



Amy Zhang, New York University “From Dirty Work to Green Labor: the Political Economy of Recycling.”

10/25 (Wed), 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (EST) @ 103 Huntington Hall + Hybrid

Hybrid event registration Link: <https://syracuseuniversity.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYqfuGurz8uHNSMzGoVL2C7FEmOlu2E6lkl#/registration>

As a part of an effort to build sustainable cities in the early 2000s in Guangzhou, state and civil society groups aimed to re-cast recycling as voluntary green labor performed by urban residents. The process however, encroached access to scraps for sanitation workers, an urban poor who have come to rely on the collection and selling of scraps. This talk describes how sanitation workers invoked a moral economy of free taking and devised new strategies of reclamation to stake their claims to waste as a resource. The practices of waste’s diversion that made up an infrastructure of labor are not only sites of green governance, but they also reconfigure access and ownership. Labor practices that facilitated waste’s circulation and diversion also grounded a politics of distribution and morality.

Amy Zhang teaches in the Department of Anthropology at New York University. Her research investigates the intersection of ecology, technology, labor and urban life. Her first book, *Circular Ecologies: Environmentalism and Waste Politics in Urban China* is forthcoming Stanford University Press. Her work has been featured in *Cultural Anthropology*, *Current Anthropology*, *China Perspectives*, *Made in China* and other venues.

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