



Spring 2025

## Sociologist questions AI replacing human relationship

We are at a moment when it is vitally important to imagine and articulate what makes us human. The steady drumbeat of news about AI, about ever more competent models achieving unprecedented milestones, raises questions about what the role for humans will be in the not-so-distant future. We have seen similar moments before. For hundreds of years, automation has pushed people into new relations with technology, with work, and with each other. And scholars have long come up with different answers to explain the uniquely human contribution: e.g., mental versus manual labor, creativity versus rote work. But today’s technologists are tackling new terrain: the mechanization of human relationship.

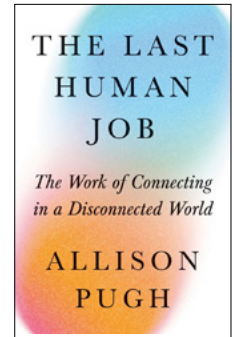


Join us as the 2024–25 Cressman Lecturer Allison Pugh gives a talk titled “Re-imagining the Other/Ourselves: Finding the Human in the Age of AI” on Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 4 p.m. in the Knight Library Browsing Room. Based on five years of ethnographic research, Pugh offers a humanistic response to the rise of AI, one that probes the profound meaning of human connection, reckons with

the challenges of seeing and being seen, and reimagines what we know of ourselves and others in light of the automation challenge.

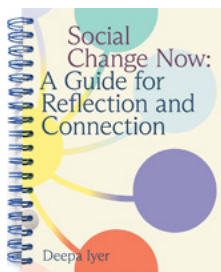
Allison Pugh is a professor of Sociology at Johns Hopkins University. She writes about how people forge connections and find meaning and dignity at

work and at home. In her latest book *The Last Human Job: The Work of Connecting in a Disconnected World* (2024), Pugh develops the concept of “connective labor,” the collaborative work of emotional recognition. This includes three key components—empathetic listening, emotion management, and the act of “witnessing,” in which one individual reflects what they have seen and heard. Drawing on years of interview and observational data, Pugh shows how in sectors like education, healthcare, and therapy, this work is increasingly systemized—a process that she argues makes it ripe for eventual mechanization. In the face of teacher shortages and hype around *continues on page 2*



## Deepa Iyer re-imagines ecosystems for social change

In an era of increased isolation where civic deserts, disinformation, and technological dependence separate us from one another, how can we reimagine our capacity for deeper connection and sustainable collaboration in our current reality? Deepa Iyer, a social justice advocate, will lead an exploration of the pathways that strengthen ecosystems for social change in her talk titled



“Re-imagine: Our Social Change Ecosystems” on Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 4 p.m. in the Knight Library Browsing Room.

Deepa Iyer is a South Asian American writer, strategist, and lawyer. Her work is rooted in Asian American, South Asian, Muslim, and Arab communities where she spent fifteen years in policy advocacy and coalition building in the wake of the September 11th attacks and

ensuing backlash. Currently, Deepa leads projects on solidarity and social movements at the Building Movement Project, a national nonprofit organization that catalyzes social change through research, strategic partnerships, and resources for movements and nonprofits. She conducts workshops and trainings, uplifts narratives through the “Solidarity Is This” podcast, and facilitates solidarity strategy for cohorts and networks.

Deepa’s first book, *We Too Sing America: South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Sikh Immigrants Shape Our Multiracial Future* (2015), chronicles community-based histories in the wake of 9/11 and received a 2016 American Book Award. Her debut children’s picture book, *We Are The*



*Builders!*, was released in 2024.

Deepa’s book *Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection* (2022)

is a practical guide for those on journeys towards justice, equity, and solidarity. It introduces an ecosystems framework that includes ten roles that many people play in service of social change values. Over the past three years, individuals and organizations around the world have used the social change ecosystem framework to respond to the pandemic, express solidarity during the uprisings against anti-Black racism, and support multiracial coalitions struggling for reproductive rights, immigrant and refugee protections, and climate justice. Free copies of *Social Change* *continues on page 3*

## Ensemble performs the music of cloistered women

Throughout the late 16th and 17th centuries, the chronicles of historians and travelers in Italy provide images of a fabulous musical world inhabited by women—singers, players and even composers. Such images are all the more intriguing, considering the truly draconian restrictions governing virtually every aspect of these cloistered women’s lives, especially their music. Moreover, a veil of mystery surrounds this repertoire: the music written by and for the nuns often includes parts for tenor and bass voices, and the use of instruments was officially forbidden in the convents. How was this music performed?

