



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**  
**Beth Ann Morrison**

Will defend her prospectus

**Creating Just, Equitable and Sustainable Communities using  
Communication and Participatory Design**

**Abstract**

Science supports a direct connection between unsustainability and the consumerist isolation of western culture – it also plays a role in our shift toward regeneration. Individualism and market-driven competition has led members of the globalizing society to feel disconnected from themselves, each other, the earth and other species. Many are blind to how our modern conveniences and habits of over-consumption are affecting marginalized communities and the environment. If we redirect our culture toward one of connectedness and empathy, we may begin to envision a more equitable, sustainable future.

I plan to conduct a three-part investigation into the relationships between sustainability, interconnectedness, and the collective design of our built environment. First, I will review primary Sustainability literature and compare it with theories from environmental, social justice and Indigenist activist scholars – my goal is to identify a set of guidelines for applied research that will lead the way toward a sustainable, equitable and just (post)modern society. This will be followed by a short-term ethnographic study of interconnectedness in the Skid Row community of downtown Los Angeles and the adjacent Historic Core neighborhood. Finally, I will present a case study of an applied framework for collective, dialogue-based design that aims to build trust and connection across differences while working toward more inspired and sustainable communities.

Modern society's collective blindness to the effects of convenience can also be seen as an opportunity: we might use this naiveté to reorganize our world on a scale that would be formidable to the prescient mind.

Tuesday, November 6, 2018  
1:00 PM  
Wrigley Hall, Room 323

Faculty, students, and the public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:  
Dr. Scott Cloutier, Chair  
Dr. James Gee, Member  
Gregory Sale, Member