




Mikael Wolfe

Assistant Professor of History

 Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

In my work, I examine the intersection of social, political, environmental, and technological change in modern Mexico and Latin America by focusing on the history of agrarian reform, water control, hydraulic technology, drought, and climate change. I offer a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses in Mexican, Latin American, environmental, and comparative and global history, on topics such as the history of water control, climate ethics, economic development, international relations, revolution and film (see course offerings below).

My first book, *Watering the Revolution*, recipient of the 2018 Conference on Latin American History's Elinor Melville Prize for Latin American Environmental History, transforms our understanding of Mexican agrarian reform, Latin America's most extensive and longest-lasting (1915-1992) through an environmental and technological history of water management in the emblematic Laguna region. Drawing on extensive archival research in Mexico and the United States, it shows how during the long Mexican Revolution (1910-1940) engineers' distribution of the water paradoxically undermined land distribution. In so doing, it highlights the intrinsic tension engineers faced between the urgent need for water conservation and the imperative for development during the contentious modernization of the Laguna's existing flood irrigation method into one regulated by high dams, concrete-lined canals, and motorized groundwater pumps. This tension generally resolved in favor of development, which unintentionally diminished and contaminated the water supply while deepening existing rural social inequalities by dividing people into water haves and have-nots, regardless of their access to land. By uncovering the varied motivations behind the Mexican government's decision to use invasive and damaging technologies despite knowing they were ecologically unsustainable, the book tells a cautionary tale of the long-term consequences of short-sighted development policies.

The research I completed for my first book led to my second book project tentatively entitled "Revolution in the Air: A Comparative Historical Climatology of the Mexican and Cuban Revolutions." The book makes climate endogenous to the story of revolution. It contends that climatic events did not simply happen once, only to disappear in importance. Rather, revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries interpreted climatic variability through a mixture of geopolitical, scientific, and religious knowledge and practices. These interpretations, in turn, shaped how revolutionary societies incorporated climatology into a broader state policy toward the environment.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Assistant Professor, History

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Assistant Professor of History, Stanford University, (2012- present)
- Mellon Visiting Assistant Professor of Environmental History, University of California, Los Angeles, (2010-2012)
- Visiting Fellow, Center for US-Mexican Studies, University of California-San Diego, (2009-2010)

- Visiting Fellow, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame, (2009-2009)
- Quinn Family Foundation Dissertation-Year Fellowship, University of Chicago Department of History, (2006-2007)
- Fulbright-Garda Robles Fellowship, Fulbright-Garda Robles Mexico, (2005-2006)
- Graduate Fellowship, University of Chicago, (1998-2002)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Elinor K. Melville Book Prize for Latin American Environmental History, Conference on Latin American History (2018)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Organizer, International Water History Conference, Montpellier, France (2013 - 2013)
- Organizer, "The Future of Environmental History: What the Past Teaches us about the Future of the Environment," UCLA History Faculty Symposium (2011 - 2011)
- Organizer, "Mexico's Other National Security Crisis: Food and Water Sustainability," Center for US-Mexican Studies, University of California-San Diego Workshop (2010 - 2010)
- Article reviewer, Mexican Studies (2011 - 2013)
- Book reviewer, Hispanic American Historical Review (2010 - 2010)
- Book reviewer, Environment and History (2013 - 2013)
- Revisions Contributor and Reviewer, Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations (2012 - 2012)
- Article reviewer, Journal Mexican Studies (2012 - 2012)
- Article Reviewer, Journal Mexican Studies (2013 - 2013)
- Member, Historical Conversations Committee, History Department, Stanford University (2013 - 2014)
- Member, Undergraduate Studies Curriculum Committee, History Department, Stanford University (2012 - 2013)
- Selection Committee Member, Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame (2009 - 2009)
- Member, American Historical Association
- Member, The Conference on Latin American History
- Member, Latin American Studies Association
- Member, American Society for Environmental History
- Member, Climate History Network

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Center for East Asian Studies
- Center for Latin American Studies

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- B.A., Columbia University , East Asian Studies (1995)
- M.A., The University of Chicago , International History (major field East Asia, minor field Middle East) (1999)
- Ph.D., The University of Chicago , Latin American History (2009)

Teaching

COURSES

2021-22

- Comparative Historical Development of Latin America and East Asia: HISTORY 205E, HISTORY 305E (Spr)
- Doing Environmental History: Water Justice: HISTORY 200B (Win)

