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Racial Liberalism and the Coloniality of Urban Ecologies

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12PM – 1PM

Rm. 1099, Buchanan Tower
1873 East Mall, UBC

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How do we understand lead poisoning in water pipes, land dispossession and evictions, and real estate speculation on wetlands—all of which disproportionately affect the life chances of racial, ethnic, and caste minorities—as projects of empire and liberalism? Drawing on urban historiography and archival and ethnographic work in India and the US, this talk seeks to expose how race and other forms of difference subtly encoded within liberal urban policy and planning have had, and continue to have, a bearing on urban ecologies. Drawing on critical race and postcolonial theory, the talk considers if and how liberalism can be recovered and repurposed for emancipatory urban futures.

Malini Ranganathan is an assistant professor in the School of International Service at American University in Washington, DC. Trained in critical geography, her scholarship focuses on urban environmental justice and grassroots struggles surrounding water, land, and housing in India and the United States. She is a 2017-2019 American Council of Learned Societies-Andrew W. Mellon Humanities Fellow.