studies, critical geography, feminist theory, and hauntological scholarship, the review synthesizes how writers and theorists conceptualize higher education institutions as inheritors and reproducers of plantation logics—logics that structure racialized space, labor, and the regulation of intellectual life. Within memoir, narrative theory, and literary criticism, Black women’s writing emerges as a primary analytic site through which the quotidian operations of institutional whiteness and racial-gendered violence are rendered legible. The reviewed literature further conceptualizes the university as a haunted geography, wherein the afterlives of slavery materialize in practices of surveillance, enclosure, and epistemic extraction. Additionally, scholarship linking enslaved rebellions to contemporary campus protests elucidates an insurgent spatial praxis that unsettles the university’s self-presentation as a neutral or progressive institution. Mobilizing frameworks such as Black feminist hauntology, Black restorative cartography, and undercommon pedagogy, the project positions literature as a methodological intervention—one capable of mapping the recursive operations of plantation power while foregrounding forms of collective knowledge production that operate against hierarchical academic norms and gesture toward abolitionist futures for higher education. **KEYWORDS:** Plantation, Higher Education, Black Geographies, Hauntology, and Refusal

Paradoxical Infrastructures of Crisis and Possibility: The Role of Place-Based Public Schools in Sustaining Communities during COVID-19

Melissa R. Gilbert and Sarah Heck

ABSTRACT: When U.S. public schools closed in March 2020 to slow the spread of COVID-19, the shutdowns triggered cascading crises in food security, childcare, digital access, and household wellbeing. While often framed as an educational disruption, the pandemic revealed the broader role of schools in sustaining communities during crisis. This presentation draws on 18 semi-structured interviews with district leaders across six suburban districts in the Northeastern U.S. to examine how schools functioned as critical social infrastructure in the immediate aftermath of school closures. We show how districts rapidly mobilized physical assets, institutional networks, and relational trust provide students and families with coping skills to navigate the crisis. These improvisations demonstrate schools’ infrastructural capacities as both material and relational, extending well beyond their formal educational mandates. At the same time, the strategies that enabled schools to buffer community hardship unfolded under conditions of entrenched inequality, chronic underfunding, racialized housing and health disparities, and the embodied labor of staff. This paradox reveals schools as simultaneously indispensable infrastructures of care and sites where structural vulnerabilities are reproduced and responsibility for public welfare is increasingly devolved exposing the limits of local adaptation. Drawing on intersectional feminist theories of infrastructure and care (e.g. McFadden 2025; Drake Rodriguez 2025), we theorize schools as paradoxical infrastructures of crisis and possibility and argue that schools’ pandemic responses exemplify the uneven geographies of social-ecological crises while also offering spaces of possibility for reimagining more equitable and resilient futures. **KEYWORDS:** Intersectional Feminist Theory; Infrastructures of Care; Public Schools, COVID-19

Session 2.C Contested Boundaries and Violent Environments

The Spatial Politics of Trash on the Curb in Philadelphia

Kelly Haggerty

This research investigates the spatial politics of the curb through the analysis of sidewalk trash and waste management in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I argue that the curb is not a mundane space, but a liminal and contested vital urban infrastructure that hosts the political and social relationships between various public and private users. Using the theoretical frameworks of discard studies and actor-network theory, this research brings the curb into the discourse as a place that exposes power hierarchies between municipalities, private companies, residents, and the public. Focusing on two contextual moments: Philadelphia’s historical development of waste management and the Summer 2025 garbage strike, this research draws on discourse analysis and empirical observation to trace the precarious political and affective life of curbside trash. This research suggests that Philadelphia’s municipal

government is not held to the same constraining policies and punishments that residents are held to on the curb, and that is made visible when residential trash piles up and is often left derelict on the curb. These results indicate that the curb makes the spatial politics/injustices of urban waste visible. As part of an ongoing doctoral project, additional research on curbside waste brings necessary attention to an under-considered space at the intersection of discard studies and geography. **KEYWORDS:** Discard Studies, Philadelphia, urban geography, the curb

Respatializing Toxic Harm: the case against sacrifice zones

Caitlin Joseph

ABSTRACT: In a quest to describe the lands and bodies subject to disproportionate toxic exposures under industrial capitalism, critical geographers often rely on spatial metaphors, such as the 'sacrifice zone,' that mark out such areas as uniquely burdened. While evocative in its articulation of the structural determinants behind variegated environmental outcomes, particularly for under-resourced and marginalized communities seeking redress, the spatial containment implied by zonal language is routinely undermined by the ubiquity and fluidity of modern toxicants like PFAS. Using case studies drawn from the history of American nuclearism, this paper explores an alternative heuristic for describing the spatial distribution of environmental harms anchored in the language and politics of disablement and disability justice. A recent, but growing, literature on disablement as a relationally emergent interaction between diverse embodiments, structures of power, and the materiality of toxicants, has the potential to reorient critical discourse from 'zones' of disproportionate pollution to geographies of ecological interconnection through which toxicity flows, seeps, spills, and gathers. **KEYWORDS:** sacrifice, zone, disability, nuclearism, toxicity

