

The 19th Annual Begeman – Gordon Lecture Series

“Invisible Labours: The liveliness, subjectivity,
and violence of seed banking”

A special talk with Dr. Xan Chacko

If seeds are foundational to plant life, safeguarding them is crucial to the safety of plants and, by extension, humanity. Saving seeds saves the planet. This logic motivates a monumental scientific undertaking called ‘seed banking,’ which takes seeds from their lived environment and holds them in frozen vaults until the unknowable, but certainly apocalyptic, future. In this talk I ask, who does it serve to see and know seeds as starting points of life? What must be willfully ignored to trust that seed banks are the salvation to the plant extinction? I will show that studying the gendered practices and language of botanic fertility chains illuminates the inherent eugenic, colonial, and biopolitical logics of controlling reproduction—both plant and human.

Thursday, Oct. 14, 2021

11:00am-12:15pm

Via Zoom:

<https://gcsu.zoom.us/j/91406361913?pwd=MkppMDNCUU9yZHhwVy9mc1pKbkVIZz09>



Dr Xan Chacko is the Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Women's and Gender Studies at Wellesley College. Previously, Xan worked as a researcher at the University of Queensland, Australia, on the role of Intellectual Property in securing access to food in the future. Her current book, provisionally titled, *The Last Seed: Colonial Legacies and Botanic Futures* situates the emergence of cryogenic seed banking as a response to catastrophic species loss of plant life in the twentieth century.

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