

OSTROM WORKSHOP RESEARCH SERIES

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“The Cosmopolitics of Outer Space”

Wednesday, NOVEMBER 7, 2018

12:00–1:00 PM • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park



A growing number of researchers in the social sciences and the environmental humanities have recalibrated their focus of analysis to the wider universe and how it is apprehended by both modern cosmology and scientific practices. This paper presents work in progress that responds to recent calls for “a space-inclusive anthropology” that embraces the cosmopolitics of outer space as environment, to study an ecology of practices of co-production of space, among government agency officials, space entrepreneurs, and astrobiologists and planetary scientists. The paper focuses on a discussion of the possibilities and limits of critical ethnographic research for studying “space-on-Earth” through three vignettes of emergent social imaginaries of outer space. First, an account of the launch in 2018 and development over the next few years of the new Australian Space Agency and its plans to envisage Australia as a space-faring nation. Second, contested imaginaries of multiplanetary futures mobilised by new modes of venture capitalism in space. And third, the cosmological imaginaries of astrobiological research on terrestrial analogues, sites on Earth used as proxies for space exploration, and the search for life-forms elsewhere in the universe.



[Juan Francisco Salazar](#) is an associate professor in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts, and research director of the Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) at Western Sydney University. As an anthropologist, communication specialist, and filmmaker, his academic and creative work is concerned with the coupled dynamics of social-environmental change. His latest book is the co-edited volume *Anthropology and Futures: Researching Emerging and Uncertain Worlds* (Bloomsbury, 2017) and his latest film is the award-winning documentary *Nightfall on Gaia* (2015).

Presentations are open to the public (see our website for papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855–3151).