Liquid Swords: Crisis Ecologies of the Gulf War

Philippe Atallah

ABSTRACT: Through the 1980s and 1990s, the Iraqi state engaged in near-constant conflict internally, with its neighbors, and with the United States-led Coalition Forces. Violence perpetrated during the Iran-Iraq War, the First Gulf War, and the Iraqi dissident uprising of 1991 greatly affected the environment of Iraq and the surrounding region. This paper will explore why the Iraqi government pursued policies of ecocide, namely the draining of the southern Iraqi marshes through the construction of canals and dams and the weaponization of oil over the course of the occupation of Kuwait. These acts of environmental destruction had long-term consequences that extended past the end of the Gulf War and beyond the war's geographic location. By comparing the effects of these events, this paper will analyze the particularities of each case and examine the ways in which the environmental violence of the Gulf War has affected human and natural environments. These events, while both perpetrated by the Ba'athist Iraqi government, illuminate the circumstances in which states will engage in ecocide through warfare and the construction of violent infrastructure. **KEYWORDS:** Ecocide; fossil fuels; war geography

Borderline Justice on Trial: Fugitive Dust and the Litigation of a Healthy Environment in Jamaica's Bauxite Conflict

Marie Widengård

ABSTRACT: This article examines fugitive dust in a Jamaican bauxite mining dispute, focusing on how dust unsettles the line between authorized extraction and a healthy environment. Permits and buffer rules try to keep mining and its harms "in place" by defining where impacts may occur and what counts as acceptable. Fugitive dust disrupts this spatial order as it drifts into homes, rainwater catchments, gardens, and bodies. Drawing on observation of an ongoing human rights trial at the Jamaican Supreme Court, the article traces how dust becomes central to disputes over contaminated water, failing crops, and respiratory illness. In court, expert testimony and cross-examination turn dust into a problem of proof: where harm is located, how it travels, and whose accounts are treated as reliable. Using border as method, the article argues that litigation can be seen as a world-making arena where the meanings of "healthy environment," "safe space," and "credible harm" are articulated, tested, and potentially expanded. **KEYWORDS:** fugitive dust; borderline justice; right to a healthy environment; environmental litigation; bauxite mining

Session 3.A. Contested Urban Spaces

Staying within the Ts: Racialized boundary and language production processes among Temple University students and the white supremacist geographies of urban university place-making

Jared Saef

ABSTRACT: “Staying within the Ts” is a geo-ethnography investigating the use of racialized boundary production language—such as “I never go north of Diamond Street,” among a sample of undergraduate Temple University students in reference to their engagement with the majority-Black neighborhood surrounding their campus in North Philadelphia. I sought to understand the specific linguistic-spatial methods by which students delineate borders (streets, symbols, etc.) and the linkages between the production of these borders and university policing structures and past/present movements of dispossession (urban renewal, gentrification). In conducting this work, I carried out 20+ recorded interviews and spatial mapping activities with students whose transcripts I subsequently analyzed in NVivo, later contextualizing this language within an analytical framework based on foundational theories of Black and LatinX Geographies. Overall, I demonstrated that although students utilized a variety of methods to demarcate boundaries, those which they marked remained largely coextensive with Temple police patrol boundaries, themselves largely informed by histories of university-driven displacement of Black residents. I concluded that students’ usage of these boundaries both reflect and perpetuate structures of racialized surveillance, dispossession, and capital extraction that actively uproot North Philadelphia’s Black communities via the reification of borders predicated on structures of systemic violence. **KEYWORDS:** Black Geographies, Racial Capitalism, Racialized Geographies, Ethnography, Raciolinguistics

Resisting the Border Regime: Local Visions of Abolition and Belonging in Philadelphia

Melissa Tolosa

ABSTRACT: The criminalization of immigrant groups who cross the U.S.-Mexico border continues to be a political issue in the U.S. Immigrant groups are currently struggling to find where they belong in their communities without the fear of being detained and deported. As immigration policies become more extreme in their regime on criminalizing the undocumented, what would abolition look like for the immigration justice system? This research will focus on what abolition looks like for the future of immigration justice, in the hopes that those who are seeking asylum are welcomed with an open heart instead of being placed in cages when they arrive to the U.S. It aims to better understand what abolition might look like when a nation is free of discrimination so those who are undocumented have a better sense of safety when migrating to Philadelphia, PA. Through archival data and interviews, local organizers are discussing ways of destroying a system to better assist those who are coming to sanctuary cities. They share their ideas of abolition for the immigration “justice” system. They are fighting back against a white supremacy system by speaking on the subject at interviews, and community gatherings and meetings they set up online. Through the lens of feminist geopolitics and Latine geographies, there can be a better understanding how abolition operates and to help illuminate how abolitionists resist not only the physical borders that divide nations but also the legal and social structures that govern who is deemed “worthy” of belonging, citizenship, and safety.