Cappella Artemisia, an ensemble of

female singers and instrumentalists, attempts to provide some answers to this question. On Sunday, May 11, 2025 the ensemble will perform “Call for the Wailing Women: Laments and Lamentations in Italian” as a culmination of this year’s Musicking Conference. The concert will take place at 3 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall. Tickets range from \$50 to \$5. A free pre-concert lecture will be at 2 p.m. in 163 Music.

Dedicated to performing the music from Italian convents in the 16th and 17th centuries, Cappella Artemisia’s repertoire includes both forgotten works composed by the nuns themselves, as well as music intended for performance in the convents



by better-known male composers, but presented here for the first time as it would originally have been heard—without male voices.

Cappella Artemisia’s Musicking residency and performance are cosponsored by the OHC’s Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities. Tickets: [musicanddance.uoregon.edu/cmb](http://musicanddance.uoregon.edu/cmb). Find the schedule for the Musicking Conference in these calendar pages, or go to [blogs.uoregon.edu/musicking](http://blogs.uoregon.edu/musicking)

## Symposium explores Indigenous and Latinx people and diasporas

How have colonial legacies—from the Spanish Colonial period to the present—shaped the lives, lands, and cultures of Indigenous and Latinx peoples across the U.S. and Latin America? How do modern borders and nation-states perpetuate the erasure of Indigenous existence and histories across the Americas?

On Thursday, April 24, 2025, “The Limits and Possibilities of Crossborder Latinidades and Indigeneities” symposium will bring together interdisciplinary Latinx and Indigenous scholars and researchers studying settler colonialism, transnational Indigeneities, and race through archival and ethnographic approaches for a vital exploration of the complex relationship between Indigenous and Latinx peoples’ identities and histories through a transnational lens. Participants will



María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo

examine the shifting borders and interactions of Indigenous and Latinx people and diasporas, focusing on regions that are now California, Texas, Oregon, Mexico, and Central America, while working to decenter Euro-American approaches to understanding these communities.

The symposium features a keynote by María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo a professor of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University, and several panel discussions. It will take place in the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art’s Ford Lecture Hall from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Find the complete schedule in these calendar pages. It is cosponsored by the Oregon Humanities Center’s Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities. For information, contact [cllas@uoregon.edu](mailto:cllas@uoregon.edu)

### Pugh

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“chatbot therapists,” Pugh makes a case for connective labor’s value to society and the potential consequences for inequality should it become a scarce commodity.

In addition, Pugh is the author of *The Tumbleweed Society: Working and Caring in an Age of Insecurity* (2015), *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture* (2009), and an edited volume *Beyond the Cubicle: Job Insecurity, Intimacy, and the Flexible Self* (2016).

Pugh’s talk, part of this year’s “Re-imagine” series, is free and open to the public and will be livestreamed and recorded. Please register at [ohc.uoregon.edu](http://ohc.uoregon.edu)

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# Scholars focus on gender and agency in postcolonial thought

In conjunction with Lanie Millar’s Romance Languages graduate seminar this term, she and Leah Middlebrook have organized a two-day symposium “Gender, Race, and Empire” on May 1 and 2, 2025. The event brings three influential scholars to campus.

Estefanía Bournot is a Research Fellow at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, where she leads the project *Forgotten Routes across the Atlantic (1960-1990)*. Her forthcoming monograph explores Pan-African encounters and cultural diplomacy as pivotal nodes in transatlantic exchanges between Brazil and West Africa, set against the backdrop of Cold War politics.

Nicholas R. Jones is an Assistant Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at Yale University. His most recent book is *Cervantine Blackness (2024)*, in which he addresses the silence about Miguel de Cervantes’s compelling literary construction and cultural codification of Black Africans and sub-Saharan Africa. Jones reconsiders in what sense Black subjects possess an inherent value within Cervantes’s cultural purview and literary corpus.

Johanna Montlouis-Gabriel is Assistant Professor of Decolonial Pedagogy in the Department of French

and Italian at Emory University. Her book, *The Afrofeminist Creative Praxis of Black French Women*, is forthcoming from Nebraska University Press in their Expanding Frontiers Series (Winter 2026-2027). This

work celebrates how Black women in France are building communities and transforming perspectives through their art, literature, and performance.

In a series of paired presentations, each of the scholars will deliver a paper and engage in dialogue with UO faculty respondents. These conversations will provide an overview of new research and developments in postcolonial thought, with a focus on gender and agency.

