

Decentering Citizenship: Gender, Labor, and Migrant Rights in South Korea

Thursday, October 24, 2019

2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Toldo Health Education Centre
Room 203



Hae Yeon Choo

Associate Professor of Sociology,
University of Toronto

Decentering Citizenship follows three groups of Filipina migrants' struggles to belong in South Korea: factory workers claiming rights as workers, wives of South Korean men claiming rights as mothers, and hostesses at American military clubs who are excluded from claims—unless they claim to be victims of trafficking. Moving beyond laws and policies, Hae Yeon Choo examines how rights are enacted, translated, and challenged in daily life and ultimately interrogates the concept of citizenship. Choo reveals citizenship as a language of social and personal transformation within the pursuit of dignity, security, and mobility. Her vivid ethnography of both migrants and their South Korean advocates illuminates how social inequalities of gender, race, class, and nation operate in defining citizenship. Decentering Citizenship argues that citizenship emerges from negotiations about rights and belonging between South Koreans and migrants. As the promise of equal rights and full membership in a polity erodes in the face of global inequalities, this decentering illuminates important contestation at the margins of citizenship.

Bio. Hae Yeon Choo is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto, and is a 2018-2019 Deutsche Bank Member of Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, NJ). She is an author of *Decentering Citizenship: Gender, Labor, and Migrant Rights in South Korea* (Stanford University Press, 2016), a comparative study of three groups of Filipina women in South Korea: factory workers, wives of South Korean men, and hostesses at American military camptown clubs. Her current research project examines the politics of land ownership in contemporary South Korea, delving into macro-level political contestations over land rights, together with the narratives of people who pursue class mobility through real estate speculation. She has also translated Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* and Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* into Korean.