Making the Home, Planning the Town: Exploring Spatial Imagination in Residential Nairobi

Pendo Kamau

ABSTRACT: The spatial imaginary of Nairobi, its bordering towns, and its many neighborhoods is taken up by a number of stakeholders, from community groups to foreign corporations. However, with Nairobi’s co-occurring housing crisis and housing boom and the many vested entities attempting to actualize how the city should function, not all visions are recognized equally. In the planning, execution and marketing of housing developments, various narratives of ‘formality’ can be identified, particularly in how they exemplify themselves in contrast to other residential spaces that, in being deemed ‘informal’, are seen as existing without spatial imagination. In this paper, I analyze advertising materials for apartment complexes in Nairobi County, focusing on marketing language and imagery, to demonstrate how these imagined and real hierarchies reify and contradict popular ideas around spatial imagination and formality. Demonstrating that spatial imagination is employed by the full gamut of actors engaging with space and housing is central in creating more equitable and critical public engagement for those in pursuit of a more livable metropolis for all of Nairobi’s inhabitants. **KEYWORDS:** Nairobi, spatial imagination, neo-colonialism, formality, advertising

Community Perceptions of GSI in Northeast Wilmington, DE

Emily Rodden

ABSTRACT: In Wilmington, Delaware, climate change–driven increases in precipitation and sea level rise are straining the city’s aging combined sewer and stormwater systems. Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) offers a sustainable adaptation strategy to mitigate flooding, improve water quality, and enhance community resilience; however, if equitably implemented, GSI can be implemented to support environmental justice. This research focuses on Northeast Wilmington, a community severely impacted by fluvial flooding during Hurricane Ida in 2021. The

study focuses on community perspectives to identify GSI types and locations that align with both physical conditions and resident priorities. Using community-engaged methods—including twenty-six semi-structured interviews, seventy-four surveys, and three participatory mapping events within the NE community—the project examines local experiences with flooding, perceptions of GSI, and barriers to adoption and maintenance. Results highlight frequent flooding along key corridors such as the 11th Street Bridge, Market Street, and E. 12th Street, and emphasize residents' preferences for practical, attractive, and well-maintained GSI such as rain barrels, tree trenches, and sidewalk planters. Participants underscored the need for equitable investment, consistent maintenance, and inclusion in planning processes. Findings inform resilience planning by identifying community-supported sites for GSI, contributing to broader understanding of how participatory, place-based approaches advance equitable climate adaptation. **KEYWORDS:** Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Community Engaged Research

The Glittery Door: Geographies of Aspiration, Finance, and Housing Hustles in Contested Urban Spaces

Sarah Klosterkamp

ABSTRACT: This paper explores how urban space is shaped by aspiration, speculative finance, and the promise of upward mobility. Focusing on contemporary housing markets and the everyday cultures of property investment, *The Glittery Door* examines how dreams of ownership, wealth creation, and class mobility are produced, circulated, and contested in the city. Drawing on ethnographic research in sites of rapid urban transformation, the paper traces how financial imaginaries become spatial practices, revealing the tensions between promise and precarity in contested urban spaces.

Session 3.B. Technoscience, Knowledge, and the Limits of Knowing Landscapes

Pixels and Frictions: Risk, Datafication, and Explosive Remnants in Post-Yugoslav Space

Ruth Trumble

ABSTRACT: Through the labor of humanitarian demining, this paper examines how digital technologies reshape the governance of “empty” landscapes in post-Yugoslav space, with a focus on Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Kosovo. The removal of unexploded ordnance (UXO), such as landmines, is increasingly oriented toward remote sensing techniques, including satellite imagery, UAV-mounted sensors, and machine-learning classification. Yet these systems generate frictions as they intersect with uneven political, embodied, and ecological geographies. UXO persist as material residues of conflict from the 1990s that are embedded within dynamic processes shaped by vegetation growth, soil conditions, erosion, land use, and climate variability over decades. Datafication promises to translate these shifting terrains into standardized risk categories that organize land release, funding priorities, and institutional decision-making. Despite the promise of digital detection, deminers' embodied expertise remains essential for navigating uncertain terrain. Drawing on preliminary fieldwork with deminers and policy actors, alongside document analysis of demining initiatives, the paper explores how the attempted datafication of landscapes for the purposes of humanitarian demining reconfigures environmental governance by privileging the forms of knowing that can be rendered legible through pixels. **KEYWORDS:** post-conflict, humanitarian demining, embodiment, remote sensing, datafication