The symposium seeks to build on the groundbreaking arguments made by Afro-Brazilian feminist and decolonial thinker Sueli Carneiro in *Dispositif of Raciality (2023)*—that Black and women intellectuals are theorists of their own existence, as active producers of knowledge. Expanding the scope of this insight to include trans and queer individuals, “Gender, Race, and Empire” seeks to inspire participants to engage in a wide-ranging conversation that spans formal and informal venues.

Students in Millar’s seminar, also

named “Gender, Race, and Empire,” will read and discuss work by the featured scholars before they come to campus. They will also have begun to explore Sueli Carneiro’s thought, in addition to other key texts and thinkers in gender and empire studies. These studies will prepare the students to participate in and gain enrichment from the symposium’s sessions.

In addition to the featured discussions between the guest scholars and faculty, brown-bag lunch sessions will be held each day directed to junior faculty and graduate students, as well as to undergraduates contemplating research careers. One will be a roundtable in which the guest scholars discuss their work creating institutional spaces for scholarship on the Global South, especially in non-Anglophone traditions and in comparative frameworks. They will share the challenges and opportunities they have faced in their work, as well as practical tips for publishing and disseminating cutting-edge research in these fields. The second session will feature faculty with experience in publication and the dissemination of research in non-academic venues, such as op-eds, Substack, popular podcasts, etc.

The symposium is open to the public and cosponsored by the OHC’s Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities. For more information, including finalized schedule and location, please contact Leah Middlebrook ([middlebr@uoregon.edu](mailto:middlebr@uoregon.edu)) or Lanie Millar ([lmillar@uoregon.edu](mailto:lmillar@uoregon.edu)).

**Iyer**  
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Now will be available at Iyer’s talk.

Iyer is the UO’s 2024–25 Lorwin Lecturer in Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Her talk, part of the OHC’s “Re-imagine” series, is free and open to the public and will be livestreamed and recorded. Please register at [ohc.uoregon.edu](http://ohc.uoregon.edu)



Estefanía Bournot



Nicholas R. Jones



Johanna Montlouis-Gabriel

## Your gift will help the OHC fund faculty research fellowships

The OHC supports humanities research that creates scholarship, fosters the development of inventive courses that enhance students’ educational and career opportunities, and enriches the knowledge and lives of Oregon’s citizens.

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## Angolan revolutionary's work translated by UO scholars

Lanie Millar, associate professor of Spanish and Portuguese, and Fabienne Moore, associate professor of French, collaborated on a newly published book *The Revolution Will Be a Poetic Act: African Culture and Decolonization* (Polity, 2024), a translation of essays and speeches by prolific anticolonial writer, poet, and politician Mário Pinto de Andrade. The two scholars will give the Oregon Humanities Center's Spring Wine Chat on Wednesday, June 4, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at Capitello Wines, 540 Charnelton St.

Born in Angola during Portuguese colonial rule, Mário Pinto de Andrade (1928–1990) was one Africa's most important 20th-century intellectuals who wrote in French, Portuguese, and Spanish. In 1956, he founded the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola but was exiled after independence was achieved in 1975. He never returned.

As anti-colonial movements got underway in the mid-twentieth century, Andrade wrote extensively about the urgent necessity for Africans to turn away from European cultural and political models, arguing that communities emerging from colonization should focus on voices from within, on self-representation, and on horizontal relationships among Black, African, and decolonizing peoples. Andrade played a key role in theorizing the international reach of revolutionary 20th-century poetry and literature, Black cultural vindication, and African liberation.

When asked how this project came about, Millar shared, "My initial thought was that I was going to translate five of his introductions to anthologies. Then as I kept digging, I realized

there was much, much more material, and a significant amount of material in French. I thought the picture of his intellectual production would be incomplete if I just focused on Portuguese, and I approached Fabienne to collaborate."

"When you research and teach a multilingual, transnational revolutionary figure," says Moore, "you are educating students about values, actions and modes of writing. The knowledge that this thinker existed, this is how they carried out their actions, this is how the work was perceived by his contemporaries, it provides an educational impact that is huge."

Along with the translated essays and speeches, the book includes a foreword by Millar and an interview with Andrade's two daughters, who are guardians of his work. This work is particularly relevant not only to scholars of African decolonization movements but to anyone engaged in contemporary conversations about race, belonging, and political community.

The Wine Chat is free and open to the public. Beverages are available for purchase and a food cart is on the premises of Capitello Wines. There is ample parking at Banner Bank across the street. Please register at [ohc.uoregon.edu](http://ohc.uoregon.edu)

