



UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI  
**L'ORIENTALE**

**DLLC**

DIPARTIMENTO DI  
STUDI LETTERARI,  
LINGUISTICI E COMPARATI



UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI  
**L'ORIENTALE**

# CALIFORNIA DREAMING

**VISIONS, SPACES, AND SHADOWS  
FROM THE GOLDEN STATE**

**12-13 JUNE 2025  
UNIVERSITY OF NAPLES L'ORIENTALE**



# JUNE 12

9.00 am *Registration*, Room T2

9.30 am *Opening Remarks*

10:00 am, Room T2 - *Keynote Lecture 1*

**Alison Rose Jefferson**

*Black California Dreamin': Stories of Claiming Space at America's Leisure Frontier*

**Moderator: Nicolangelo Becce**

(University of Roma Tre)

11:15 am *Coffee Break*

11:45 am *Parallel Panel Session 1*

**Panel 1 - Racial Uprising and Imagination**, Room T2

**Chair: Agnese Marino**

(University of Roma Tre)

**Michael Docherty**

(Appalachian State University)

*Imagining Elsewhere: Black California in the Fictional Imagination*

**Eleni Tasioula**

(Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

*At the Intersection of LA's Systemic Violence and Gang Culture: Reading Luis J. Rodriguez's Always Running (1993)*

**Cinzia Schiavini** (University of Milan)

*Dreaming, leaping, struggling to be real (and survive): California and the Arab-American stage*

**Panel 2 - Water Narratives between Economic Fragilities and Environmental Disasters**, Room T2

**Chair: Pasquale Concilio**

(University of Naples L'Orientale)

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*Everything begins and ends right here! Exploring the Los Angeles River in Dick Roraback's In Search of the L.A. River and Tim DeRoche and Daniel González's The Ballad of Huck & Miguel*

**Cinzia Scarpino** (University of Milan)

*From 'Miracle In The Desert' to Environmental Disaster: The History and Narratives of the Salton Sea*

**Sofia Martinicorena**

(Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

*"Some Ruined Heaven:" California Violence in Claire Vaye Watkins' Gold Fame Citrus*

**Rachel Marie Davis**

(Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

*Rethinking Silicon Valley: The Duality of Economic Realities in Ripe*

1:15 pm *Lunch Break*

2:30 pm, Room T2 - *Keynote Lecture 2*

**J. Scott Bryson**

*Myth, Geography, and Geometry:  
Finding Meaning in Los Angeles  
and its Literature*

**Moderator: Elisa Bordin**

(Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

3:45 pm *Parallel Panel Session 2*

**Panel 3 - Environmental Challenges  
and Natural Resources, Room 5.3**

**Chair: Enrico Mariani**

(Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

**Ali Dehdarirad**

(Sapienza University of Rome)

“Los Angeles is Burning”

or “The Burning of Los Angeles”?

The Vision of Disaster in Richard  
Powers’ *The Overstory* and Thomas  
Pynchon’s *Vineland*.

**Julia Fiedorczuk** (Warsaw University)

California in the poetry  
of Forrest Gander.

**Nele Thomann** (Heidelberg University)

Beyond State Lines: California’s  
Climate Leadership in the United  
States and Abroad.

**Enrico Mariani**

(Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Ecologies of Waters and Oil Extraction:  
Mary Austin’s Forerunning Literary  
Resistance

**Panel 4 - Activism and Justice, Room T2**

**Chair: Fulvia Sarnelli**

(University of Naples L'Orientale)

**William Bauer**

(University of California, Riverside)

California Indians

and the California Dream

**Melanie Gish** (Independent Scholar)

Born-Again Again: The Role of  
California in Early Evangelical  
Environmental Activism

**Fulvia Sarnelli**

(University of Naples L'Orientale)

California Reproductive In/Justice in  
Contemporary Narratives

**Magdalena Modrzejewska**

(Jagiellonian University in Kraków)