Ant-Fungus Gardens: Technoenvironmental Racialization in Panamanian Bioprospecting Experiments

Alberto Morales

ABSTRACT: Insect ecologies and multispecies relations, like in Ant-Fungus gardens, have now come to occupy the technoscientific imagination of natural products researchers or bioprospecting scientists looking for “entities of biological interests” that may serve salutary purposes for humans. Natural products scientists in Panama deploy microbial and ecological understandings of Ant-Fungus gardens to isolate biochemicals, with the aim of one day offering interventions for diseases and the growing ailments of late industrialism locally and globally. In this technoenvironmental arrangement, Ant-fungus gardens are nested and entangled with other life forms and forms of life, including racial histories and various biomedical articulations such as tropical medicine, public health, and global health disparities produced by layers of colonial rule, U.S. government involvement in shaping hemispheric political economies, and imaginaries of development and their uneven outcomes. By closely examining the scientists' work “along with the ants” and the biomedical histories of place they are entangled in, I explore concerns with global health through ecological and multispecies relations to raise questions of difference, specifically persistent racial hierarchies in scientific knowledge production. In a world with increasing health disparities, it matters who makes biomedicine, who produces scientific knowledge, and for whom. It matters who is included in the creation and shaping of emerging global and planetary health imaginaries.

Prediction to Responsibility: Explainable GeoAI and New Build Gentrification

Isaac Quaye

ABSTRACT: In the streets and rowhouses of Philadelphia, gentrification is often felt before it is formally recognized. Boxy modern design, bump-out windows, mixed building materials and sidewalks are remade, and everyday routines are quietly disrupted. Increasingly, these transformations are identified by computer vision systems trained to “see” urban change from street-level imagery. Yet for people living through these shifts, model outputs alone carry little meaning. What matters is not only what the model detects, but how explanations are produced, and who is invited into that process. This work treats GeoAI explainability not as a technical add-on, but as a grounded experiment in lived realities. Working with street-view images, spatial analysis, and interpretable deep learning models, we examine how different ways of training and tuning models shape the visual cues they attend to. Rather than optimizing prediction alone, we ask how models come to recognize new-build gentrification through features that resonate with community understandings of change in the built environment. This work-in-progress advances a new framework for GeoAI explainability grounded in three relational dimensions: the model, domain experts, and community knowledge. This framework approaches explainability as a situated, collective practice. Explainability becomes a reparative, world-making intervention that surfaces the power embedded in machine vision while opening space for alternative urban knowledge. By redistributing who gets to explain algorithmic decisions, the project asks how GeoAI might support more accountable, ethical, and collectively meaningful ways of seeing and governing urban change. **KEYWORDS:** Explainable GeoAI; Gentrification; Community Knowledge; Critical Urban Geography; Grounded Experiments in Method

Grounded Experiments in Urban Political Ecology: Native Bees, Disinvestment, and Method Across Epistemologies

Austin Martin

ABSTRACT: This paper advances a grounded experiment in method that brings urban political ecology, field ecology, and critical human geography into sustained dialogue through the study of native bees in disinvested urban landscapes. Drawing on comparative research in Philadelphia and Montreal, it examines how spontaneous vegetation and unmanaged spaces (often dismissed as ecological “noise”) become legible only through methodological approaches across epistemologies. Rather than treating biodiversity data, social context, and urban history as separable analytical domains, this paper experiments with a relational method that situates native bee assemblages within processes of abandonment, uneven investment, and capital flows. This approach blends standardized ecological sampling with historically and politically situated interpretations of land use, vacancy, and governance, keeping critical inquiry responsive to both non-human agency and structural constraint. By foregrounding weeds, pollinators, and disinvested spaces as sites of methodological insight, this paper argues that critical geography beyond critique requires methods that can translate between quantitative ecological evidence, critical geography, and place-based knowledge. In doing so, it offers a generative model for interdisciplinary research that keeps critical work grounded and open to unexpected forms of urban life. **KEYWORDS:** Urban political ecology; native bees; disinvestment; methodological pluralism; relational urbanism

Session 3.C. Extraction, Finance, and Capitalist Contradiction

Gendered household dispossession and capitalist theft: A feminist political ecology analysis of the oil industry in Ghana

Florence Antwi

ABSTRACT: Scholarship focused on critical resource extraction attends to the study of resources and how they shape socio-environmental processes. As critical feminist scholars have demonstrated, a focus on extractivism illustrates the logics of socio-economic systems that extend beyond the moment of mineral extraction. Extractive logics are not only capitalist but also embodied. Building through feminist political ecology to develop an analysis of gendered responses to livelihood shifts in response to the oil industry in Ghana, we demonstrate how oil extraction produces uneven and cascading forms of dispossession across land, sea, and household. We argue that these cascading forms of dispossession in coastal communities have specific impacts at the scale of the household, depleting women’s socially reproductive labor that makes life in coastal communities possible. Drawing on discourse analysis of news articles, ethnographic evidence from community stakeholder meetings, and participant observation and interviews, we show how capitalist theft is facilitated through the exploitation of women’s socially reproductive labor, where oil extraction leads to the depletion of households’ capacities for social reproduction.

