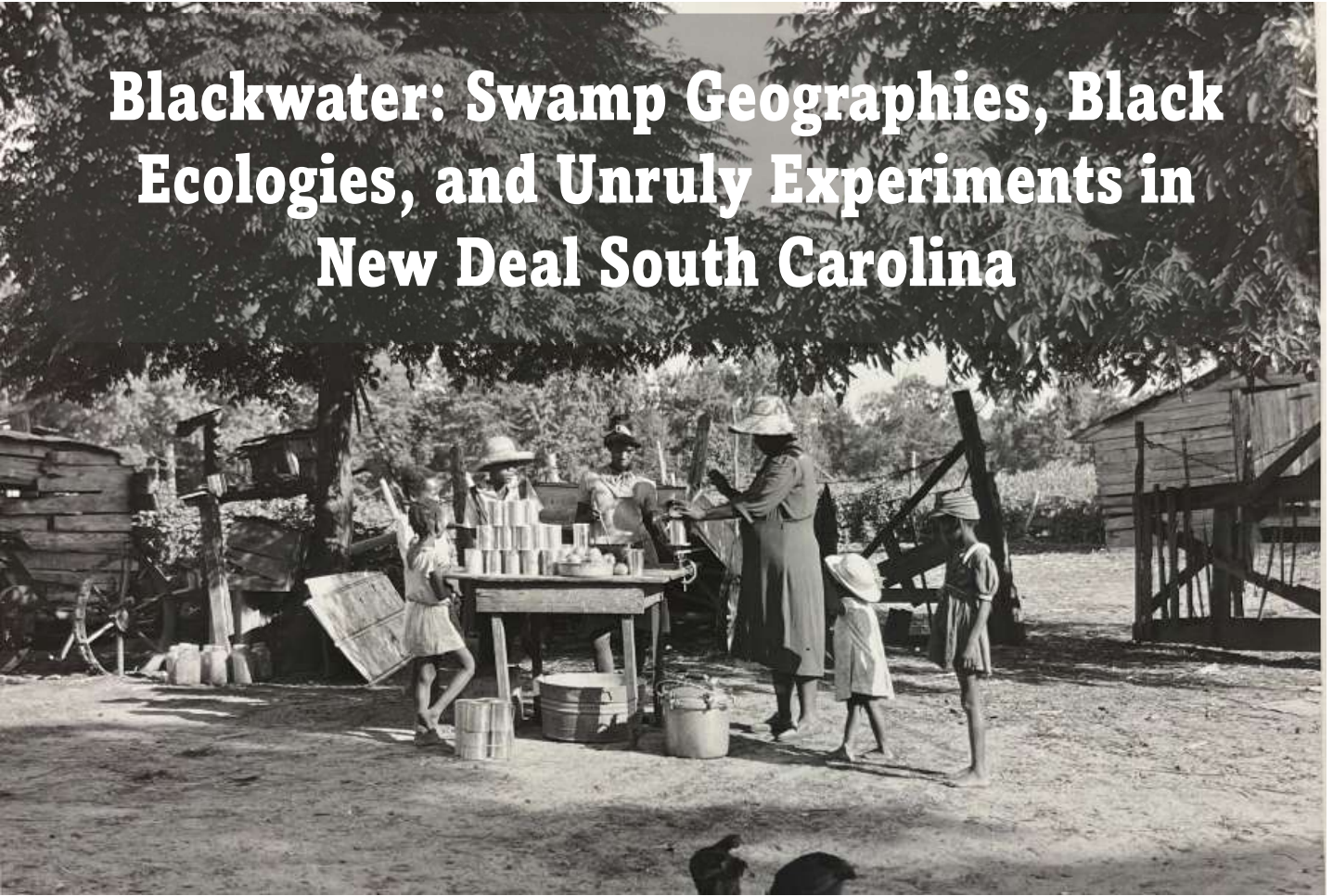


Blackwater: Swamp Geographies, Black Ecologies, and Unruly Experiments in New Deal South Carolina



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In this talk, I highlight three key case studies from my forthcoming manuscript, *Blackwater: Swamp Geographies, Black Ecologies, and Unruly Experiments in New Deal South Carolina*. Drawing its name from the slow-moving waters of the Lowcountry South that developed a dark hue over centuries of ecological compost, *Blackwater* analyzes the creation of the Santee-Cooper Hydroelectric and Navigation Project, a New Deal schema constructed between 1939 and 1941 in Lowcountry South Carolina. I offer three vignettes around the removal of 901 Black families and the clearance of nearly 200,000 acres of swampland; the resettlement of an estimated 2500 Black people from rich bottomlands to dry and degraded uplands; and the medical, chemical, and militaristic experiments performed upon Black residents and wetland ecologies that would later be exported on a national and global scale. This talk builds upon a theory of *swampification*, introduced in my 2022 article, 'On Swampification: Black Ecologies, Moral Geographies, and Racialized Swampland Destruction,' published in the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*. *Swampification* is a Black ecological process that demonstrates how the racialization of landscapes, the equating of Blackness with disease, and environmental destruction are co-constitutive processes of ecological and social damnation, designed to make Black people and the spaces they inhabit valuable vis-a-vis their destruction. The manuscript pushes back against long-sustained myths of swamplands as containing wasted ecologies and wasting people, instead insisting upon the possibility of swamplands as a locus of Black ecological repair.

Friday, April 18th. 3:30- 4:30 pm
Smith Hall 304

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