Speranza - California’s Utopian  
Community

5:15 pm

*End of Day 1*





# JUNE 13

9:30 am *Registration Desk Opens*

10:00 am, Room T2 - *Keynote Lecture 3*

**David L. Ulin**

*Porousness in the Literature  
of Southern California*

*Moderator: Vincenzo Bavaro*

(University of Naples L'Orientale)

11:15 *Coffee Break*

11:45 am *Parallel Panel Session 3*

Panel 5 - **Re-imagining California**

**(Social) Spaces**, Room T2

*Chair: Antonio Di Vilio*

(University of Naples L'Orientale)

**Antonio Di Vilio** (University of Naples

L'Orientale) and **Shelleen Greene**

(University of California, Los Angeles)

*Smog* (1963) and *The Ecological Crisis of  
Post-War Los Angeles*

**Gayle Kennedy** (King's College London)

*"No One Thinks": Simone de Beauvoir's  
Snapshot of Post-War California*

**Vincenzo Bavaro**

(University of Naples L'Orientale)

*Cinematic Representation of the Los  
Angeles Streets: Mobility, Isolation,  
and Urban Identity*

**Sarah Gleeson-White**

(University of Sydney)

*Little Harlem's Little Magazines*

Panel 6 - **Popular Culture**, Room 5.3

*Chair: Cinzia Scarpino* (University of Milan)

**Owen Atkinson** (University of Leeds)

*Conservative California: tracking  
the crisis of the white-collar worker  
in *Aerospace Folktales* and *Falling Down**

**Florian Groß** (Leibniz Universität Hannover)

*Los Angeles is Burning: Social Crisis and  
Environmental Disaster in SoCal Punk*

**Konstantin Butz**

(Academy of Media Arts Cologne)


*California to Go: Skateboarding and  
the Transference of West Coast Site-  
Specificity*

**Emma Dinuzzi** (Independent Scholar)

*Haunted Suburbia: The Racialized  
Landscape of Mid-Century California  
in Little Marvin's *Them**

1:15 pm *Lunch Break*





2:30 pm, Room T2 - *Keynote Lecture 4*

**Robb Hernández**

**“Barrio 2000: An East LA Space Odyssey”**

*Moderator: Vincenzo Bavaro*

(University of Naples L’Orientale)

3:45 pm *Parallel Panel Session 4*

Panel 7 - **Racial Memory**, Room T2

*Chair: Nicolangelo Becce*

(Roma Tre University)

**Nicolangelo Becce** (Roma Tre University)

Post-WW2 Los Angeles from a Japanese American Perspective in Naomi Hirahara’s “The Chirashi Covenant”

**Agnese Marino** (Roma Tre University)

States of Exception in the Exceptional State: Interrogating California at the Border, in Desiré Zamorano’s *The Dispossessed*

**Giacomo Traina** (University of Trieste)

“Haunted by the Living”: San José in the Literature of the Vietnamese Diaspora

**Cristina Garrigós** (National University of Distance Education)

Unhousing Memory in Nueva California: A Revision of Hegemonic Historiography in Cherrie Moraga’s *Native Country of the Heart*

Panel 8 - **Our Mediterranean,  
Our Italy. Italian American  
California and Race**, Room 5.3

*Chair:* **Elisa Bordin**

(Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

**Rosemary Serra** (University of Trieste)  
Under the Californian Sun. Integration  
Process of Italians from the Great  
Migration to Today

**Elisa Bordin** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)  
Urban Politics and Mexican American  
Los Angeles: 'Home Is the Hunter' by  
John Fante and Carey McWilliams

**Stefano Luconi** (University of Padua)  
Dreaming Whiteness in California:  
Italian Americans and the Color Line in  
the Golden State

**Tommaso Caiazza**  
(Liceo Federico Enriques, Rome)  
“The melting pot is the world”: Robert  
E. Park's critique of California “racial”  
exceptionalism

5:15 pm *Closing Remarks*