Socially reproductive labor is not simply expropriated but is also depleted as household reproduction becomes increasingly unsustainable in the midst of expanding extraction. **KEYWORDS:** feminist political ecology, extractivism, household, dispossession, social reproduction

Accumulation by Development

Md Borhan Uddin

ABSTRACT: Accumulation by development conceptualizes development as a vehicle for resource accumulation. Drawing on Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession and Thomas's accumulation by adaptation, we contend that development initiatives facilitate accumulation that contradicts and undermines their objectives of alleviating poverty and sustainable development. Departing from political economy of development approaches that treat state- and NGO-led development as separate spheres, we analyze them co-constitutively as operating within the same accumulation logic. However, through a decade of immersive professional practice within the development ecosystem and ethnographic procedures, we identify four key modalities through which development is configured towards accumulation: (1) manufactured demand for development; (2) accumulation by dispossession and exploitation; (3) inflation of project costs; and (4) exaggeration or fabrication of development outcomes. As the adoption of neoliberal policies has weakened state institutions, NGOs have assumed greater importance in development programming. Thus, we extend our analysis to consider how NGOs, in particular, have become subordinated to the logics of accumulation, with accumulation by development functioning as an underlying strategy for their survival and expansion—even among those designated as “not-for-profit.” This paper complicates neoliberal development debates by foregrounding the tension between development and extraction, demonstrating how this tension undermines the sustainability and effectiveness of development efforts. **KEYWORDS:** Development, Accumulation, NGOs, Government

Channeling biodiversity credits into agricultural landscapes: A reparative roadmap using the Brazilian coffees supply chain as a case study.

Diana Swidler

ABSTRACT: Market-based conservation mechanisms have drawn justified scrutiny for commodifying nature, disregarding communities, and failed to deliver promised ecological outcomes. This paper begins precisely from that critique, and dives deeper into how designing generative alternatives when ecological degradation is accelerating and public funding for biodiversity conservation and restoration remains insufficient. I present a roadmap for channeling biodiversity credits into agricultural farms, offering a replicable framework across global commodity supply chains. This framework has three main phases: spatial prioritization through multi-criteria GIS analysis, participatory design and co-creation with local stakeholder-driven governance, and implementation with adaptive monitoring. To demonstrate its applicability, I explain a case study with coffee supply chains in Brazil's Atlantic Forest, one of the world's most biodiverse biomes and also most degraded. I argue that the roadmap's integrity rests not on market logic alone, but on governance, equitable benefit-sharing, and community co-production of ecological knowledge. Biodiversity credits are presented not as a technocratic fix, but as potential reparative market instrument, whose transformative capacity depends on power sharing within the supply chain. **KEYWORDS:** Biodiversity credits, agricultural supply chains, nature-based finance, participatory governance, Atlantic Forest

On the Verge of Elsewhere: Crises, Contradictions and Shifting Modes of Geographic Critique

Kevon Rhiney

ABSTRACT: The ongoing climate catastrophe is rife with contradictions. Despite significant advancements in climate science and decades of international climate negotiations, global warming has accelerated, with the last 11 years being the warmest in recorded history. Likewise, we have seen the increased financialization of material nature through carbon offset schemes alongside increasing rates of biodiversity loss, species extinction and deforestation. Yet probably one of the largest contradictions of them all is the fact that the very specter of global ecosystem collapse (framed increasingly as a systemic risk) has become the basis for deploying new rounds of capital investments (e.g., blue and green economy initiatives) and ‘natural resource’ governance, increasingly targeted at countries in the global South. Instead of extracting from nature, capital is now being invested in the management of nature's decline. My talk will use these contradictions as a point of departure to explore how critical geography's attention to place, social movements, and knowledge-power dynamics, can offer unique opportunities for cultivating alternate futures that move beyond discourses of crises and extraction. Given the unprecedented nature of the challenges we face, I argue that this requires critical geographers to engage with new methodologies and modes of reasoning while anchored in a rich tradition of critique. **KEYWORDS:** Climate catastrophe; critical theory; justice theory; governance, future geographies

Session 3.D. Critical geographies of, and for, the future

Organizers: Hermione Zhou, Clark University; Kevin Grove, Florida International University

