

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

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Edward J. “Ned” Taaffe Human Colloquium

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Mystical Modernity, Mapping Neoliberalism and Mexico’s “Disappeared”

Sparked by the 26 September 2014 massacre of rural students in Iguala, Mexico, protests have spread across the country as people demand the students’ return. Even with news of their deaths, the demand for their immediate return – alive – does not change. This demand echoes four decades of protest for the return of the *desparecidos*, those forced to disappear by corrupt governments. Such a declaration indicates a fight of the eternal revolutionary, a mystical figure who will stop fighting once the dead can be brought back to life. In Mexico, these protests have woven together with those against *feminicidio* (the killing of women with impunity) and against the *juvencidio* (the killing of youth with impunity) as part of the Mexican drug war funded by the United States. In this talk, I triangulate the struggles sparked by the Iguala massacre, *feminicidio* and *juvencidio* to show how they seek to generate an international and activist public engaged in related struggles across the Americas, including in northern North America, where socially-vulnerable populations battle the forces to disappear them from history and geography. Such struggles reinforce debates within geography over developing the tools of our disciplinary trade to address social justice. Especially in contexts of state terror, these fights against disappearance demonstrate how the forced invisibility and refusal to recognize “the legitimate geography” of targeted populations represent modern tools, alongside the biopolitical technologies for visualizing and counting, for controlling and exploiting the world’s working poor. Geography, as a discipline which provides many tools for visualizing, has the potential to offer more (both theoretically and empirically) to social justice struggles, to make visible and recognize the geography of those who have gone missing. In short, there are many lessons to be learned from Mexico and from other struggles across the Americas where fights to reappear offer geographic insights into these neoliberal times.

Friday, March 27, 2015
Derby Hall Room 1080
3:30-5:00 p.m.



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