

8 September 2011

Thursday, 12:00 – 1:00

ANSO 134

# Susan Hicks

## **BETWEEN INDIGENEITY AND NATIONALITY: THE POLITICS OF CULTURE AND NATURE IN RUSSIA'S DIAMOND PROVINCE**

In this presentation, Susan Hicks will discuss her doctoral thesis, which examines the politics of indigeneity in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). The Sakha Republic is a large yet sparsely populated province of Northeastern Russia that produces 25% of the world's diamonds and is also home to a sizeable indigenous population, the Sakha, who comprise almost half the region's residents. For at least two decades, Sakha activists have been engaged in a sustained project of ethnic revival that has sought to contest environmental destruction, assert regional control over lands and resources, and challenge socioeconomic marginalization. Sakha activists have drawn heavily on globally circulating representations of indigeneity, especially in regards to ecological wisdom, spirituality and ancient cultural tradition. However, articulations of indigenous identity are often contested by both Sakha and non-Sakha. In this context, indigeneity also intersects with historically sedimented frameworks of ethnonational identity, which are themselves undergoing rapid transformation in an increasingly centralized Russian Federation.



Susan Hicks is a doctoral candidate in cultural anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Her research focuses on the politics of culture and the environment in Eastern Russia. She has conducted a total of 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork in the Sakha Republic since 2005. Susan also has an MA in Comparative Education from the University of Pittsburgh and a BA in Anthropology and English Literature, also from the University of Pittsburgh.

~ All are welcome ~

~ Refreshments and reception will be served following colloquium in the ANSO lounge ~