Discomfort in the Care-full Classroom

Nathan Thayer

ABSTRACT: Classrooms are not neutral educational spaces. They are brimming with power relations, politics, and are shot through with historical legacies of various intersecting processes of privilege and oppression as well as exclusion. They are also spaces fraught with complex, messy emotions felt by instructors and students alike, shaped along the contours of care and discomfort. In this piece, I engage with literatures on caring and discomforting pedagogies to think through antiracist praxis in the higher education classroom. Drawing on reflective journals written by students in an antiracist geographies course, classroom observations, and self-reflective journalling done by the author, I argue that discomfort is a site of noticing in the classroom; a space from which we can learn about unconscious biases and patterns of thoughts we hold, and one which we can reimagine how to change our practices as students and educators. **KEYWORDS:** Care; Discomfort; Antiracist; Pedagogy

Constructing the Futures: Urban Green Inequities and Environmental Justice Narratives in Post-COVID U.S. News Media

Nasibul Hoque

ABSTRACT: Critical geography has traditionally relied on historiographic analysis of current socio-spatial issues and inequalities. However, this approach can limit analysis of how the future is engaged as an object of inquiry (Cox, 2024) and the ways futures are imagined, contested, and actively shaped. This paper investigates how U.S. mainstream news media discursively construct and (re)produce urban climate futures in the post-COVID period (2021-2025). It focuses on media narratives related to environmental justice, urban heat, pollution, green spaces, and climate resilience. Using insights from critical human geography, the study examines how media representations draw on historical contexts, especially redlining, segregation, disinvestment, and zoning, to explain ongoing climate inequalities, while also limiting the scope of future. The paper employs qualitative thematic analysis with open and focused codes of 44 U.S. national and local news media outlets, showing that news increasingly recognizes structural environmental injustice. However, they often depict future responses through technocratic and managerial strategies like tree planting, cool roofs, and climate-resilient infrastructure. This paper situates media discourse as a space for shaping the future, thereby creating scope for discussing the critical geographies of the future. It suggests that climate narratives may (re)produce existing socio-spatial inequalities unless geographers actively engage in addressing these issues through future practices that prioritize justice, agency, and collective imaginaries. **KEYWORDS:** Environmental Justice, Urban Climate Inequality, Media Narratives, Critical Human Geography, Post-COVID Urban Futures

Refusing to refuse resilience: destituent geographies, abolition ecologies, critical design, and re-futuring interdisciplinary research

Kevin Grove

ABSTRACT: Since the 2000s, interdisciplinary initiatives such as solutions-oriented science, convergence science, transition design, and resilience-driven design promise to transform the production and use of scientific knowledge to solve wicked problems and grand challenges such as climate change adaptation, energy transitions, and coastal and urban resilience. However, these movements' underlying cybernetic ethos instills a depoliticizing and defuturing instrumentalism. In this paper, I work across critical design, abolition ecologies and destituent geographies to explore the possibilities for problem-finding rather than problem-solving science. These initiatives render environmental science, design practice, and community engagement inoperative: a refusal to instrumentally apply scientific knowledge to pre-determined problems of state-based coastal and urban resilience initiatives that reinforce rather than challenge the political ecological status quo. These refusals are not, however, nihilist rejections of action in the face of catastrophic social and environmental disruption. Rather, they exemplify a "refusal to refuse" resilience, a destituent move that radically opens the potential ways the tools and techniques of resilience initiatives may be repurposed. This refusal to refuse, and the inoperativity it generates, offers a provocative lesson on the potential for work in critical geography, critical design, and allied fields to envision and enact problem-finding practices in the Anthropocene. **KEYWORDS:** resilience, design, critique, problem-finding, destituent power

Abolition and the everyday life of Sacramento's carceral housing crisis

Mia Karisa Dawson

ABSTRACT: The movement for abolition has articulated a rejection of policing and prisons as an organizing principle towards a complete dismantling of racial capitalism. In this paper, I argue that a focus on housing develops and advances this broader goal of the movement. Through ethnographic work in Sacramento with those most impacted by policing, incarceration, and housing precarity, I argue that a widely acknowledged housing crisis can be more aptly named a carceral housing crisis, in which the punishing and destabilizing functions of policing and incarceration participate centrally. In describing the everyday life of the crisis, I document close encounters between a carceral system of jails, police, courts, and probation offices with a housing system defined by predatory capitalism, precarity, and distracting state interventions. I then engage with organizing projects to end housing precarity and incarceration in Sacramento in conversation with abolitionist and anarchist theories of housing. I conclude by arguing for abolitionist housing practices that reject private ownership, tenancy, and social atomization in favor of occupant control, self-government, and mutual aid. **KEYWORDS:** Abolition; housing; policing; incarceration; self-governance

Assembling Alternative Climate Futures: insights from research work in the U.S. Caribbean

