When Water Rights Ebb into Energy Development
Unconventional Oil & Gas Development and
Changes to Water Allocation in Northern Colorado

Speaker:
Stephanie Malin
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology

Location and Time:
Natural Resources Room 109
April 13, 2015
4:00 - 5:00 pm

Abstract:

Unconventional oil and gas production has boomed in diverse regions of the U.S., including Pennsylvania, Texas, North Dakota, and Colorado. While certain aspects of the industry’s rapid and widespread growth have been well-documented, analysts still know little about the multi-faceted ways in which this industry interacts with other social institutions, other resource markets, related systems of water rights, and access to a resource that is highly-contested and over-appropriated in contexts like Colorado.

In her presentation, Dr. Malin will present preliminary evidence from her on-going fieldwork, which examines the relationships between unconventional oil and gas production, other economic sectors like agricultural production, and systems of water rights and water markets in Northern Colorado. Armed with rich evidence from over 40 in-depth interviews and extensive ethnographic and archival research, Dr. Malin will describe and analyze how rapidly expanding, water-intensive, unconventional forms of oil and gas production have changed the marketplace for water in Northern Colorado. In the context of the looming oil bust, Dr. Malin will also explore how complex relationships and resource dependencies that have developed among different institutions and economic sectors may be destabilized over the next few years.