

The Department of Anthropology in conjunction with the South Asia Center and Geography Presents:

MORE-THAN-HUMAN-DEMOCRACY: ON THE POLITICAL LIVES OF COWS, RIVERS, AND MOUNTAINS IN
CONTEMPORARY INDIA

February 20, 2020

4:00- 5:00 pm

204 Maxwell Hall

This talk draws on ethnographic fieldwork among gau-rakshaks (cow-protectionists) and villagers in India's Central Himalayan state of Uttarakhand to explore the possibilities and limits of more-than-human politics. This talk asks what is at stake for right-wing cow-protectionists in having the cow constitutionally reclassified as “mother” instead of “animal”. What does this particular gesture of kinship allow us to understand about the dark side of seemingly expansive political movements grounded in human kin relations with what might be called “nature”? I argue that the grounding of this more-than-human politics in majoritarian ideology not only authorizes violence against those who are deemed enemies of a nation united around the figure of the mother-cow, but also fetishizes and naturalizes feminized bovine bodies and labor in ways that end up entrenching human domination over nature.



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If you have any questions or require accommodations, please contact JoAnn L Rhoades at jlrhoade@syr.edu by 6 February, 2020.