

## Social Sciences Seminar Series

Spring 2023

**Wednesday February 15, 2023 1-2pm**

Marshall Building 845 North Park Ave. Room 531

### **Amanda Hilton**

Research Scientist, Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, University of Arizona



### **Living Landscapes: Sensory Approaches to Relationality in Sicilian Oliviculture**

This talk presents the case of Sicilian oliviculture to unsettle a landscape, and a people, too often considered timeless and unchanging. In a context of historically entrenched economic underdevelopment and environmental ruination exacerbated by climate change, centering life and liveliness troubles a simplistic focus on impossibility and apocalypse.

Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork with olive growers and olive oil producers in Sicily, Italy, I offer the concept of "living landscapes" to conversations about multispecies relationality and, in Anna Tsing's words, "the possibilities of life in capitalist ruins" (2015). Sicilian

oliviculturalists refer to olive oil as alive (*l'olio è vivo*) and to "living the land" (*vivere la terra*). In the current moment, what does it mean to be alive, to live a place, and for a landscape to be living?

I situate a discussion of these questions in a broader discussion of care and multispecies relationality in economically precarious and environmentally ruinous contexts. I include a methodological discussion of sensory anthropology as I used it, and how relationality is embodied and sensed through place and through interactions with specific plants, landscapes, and people. In so doing I maintain attention on the local impacts of global systems of economic and political power.