"Clear Souls | Clear Fields": Christian Conversions and Agricultural Landscapes in Madagascar

Dr. Sarah R. Osterhoudt (Yale University)

Monday, Feb. 24
4:00 pm
Glenn Black Laboratory (423 N Fess)

A light reception will follow the lecture.

The village of Imorona, Madagascar is currently experiencing rapid rates of conversion to Christianity from ancestral worldviews. In my discussion, I examine relationships between religious conversions and agricultural meanings and practices. I illustrate how ideas of being a good farmer and being a good Christian become intertwined, as agrarian landscapes act as sources for metaphors, spaces of reflection, and places to put into practice the new moral ideals of Christian teachings. Overall, the cultivation of land and the cultivation of self are fundamentally connected, as people look towards their local landscapes to articulate new formulations of identities, moralities, and nature.