

Over, Under and Out

Population Panic in (Il)liberal Times

Thursday, September 10, 2026, 17:00 (s.t.)

Ludwig-Uhland-Institute, Ausstellungsraum, Burgsteige 11

Keynote Lecture:

Over, Under and Out: Population Panic in (Il)liberal Times

Feminist solidarities have long been built around the experience of reproductive oppression tethered to population politics. Today's population panic, and the politics they inspire, are confounding. Familiar fears of **over**population tipping beyond the Earth's carrying capacity continue to proliferate, while new panic about an **under**populated world that spells the loss of humanity brought on by population aging and collapse spreads fast. What should we make of these contradictory platforms? Add to them a prevalent third panic, **out**population, which combines the two, focusing on the ways some groups in decline are projected to be "out" populated by others in growth, and you have a veritable mix of population anxieties in the present. They each construct an existential threat to raise alarm about demographic indices – population size, fertility and immigration rates. As population panics evolve, what lessons might we learn from the legacy of feminist critiques of population control? How can we renew feminist resistance to these gendered, racialized, nativist and neocolonial forms of populationist oppression and neo-eugenics? This talk addresses the critical need for (re)productive solidarity as we build towards reproductive justice futurisms.

Dr. Rajani Bhatia, associate professor in Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University at Albany, State University of New York, will present on today's population panic from her forthcoming book, *Over, Under, and Out: Population Panic in (Il)liberal Times* (University of California Press). She is also co-editor of *Pop Panic*, a new collaborative substack exploring these issues.



The keynote lecture will be streamed live on Zoom;
get access here via the QR code



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