



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Neda Yousefi Movahed

Will defend her prospectus

**How we wear water:
an arts-based research practice of weaving
human complexity & love into sustainability education**

Abstract

Living systems theory reminds us that all life is connected across multiple scales. The concept of emergence helps us recognize how individual parts of a system come together to create more complex wholes. Understandings of emergence invite us to re-think how change happens. In my PhD research, I explore implications of emergence for us humans, at both the personal and societal scale. My central thesis is that engaging the personal dimension is necessary for supporting the emergence of sustainability at the societal scale.

I structure this project using an arts-based research methodology since it allows room for aesthetic appreciation, subjectivity, and emergence within the research process. I use water as a central theme throughout the project to conceptualize how change happens within me and within spaces I'm a part of.

I research how creative, experiential tools can be used to weave human complexity and love into Sustainability Education. The field of Sustainability Education is a critical space to experiment and exchange methods that support cultural evolution. Data is being collected from the undergraduate course I facilitate on "International Development & Sustainability." I examine how experiential tools impact a personal sense of responsibility, creative power, and trust.

I also simultaneously use autoethnography to collect data from my lived experiences. The autoethnography is centered around a personal practice of sustainability, which I define as my practice of being a good ancestor. Through the use of poetry, storytelling, folk art-making, and movement practices, I inspect what I have inherited from my Persian ancestry and family lineage. I harvest this wisdom as I choose my legacy for

future generations.

Monday, April 1, 2019
10:30 AM
Wrigley Hall, Room 481

Faculty, students, and the public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. David Manuel-Navarrete, Co-Chair
Prof. Liz Lerman, Co-Chair
Dr. Mary Margaret Fonow, Member