

Geography , Environment, and Society Colloquium Series

October 12, 2018, 3:00pm

Peter Graham Scholarly Commons (Bird Lib., Rm 114)



Sacred Landscape, Secular Law: Storying Spirituality on American Public Lands

Nicolas Howe
Professor of Environmental
Studies Williams College

Nicolas Howe will discuss the idea of spirituality and how it has shaped public discourse about sacred space in modern America. Focusing on legal conflicts over sacred sites and iconic wilderness areas, he will show how dominant stories about the nature of ‘spiritual experience’ have enabled courts to routinely deny land claims that threaten secular assumptions about the material agency of place—assumptions paradoxically rooted in the country’s still-dominant Protestant religious imaginary.

Note: *This talk is presented with the support of the Syracuse University Humanities Center as part of the 2018-19 Syracuse Symposium “Stories,” with additional support from the Department of Religion.*