

## An Invitation

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From: **Revolutionizing American Studies and The Mellon Committee on Globalization and Social Change**

What: A lecture, **“Indigenous as Alien”**  
*Free and open to the public.*

By: Professor **Leti Volpp**  
University of California, Berkeley, School of Law



When: **Friday, 14 October, 4-6pm**

Where: CUNY/The Graduate Center, Room 8201.01

Immigration law's focus is nation-state sovereignty and the ability of the state to exclude or deport aliens, who are understood to move spatially to the nation state, seeking entry or admittance. But this vision of immigration law fails to recognize settler colonialism, and, in particular, its grounding on preexisting indigenous populations' territory. This talk seeks to examine the reasons for this omission, as well as its consequences. Immigration scholarship tends to presume not only that borders are spatially fixed, but that they are fixed over time, so that states have always existed within their current territorial borders. The focus of inquiry then becomes the lawfulness of the already existing's state's deployment of sovereignty to keep out or expel noncitizens. Forgotten is how states came to be. This talk will examine the political theory underpinning immigration law, political theory that imagines a social contract quite different from what has been termed a "settler contract." The consequences of this settler contract for indigenous populations, including their transformation into aliens, will be discussed.

*Leti Volpp is a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law. A well-known scholar in law and the humanities, she writes about citizenship, migration, culture and identity. Her publications include the edited volume *Legal Borderlands: Law and the Construction of American Borders* (with Mary Dudziak) (2006); "The Culture of Citizenship" in *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* (2007); and "Disappearing Acts: On Gendered Violence, Pathological Cultures and Civil Society" in *PMLA* (2006). She is also the author of "Divesting Citizenship: On Asian American History and the Loss of Citizenship Through Marriage" in the *UCLA Law Review* (2005), "The Citizen and the Terrorist" in the *UCLA Law Review* (2002), "Feminism versus Multiculturalism" in the *Columbia Law Review* (2001), "Framing Cultural Difference: Immigrant Women and Discourses of Tradition," in *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* (2011); and "Engendering Culture: Citizenship, Identity and Belonging," which appears in *Citizenship, Borders, and Human Needs*, edited by Rogers Smith (2011), among many other articles.*

This event is made possible by the generous co-sponsorship of President William Kelly, the Center for the Humanities, and the American Studies Certificate Program.

For more information, please see <http://revolutionizingamericanstudies.commons.gc.cuny.edu/> and <http://globalization.gc.cuny.edu/leti-volpp-indigenous-as-alien/>.