

FROM SNAKES' BLOOD TO SEWAGE

MYTHOLOGY AND ECOLOGY OF A MINOR RIVER IN RAJASTHAN

This event is sponsored by the South Asian Studies Program in International Programs
and co-sponsored by the Department of Anthropology

OCT. 25 • 4:00 – 5:30 PM

2390 UCC EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

Chai and snacks will be served

THE NAGDI RIVER

A tributary of the much larger Banas, the Nagdi River, flows through a portion of Rajasthan's Bhilwara District including the old market town of Jahazpur. Unlike India's major sacred waterways such as the Ganga and the Yamuna which have the status of goddesses, the Nagdi was never deified. However, within living memories the Nagdi displayed miraculous properties, and it figures in Jahazpur's origin legend, reaching back to the epic Mahabharata. At present, due to a complex convergence of conditions unique to this place but strongly resonant with ecological tragedies the world over, the Nagdi's flow has dwindled and its waters are badly polluted. Many in Jahazpur mourned the end of their river. Once proud of the Nagdi's miraculous properties, Jahazpur residents were aware of having lost an important part of their environmental and cultural heritage. Several activists have initiated or participated in movements to save the Nagdi, but most of these defenders have given up hope. This presentation explores the complex causalities of the Nagdi's deterioration and emergent possibilities for restoration.

Ann Grodzins Gold

is Thomas J. Watson Professor of Religion and Professor of Anthropology at Syracuse University. Gold's fieldwork in rural Rajasthan, North India, has focused on pilgrimage, gender, expressive traditions, and environmental history. Most recently, during 2010-2011, she held a Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Fellowship for ethnographic research on landscape and identity in a small market town. Her publications include numerous articles and four books: *Fruitful Journeys: The Ways of Rajasthani Pilgrims* (1988); *A Carnival of Parting: The Tales of King Bharthari and King Gopi Chand* (1992); *Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India* (1994, co-authored with Gloria Raheja); and *In the Time of Trees and Sorrows: Nature, Power and Memory in Rajasthan* (2002, co-authored with Bhoju Ram Gujar) which in 2004 was awarded the Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy Book Prize from the Association for Asian Studies.



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