

Occasional Talk

with

Lindsay Smith

Friday, January 26, 2018

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Tempe campus - Memorial Union Mohave #236

Lunch will be served.

The Dead, the Living, and the Disappeared: necro-logics and forensic DNA as governance in the Mexican borderlands.

In the contemporary Mexican migration crisis, an estimated 90,000 people have disappeared crossing Mexico since 2006 and thousands of others have died in the borderlands of the United States. The estimated 300,000 migrants who cross Mexico annually continue to suffer extreme brutality, violence, and economic exploitation. In the midst of this legal indeterminacy, human rights groups, governments, family activists, and anti-immigrant groups have all coalesced around the call for DNA technologies and databases as a techno-legal solution to the crisis. In this talk, I examine the linking of DNA technologies with social order, paying particular attention to the politics surrounding the naming, identification, and invocation of the dead. Drawing on over four years of ethnographic fieldwork in post-conflict settings in Latin America with survivors, family members, and forensic scientists, I developed the concept of necrological citizenship to account for the ways in which the dead and their biological resources, interpreted and disciplined by scientific practice, have emerged as sites of new forms of governance.

Please RSVP here: goo.gl/zvDmfv

Dr. Lindsay Smith is an Assistant Professor at The University of New Mexico. After earning her PhD in medical anthropology at Harvard University, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the UCLA Center for Society and Genetics and a Fellow in Science and Human Culture at Northwestern University. Her research and teaching interests lie at the intersection of justice, mental health, and scientific innovation. Her book manuscript, *Subversive Genes: Making human rights and DNA in Argentina*, examines the impact of the invention of forensic genetics on the constitution of family, justice, and democracy in post-dictatorship Argentina. As an engaged anthropologist and ethnographic filmmaker, Lindsay has made films and published in collaboration with human rights groups, including the documentary *Aparición con Vida*, detailing the use of DNA in the search for children kidnapped during the Argentine Dirty War. In her current work, Dr. Smith focuses on migration from Central America to the United States and the use of new technological innovations in the Mexican borderlands by activist groups to mitigate migration-related violence.

