



Legalizing the Impossible Subject: The White Russian Refugees and the Development of American Immigration and Refugee Law during the Great Depression

Monday, February 24, 2020 | 12:00PM - 1:30PM

ERC Conference Room 115



S. Deborah Kang, PhD

S. Deborah Kang is an associate professor of history at California State University San Marcos. Published by Oxford University Press in 2017, her first book, *The INS on the Line: Making Immigration Law on the US-Mexico Border, 1917-1954*, won the Henry Adams Prize from the Society for History in the Federal Government, the Theodore Saloutos Book Award from the Immigration and Ethnic History Society, the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians Book Prize, the W. Turrentine Jackson Award from the Western History Association, and the Americo Paredes Book Award for Best Nonfiction Book on Chicano/a, Mexican American and/or Latino/a Studies. It was also recognized as a Finalist for the 2018 Weber-Clements Book Prize by the Western History Association. Her current research focuses on the relationship between law and society along the nation's northern and southern borders and has been supported by the Huntington Library, the Clements Center for Southwest Studies, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

During the Great Depression, states and localities expelled nearly a half-million ethnic Mexicans from the United States. Yet, in the midst of these removals, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) launched an initiative to reform the hardships surrounding federal deportation policy. In the process, it expanded the legal architecture by which undocumented Europeans could be legalized. Drawing upon a chapter from her second book project, *Undocumented Immigration and Immigration Legalization in the United States, 1906-1986*, Kang will describe a legalization program created for Russian immigrants and its implications for the development of US refugee and immigration policies.

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