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Property Value, Race, and Worth: The Cultural Politics of Housing in San Francisco's Sunset District, 1924-1944

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ICS PRESENTS

DR. THERESA MAH

What is the connection between the development of neighborhoods and the social construction of race? In this presentation, Professor Theresa Mah explores how the establishment of property value for middle class neighborhoods was linked to the construction of an American identity defined in both racial and class-specific terms.

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY PUBLIC TALK

In her talk, Prof. Mah will examine the connections between the built environment, modern American culture, and the reproduction of race during a period of spectacular urban expansion in the twentieth century. Focusing on a proto-suburban San Francisco neighborhood built in the 1930s and 40s, Professor Mah will show how the racialized and class-marked dimensions of the neighborhood are illuminated by comparisons with the unmistakably racialized and class-specific appraisals of Chinatown, the epitome of an older, "slum district." Her analysis illuminates the extent to which the design and spatial organization of the built environment shaped the racialization of Asian Americans and African Americans in distinct but related ways.

Property Value,

Race

and Worth

The cultural politics of housing in
San Francisco's Sunset District, 1924-44

Theresa Mah is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies and an affiliated faculty member in the American Culture Studies Program at BGSU. Originally from San Francisco, California, she received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1999. Trained as a historian, she specializes in twentieth-century American social and cultural history, urban studies, and race. Dr. Mah recently returned from an Urban Scholars Postdoctoral Research fellowship sponsored by the National Research Council and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. She is currently a fellow at ICS and at work on a manuscript entitled "My American City: Multiracial San Francisco and the Cultural Politics of Housing, 1924-1968."

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 19, 2003 3:30-5 PM • ROOM 201A, BTSU



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