

Please join us at The Graduate Center, CUNY  
for a lecture by **Audra Simpson**  
(Columbia University) entitled:

## **"Reconciliation and Its Discontents"**

(from her new book, *Savage States:  
Settler Governance in an Age of Sorrow*)

**April 23 | 6pm | 365 Fifth Ave | Skylight Rm (9100)**

"Reconciliation" has achieved a seemingly unquestioned status in Canada as the good thing that is to usher in the better thing that will be. That "better thing" is a repaired past, a better future, an ethical, and balanced present. This move to reconcile has emerged from three decades of overt and unambiguous Indigenous foment, resistance and refusal in the face of neoliberal and dispossessive settlement and statecraft, statecraft that is now manifest and embodied in especially unambiguous ways by Stephen Harper's Conservative government. It is his government however, that ushers the twin move of official "reconciliation" and simultaneously violent resource extraction and although on a continuum this moment appears as an apogee of sorts. The paper takes the highly gestural and symbolic discursive work of reconciliation to examine how it can abet violence towards land and people through an emotional performance of singular contrition – contrition that attempts to ameliorate all forms of violence and move indigenous polities out of the status of polities and into the space of suffering, minoritized and incapacitated victims of a history that once acknowledged, are somehow healed, or repaired and, in this, whose variegated and violent histories are no longer to be dealt with. The paper stages its argument with recourse to ethnographic conversations with those who stand in active critical, ethical and political relationship to the project of reconciliation.

**Audra Simpson is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. She is author of numerous publications including *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* and a co-editor of *Theorizing Native Studies*. Her writing has appeared in publications such as *American Quarterly*, *Cultural Anthropology*, and *Law and Contemporary Problems*. Her second research project examines the borders of time, history and bodies across and within what is now understood to be the United States and Canada.**

***Sponsored by the Advanced Research Collaborative, Revolutionizing American Studies, and the Mentoring Future Faculty of Color initiative. This event is free and open to the public.***