Bárbara López-González

ABSTRACT: What can collaborations with community-led initiatives tell us about research practice and future-making? This question emerges from work with Caribbean island communities highly exposed to climate change due to natural hazards, colonial legacies, and development pathways that (re)produce vulnerability. In the face of these experiences, community organizations are actively crafting strategies, developing mutual aid networks, and advancing local visions of sustainability. Through these practices, they produce diverse forms of expertise that complicate dominant policy models and expand what counts as climate knowledge. This paper argues that such future-oriented actions demand that researchers rethink how they engage with communities. Rather than treating the future as predetermined or determined by others, collaborations require approaches that acknowledge that multiple futures are actively and collectively assembled and held open as ongoing possibilities. Drawing on qualitative and participatory research with community organizations in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the paper reflects on service-learning and participatory methods as two attempts to adapt research accordingly. In doing so, it states that, when used critically, these approaches can reorient research toward relational and supportive roles in which researchers act as translators and facilitators within a broader constellation of knowledge. By foregrounding insights from community-engaged work and bringing into conversation the experiences of both places, the paper contributes to debates on decolonial and abolitionist futures and future-making in times of 'wicked problems,' such as climate change. It also suggests pathways for working with, rather than about, communities as they assemble alternative climate futures. **KEYWORDS:** Future; Community-led Initiatives; Climate Change; Puerto Rico; U.S. Virgin Islands

Concurrent Sessions 4 - Alternate Format

4.A. Theorizing the Materiality of Biology [Fishbowl Roundtable]

Moderator: Tyler Munn

Participants: Allison Hayes-Conroy, Halie Kampman, Heidi Hausermann, Rob Kulathinal, Randy Hong, Matthew Kucmanic

DESCRIPTION: A fishbowl roundtable is an open, participatory discussion where everyone is welcome to join in, with a small group of invited participants there to help seed and gently guide a conversation that is meaningful for all. Together, we will explore the tendency to treat biology as prior to, or separable from, the relations through which it is constituted. If we take seriously the inseparability of matter and meaning, or biology and lived experience, how might the materiality of life, including bodies, cells, genes, and ecologies, be understood differently? How do we specify the relational material emergence of biological life in a way that makes sense both to biology as a discipline and critical geography and other fields that critically attend to lived experience?

4.B. Rationing Life: Criminalization of care in U.S. housing policy [Panel]

Organizer and Moderator: Sterling Johnson

DESCRIPTION: In 2024, the Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services came under investigation by the Office of the Inspector General after reports revealed that the agency had [overspent its budget](#) by approximately \$15 million while attempting to sustain life-saving services amid compounding crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the Housing crisis. The Philadelphia case is not an exception, but a window into the broader contradictions of care under the U.S. homelessness response system. This panel brings together Philadelphia-based harm reduction

organizers, housing justice advocates, and frontline providers to examine the barriers and contradictions of delivering care through the U.S. homelessness response system. The focus will be on U.S.-based approaches "coordinated entry" and "managed care" implemented to ration care through urban centers. Panelists will share the current positive and negative aspects of these algorithm-based care. Particular attention will be paid to HOW these bureaucratic and algorithmic systems determine who is approved or denied access to life-sustaining support as well as ways that organizations have pushed the system to meet the needs of the population that it claims to serve.

4.C. Body-territory Mapping: Practicing Embodiment as a Way of Knowing [Hands-On Session]

Organizer and Moderator: Katy Dix

DESCRIPTION: Body territory mapping (*Mapeo Cuerpo Territorio*) is an embodied feminist praxis generated by activists and scholars from the global south. It is often used in the context of territorial defense against colonialism and extractivism, and for understanding and mapping social and environmental threats and sites of resistance and resilience. Body-territory mapping invites us to connect to the body as the first territory that we inhabit and protect. We will explore how we connect to our territories through our bodies and how our bodies themselves can be understood not only as a "part" of the territory, but as the territory itself. This is a participatory workshop where we will collectively decide whether to generate individual or collective body-territory maps. We will start with an embodiment exercise and then proceed to map our body-territories and how they are affected by the social and environmental phenomena we are presently facing, as well as mapping sites of resistance and resilience. Through this process of connection, we will cross-pollinate across our unique and shared experiences to generate collective insights about how to navigate our current landscape.

Concurrent Sessions 5 - Alternate Format

5.A. Practicing Cross Epistemological Scholarship [Fishbowl Roundtable]

Moderator: Carly Nichols

Participants: Darius Scott, Heidi Hausermann, Tyler Munn, Jessica Hayes-Conroy, Bronwen Powell, Marie Widengård, Jorge Soldevila, Natalia Martini

DESCRIPTION: A fishbowl roundtable is an open, participatory discussion where everyone is welcome to join in, with a small group of invited participants there to help seed and gently guide a conversation that is meaningful for all. Building on the previous fishbowl roundtable, but open to all, this session shifts from theory to practice, asking what it looks like to do cross-epistemological work in the world. What challenges, tensions, and institutional barriers arise in trying to work across ways of knowing? How might geography support moves beyond "mix-and-stir" interdisciplinarity? What would it mean for geography to take seriously the stakes of relational, expansive thinking for knowledge production and work beyond the discipline?

