Stanford



Angela Garcia

Roger and Cynthia Lang Professor of Environmental Anthropology

Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

Research Area(s)

Culture and Society

Environmental Anthropology

Gender and Sexuality

Medical Anthropology

Political Anthropology and Political Economy

Race, Ethnicity, and Collective Identity

Materiality

Field of Interest(s)

Violence

Addiction

Kinship

Care

Environment

Landscape

Writing

Professor Garcia works at the intersection of violence, care, and form, asking how suffering is both endured and narrated, and what is at stake, ethically and politically, in the telling. Her research focuses on the intimate lives of the dispossessed and on the attachments, affects, and daily practices through which they work to hold their worlds together against forces designed to break them apart. Increasingly, her work has turned toward the ways ecological transformation, dispossession, and the built and unbuilt environment shape ethical and social life. Garcia is also attentive to narrative form as a means of apprehending historical and lived experience.

Garcia's most recent book, The Way That Leads Among the Lost: Life, Death, and Hope in Mexico City's Anexos (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2024), takes readers inside Mexico City's anexos — informal, coercive rehabilitation clinics where the working poor treat drug addiction, and where violence itself is folded into the work of healing. Widely condemned as abusive, illegal, and unethical, anexos are nonetheless the primary resource for addiction

treatment among Mexico's poor, spreading now across the United States as well. Garcia sets these spaces within the larger history and social fabric that produced them, showing how families turn to anexos not despite the violence of the drug war but because of it — as one of the only shelters available against a catastrophe that is at once historical, structural, and ongoing.

Garcia's first book, The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession Along The Rio Grande (University of California Press, 2010), traced intergenerational heroin use among Hispanos in northern New Mexico back to a longer history of colonial dispossession — arguing that addiction there is less a private affliction than a collective, historically produced longing for connection and release.

Garcia's current projects extend this attention to land and its histories. The first project is a narrative nonfiction book titled The Devil's Backbone, which turns to Santa Rita del Cobre and the Chino Mine district near Silver City, New Mexico — a landscape scarred by conquest, extraction, and ecological ruin. Drawing on Garcia's own family history alongside ethnographic and archival research, the book brings back to life a racially segregated company town that was erased as the mine expanded. Moving from present to past, surface to subsurface, the book traces four generations of labor and loss experienced by Mexican and Mexican-American miners, unearthing new ways of thinking about environmental, social, and family history. It also reveals the difficult necessity of remaining resilient amid ongoing environmental and existential catastrophe.

The second project examines Mexico City's desagüe — the vast drainage project Spanish colonists began carving into the Valley of Mexico in the seventeenth century, and which continues, centuries later, to reshape the city's water, bodies, and disease. Still incomplete and still consequential, the desagüe becomes a lens onto some of the most urgent questions of our moment: water scarcity, the human entanglement with changing ecologies, and the slow violence of chronic illness. Garcia asks how this centuries-old engineering project continues to remake neighborhoods, bodies, and social worlds from underground up.

Garcia’s work has received major awards in anthropology and writing. She is a 2026 Guggenheim Fellow.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor, Anthropology
- Affiliate, Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE)
- Center for Latin American Studies

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Ph.D., Harvard University , Social Anthropology (2007)
- B.A., University of California, Berkeley , Anthropology (1997)

LINKS

- Interview KQED: https://www.kqed.org/forum/2010101905554/inside-mexicos-clandestine-drug-treatment-centers
- On Point: https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2024/04/29/underground-addiction-care-mexico-rehab
- Something We Call Care: https://couchedpodcast.org/something-we-call-care/
- Personal website: https://www.angelagarcia.ink/

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **The Way That Leads Among the Lost: Life Death and Hope in Mexico City's Anexos**
  Garcia, A.
  Farrar, Straus and Giroux.2024
- **The confessional community Narratives of violence and survival in Mexico City's anexos** *AMERICAN ETHNOLOGIST*
  Garcia, A.
  2023
- **Fragments of Relatedness: Writing, Archiving, and the Vicissitudes of Kinship** *ETHNOS*
  Garcia, A.
  2019
- **THE BLUE YEARS: An Ethnography of a Prison Archive** *CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY*
  Garcia, A.
  2016; 31 (4): 571-594
- **Violence, addiction, recovery: An anthropological study of Mexico's anexos.** *Transcultural psychiatry*
  Garcia, A., Anderson, B.
  2016; 53 (4): 445-464
- **The Blue Years: An Ethnogrpahy of a Prison Archive** *Cultural Anthropology*
  Garcia, A.
  2016; 31 (4): 572-595
- **Serenity: Violence, Inequality, and Recovery on the Edge of Mexico City** *MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY QUARTERLY*
  Garcia, A.
  2015; 29 (4): 455-472
- **Serenity: Violence, Inequality, and Recovery on the Edge of Mexico City.** *Medical anthropology quarterly*
  Garcia, A.
  2015; 29 (4): 455-72
- **'Spirituality' and 'cultural adaptation' in a Latino mutual aid group for substance misuse and mental health.** *BJPsych bulletin*
  Anderson, B. T., Garcia, A.
  2015; 39 (4): 191-195
- **The Promise: On the Morality of the Marginal and the Illicit** *ETHOS*
  Garcia, A.
  2014; 42 (1): 51-64
- **Regeneration: Life, Drugs and the Remaking of Hispano Inheritance** *Social Anthropology*
  Garcia, A.
  2014; 22 (2): 200-212
- **The Elegiac Addict, Revisited** *Addiction Trajectories*
  Garcia, A.
  edited by Garriott, W., Reikhel, E.
  Duke University Press.2013
- **Scripting Addiction: The Politics of Therapeutic Talk and American Sobriety (Book Review)** *AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST*
  Book Review Authored by: Garcia, A.
  2012; 114 (1): 160-161
- **Suffering Without Health Insurance** *The Progressive Magazine*
  Garcia, A.

2011; 31-32

- **Reading Righteous Dopefiend with My Mother** *Anthropology Now*
  Garcia, A.
  2010; 2 (3): 31-36
- **The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession Along the Rio Grande**
  Garcia, A.
  University of California Press.2010
- **The Elegiac Addict** *A Medical Anthropology Reader*
  Garcia, A.
  edited by Good, B., Fischer, M., Willen, S., Good, M. D.
  Wiley-Blackwell.2009
- **The Elegiac Addict: Addiction, Chronicity and the Melancholic Subject** *Cultural Anthropology*
  Garcia, A.
  2008; 23 (4): 718-746