- Film and History of Latin American Revolutions and Counterrevolutions: FILMEDIA 178, HISTORY 178, HISTORY 78, ILAC 178 (Win)
- The Historical Ecology of Latin America: HISTORY 278B, HISTORY 378 (Spr)

2020-21

- Doing Environmental History: Water Justice: HISTORY 200B (Sum)
- Graduate Colloquium: Explorations in Latin American History and Historiography: HISTORY 371, ILAC 371 (Win)
- The Ethical Challenges of the Climate Catastrophe: HISTORY 179C, HISTORY 79C (Spr)

2019-20

- Film and History of Latin American Revolutions and Counterrevolutions: HISTORY 178, HISTORY 78 (Win)
- Graduate Colloquium: Explorations in Latin American History and Historiography: HISTORY 371, ILAC 371 (Aut)
- Human Society and Environmental Change: EARTHSYS 112, EARTHSYS 212, ESS 112, HISTORY 103D (Aut)
- The Historical Ecology of Latin America: HISTORY 278B, HISTORY 378 (Win)

2018-19

- Film and History of Latin American Revolutions and Counterrevolutions: HISTORY 178, HISTORY 78 (Spr)
- Graduate Colloquium: Explorations in Latin American History and Historiography: HISTORY 371, ILAC 371 (Win)
- The Ethical Challenges of Climate Change: HISTORY 179C, HISTORY 79C (Win)
- The Historical Ecology of Latin America: HISTORY 378 (Spr)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Paul Nauert

Orals Evaluator

Paul Nauert

Master's Program Advisor

Yangran Gao

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Land, Liberty, and Water: Morelos after Zapata, 1920-1940 (Book Review)** *HAHR-HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*
Book Review Authored by: Wolfe, M.
2021; 101 (2): 366-367
- **"A Revolution Is a Force More Powerful Than Nature": Extreme Weather and the Cuban Revolution, 1959-64** *ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY*
Wolfe, M.
2020; 25 (3): 469-91
- **The Climate of Conflict: Politico-environmental Press Coverage and the Eruption of the Mexican Revolution, 1907-1911** *HAHR-HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*
Wolfe, M. D.
2019; 99 (3): 467-99
- **Considering the Alternatives: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Agriculture, Water, and Migration in Mexico under State Developmentalism and Neoliberalism** *MEXICAN STUDIES-ESTUDIOS MEXICANOS*
Wolfe, M.
2013; 29 (1): 1-2

- **Review of "A Land Between Waters: Environmental Histories of Modern Mexico"** *Environment and History*
Wolfe, M.
2013
- **The Sociolegal Redesignation of Ejido Land Use, 1856-1912** *Mexico in Transition: New perspectives on Mexican Agrarian History, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centurie*
Wolfe, M.
edited by Butler, M., Escobar-Ohlmstede, A.
Mexico City and Austin, Texas: University of Texas-Austin and Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropologia Social-Guadalajara.2013: 291–318
- **The Historical Dynamics of Mexico's Groundwater Crisis in La Laguna: Knowledge, Resources, and Profit, 1930s-1960s** *MEXICAN STUDIES-ESTUDIOS MEXICANOS*
Wolfe, M.
2013; 29 (1): 3-?
- **Land Reform in Puerto Rico: Modernizing the Colonial State, 1941-1969 (Book Review)** *HAHR-HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*
Book Review Authored by: Wolfe, M.
2011; 91 (3): 554-555
- **Bringing the Revolution to the Dam Site: How Technology, Labor, and Nature Converged in the Microcosm of a Northern Mexican Company Town, 1936-1946** *JOURNAL OF THE SOUTHWEST*
Wolfe, M.
2011; 53 (1): 1-31
- **Review of "Agua, Poder Urbano, y Metabolismo Social"** *Hispanic American Historical Review*
Wolfe, M.
2011; August
- **Mining Water for the Revolution: Marte R. Gomez and the Business of Agrarian Reform in 'La Laguna, Mexico'** *The Kellogg Institute Working Papers*
Wolfe, M.
University of Notre Dame.2010
- **Conflicto por un cambio de regimen de aguas en La Laguna: la 'construccion social' de la primera gran presa en el rio Nazas, 1900-1936** *Buenaval Journal of the Universidad Iberoamericma-Laguna*
Wolfe, M.
2006: 1-37