



In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Sarra Tekola

will defend their prospectus

**Climate Change and Colonialism:
Exploring Decoloniality as a
Response to Climate Change**

Thursday, March 19, 2020
12:00 pm

[Zoom Meeting ID: 597 246 131](#)

Faculty, students, and the public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Scott Cloutier, Chair
Dr. David Manuel-Navarrete, Member
Dr. Elizabeth Swadener, Member

Abstract

My research seeks to explore Western society's inability to substantively address climate change, and what I have termed as modernity's pathology. This dissertation will result in three deliverables: (1) a persuasive critical literature review that will define modernity's pathology, (2) a qualitative research paper on the traits of modernity's pathology, and (3) a documentary and contextual toolkit for decoloniality. In paper one, I will show the connections of climate change and colonization by drawing on political ecology and critical sustainability literature. After building a case for Western society's responsibility for climate change, I will draw on radical psychology to examine why many of modern society's Western leaders tend to deny or ignore climate change and related systemic issues. I propose such a mindset to be an expression of a societal illness I define as modernity's pathology. In paper two, I will describe the traits and characteristics of modernity's pathology through an autoethnography of my community organizing and qualitative interviews with indigenous leaders. Finally, for deliverable three, I will draw on decolonial and indigenous studies to identify ways to confront and heal modernity's pathology. I will do so using a decolonial methodology as well as grounded theory. Methods for all three deliverables include a critical argumentative literature review, autoethnography, ethnography, art-based methods, a documentary and qualitative interviews. My research intends to change the conversation around climate change, addressing the structural power-based issues and mentality in Western society that prevents climate justice and climate action.