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SEMINAR SERIES

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM & PEDAGOGY



28 OCT

SCARFE 1214
12:30-2:00

Light refreshments will be served at noon
Lecture will commence at 12:30 pm

(Un)Learning Anthropocentrism: An Ecocritical Framework for Teaching to Resist Human-Supremacy in Curriculum and Pedagogy

Assistant Professor, **John Lupinacci**, Washington State University

In this talk, I will call attention to—and critically question—the epoch now referred to as the Anthropocene in relationship to Western industrial assumptions rooted in the understanding of human-beings as separate from and superior to all other life-forms and the environments upon which they depend. Drawing from an ecocritical framework in education, I emphasize that because anthropocentrism is cultural rather than inherently natural, it is amenable to social change. As a scholar-activist educator, I take the position that (un)learning anthropocentrism as radical change is imperative in light of environmental degradation, climate change, and the multitude of social and ecological problems that follow as a consequence. The stakes are high and the capacity of the planet for sustaining life depends upon future generations learning to live in harmony and at peace with the diverse ecosystems within which they reside. More than a critique of anthropocentrism, I work to challenge this worldview and seek ways of engaging educators and educational researchers in doing the same. Drawing from ecocritical projects in education—including critical animal studies, anarchism, and ecofeminism—while recognizing centuries of wisdom in indigenous epistemologies, this talk shares a pedagogical process aimed at helping educators to recognize an anthropocentric worldview, to examine how this worldview is implicated in maintaining human (and male, white, able-bodied) supremacy, and to rethink anthropocentrism in favor of ecological alternatives that are socially just and encompass all living systems.

John Lupinacci is an Assistant Professor at Washington State University. He conducts research and teaches in the Cultural Studies and Social Thought in Education (CSSTE) program using an approach that advocates for the development of scholar-activist educators. His ecocritical work in education is interdisciplinary and draws from critical social theory through anarchist philosophy, critical animal studies, new materialism, and queer-ecofeminist philosophy while recognizing that many of these Western frameworks are entangled with colonial cultures and thus ought not take precedence over—or appropriate—diverse indigenous knowledges. Drawing heavily from critical conceptions of environmental education, Dr. Lupinacci's research focuses on how people—specifically educators, educational leaders, and educational researchers—learn to both identify and examine destructive habits of Western industrial human culture and how those habits are taught and learned in schools. His experiences as a high school teacher, an outdoor environmental educator, and a community activist-artist-scholar all contribute to his research, teaching, and development of interdisciplinary research projects open to the (im)possibilities of unexpected spaces with(in) education and educational research.

