

CLAS Open Seminars

Monday 5 February - 5:15pm

SG1 Ground Floor, Alison Richard Building, 7 West Road, CB3 9DT

Genealogies of Extractivist Entanglement in Bolivia

[Mark Goodale](#) (University of Lausanne)

Chair: [Sian Lazar](#) (University of Cambridge)

Abstract:

This seminar will examine the findings from a four-year ethnographic study of Bolivia's contested efforts to industrialize the country's massive lithium reserves, which are destined for use in lithium-ion batteries and electric vehicles, key technologies of the green energy transition. In framing the ethnography of this fraught project within longer histories of extractivism and resource utopianism, I hope to show how the anthropology of energy brings much-needed nuance to wider debates over the contradictions and ultimate limitations of energy transition and climate crisis mitigation.

Mark Goodale is currently a Leverhulme Trust Visiting Professor and member of St Antony's College at the University of Oxford. He recently completed a four-year research project, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, on lithium, resource politics, and the contradictions of the green energy transition, with a focus on Bolivia. He has written two books about Bolivia and is one of the co-editors of the *The Bolivia Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Duke University Press, 2018). During the academic year 2023-2024, he is writing a new book based on his current research for the University of California Press.