Wednesday Seminars

Lecture Series in Social and Cultural Anthropology

25.11.2026 | 5 p.m. | @ Übungsraum IKSA | NIG, 4th floor

Jolynna Sinanan (University of Manchester)

Icefall Unseen: Enlightening the Khumbu Glacier in Everest Tourism

Jolynna Sinanan is a Senior Lecturer in Digital Anthropology in the Department of Social Anthropology and the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology at the University of Manchester.
She has conducted extensive fieldwork in Trinidad, Nepal, Australia and Cambodia and has published widely on digital and data practices, digital visual communication, intergenerational mobilities, work and gender. Jolynna's current research is developing a long-term ethnography and audio-visual study of the Everest economy.

This seminar introduces initial insights from my long-term ethnography with high-altitude guides and porters that offers perspectives of changes to everyday life, aspirations and environmental knowledge in the Himalayan Khumbu (Everest) region in Nepal. It will focus on human encounters with the Khumbu icefall, a key landmark on the route to summitting Mount Everest and part of the Khumbu glacier, the largest glacier in Nepal whose drainage patterns affect three major rivers in the Khumbu valley. I argue that engagements with the Khumbu glacier are inseparable from colonial and imperial conquest and exploration, and more recently motivations to embark on expeditions have become exacerbated through digital technologies of visual culture. My research aims to establish an agenda for an anthropology of mountains characterised by high-altitude cryosphere that draws on a multiplicity of regional knowledge. Collaboration, co-envisioning, and media co-production have generated new ways of imaging futures in the unfolding of Everest tourism, where currently, concerns for environmental degradation and climate change have an uneasy relationship with aspirations for maintaining and expanding opportunities for tourism livelihoods.

DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHY INITIATIVE

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