5.B. Between Carceral & Therapeutic Space: Political Ecology of the Body in Urban Homeless Governance [Roundtable]

Organizer and Moderator: Sterling Johnson

DESCRIPTION: This roundtable brings together academics, organizers, and community members to explore the contested line between care and control in housing and homelessness urban governance responses. The discussion asks when spaces designed as "therapeutic" become sites of carcerality, surveillance, discipline, and coercion, and who has the power to define what healing looks like. Participants will reflect on shelters, encampments, treatment settings, recovery housing, permanent supportive housing and other homeless service programs as spaces where autonomy and self-determination are constant negotiations. Centering lived experience and the [political ecology of the body](#), the roundtable will provide prompts that read the "the Body" into the material, emotional and discursive conditions that can make space feel therapeutic, carceral, or both. Audience members will be encouraged to participate and offer their viewpoints as well.

5.C. Practicing Pedagogies: A Participatory Convening [Roundtable]

Organizer and Moderator: Serin Houston

DESCRIPTION: Please join this participatory convening to collectively engage with pedagogy and generative co-learning. Through a mix of experiential activities and collaborative discussions, this session offers an interactive practice ground for situated solidarity and pedagogical possibilities that affirm multiple forms of knowledge production and meaning making. I look forward to gathering, practicing, and dreaming together!

Plenary Panel: Confronting this Political Moment as Critical Geographers

Organizers: Kimberley Thomas, Melissa Gilbert, Sterling Johnson

Moderator: Melissa Gilbert

Panelists: Helga Leitner, Eric Sheppard, Caroline Faria, Kevin Grove, Darius Scott

DESCRIPTION: We invite reflections on the roles of critical geographers in facing the conditions we are living in: attacks on science, state-sanctioned terrorism (e.g. ICE), environmental deregulation, the rapid amassing of technologies capable of monitoring and controlling life, and the erosion of democratic deliberation, to name just a few. How might we meet this political moment intellectually, politically, pedagogically, creatively, or otherwise? Reception to follow!

Sunday Activities

Theatrical Vocabularies as Research Tools – *please register in advance*

Organizers: Caroline Heins (they/them) and Tyler Munn

This interactive theatre workshop introduces theatrical vocabularies—movement, spatial relationships, light, sound, text, and costume—as tools for engaging research in embodied and affective ways. Participants will be invited to explore their own research materials through movement, improvisation, and collaborative experimentation, opening new ways of sensing, interpreting, and presenting empirical work. The session will include a gentle physical warm-up, followed by guided activities that involve working with text, objects, and performance. Participants are encouraged to approach the workshop with curiosity and a willingness to experiment. No prior theatre experience is needed. See participant instructions here: <https://sites.temple.edu/bheandcg2026/sunday/>

North Philadelphia Urban Walk – *please register in advance*

Organizers: Sterling Johnson and Kelly Haggerty

Join a graduate student-led urban walk through North Philadelphia exploring how communities shape, defend, and reimagine neighborhood open spaces. Over the course of a two-hour, approximately three-mile walk, participants will visit sites including Live Do Grow Farm (Urban Creators), Norris Square and Las Parcelas (Xiente), Open Kitchen Sculpture Garden, and César Iglesias Garden—a guerrilla garden rooted in Indigenous and Latino community organizing. Along the route, we will consider how different forms of stewardship, activism, and city governance intersect, revealing the tensions and possibilities that define urban open space. Please wear comfortable clothing and walking shoes and bring water; the route includes uneven sidewalks and neighborhood streets. We look forward to exploring North Philadelphia together. See participant instructions here:

<https://sites.temple.edu/bheandcg2026/sunday/>

Co-thinking, Co-writing Retreat Space – *please register in advance / Boxed lunch included*

Organizers: Allison Hayes-Conroy and Carly Nichols

This retreat space is an invitation to stay with the ideas that moved you across the weekend, perhaps ideas or arguments that kept coming up or connections or questions you are still grappling with. We'll begin with a short collective brainstorming exercise using the sticky notes distributed at check-in: each person is invited to bring one or two ideas from each or any of their sessions that feel particularly alive or exciting, and together we'll see what patterns have been gathering across rooms and conversations. From there, we'll use these emergent threads as a point of departure for collective thinking about a shared project: how do we write together across the lines that usually separate critical geography from bodies/health/environment scholarship? What would it mean to make the case that health and embodiment are not a subfield but a through-line across all of human geography? This will be a fun, informal drafting space. Come with your ideas, your work-in-progress, or simply your presence.