"Killing life to make life: the biopolitics of soil fumigant regulation in California's strawberry industry"

*Tuesday October 28th, 2014 * 4:10-5:30 PM * 3201 Hart Hall*

**Dr. Julie Guthman,**
Professor in the Division of Social Sciences and
Co-Director, Multicampus Research Program on Food and the Body, University of California Santa Cruz

As the phase out of methyl bromide, a soil fumigant and ozone depletor prohibited by the Montreal Protocol, draws near, the California strawberry industry is facing enhanced regulatory scrutiny for several other fumigants that prevent strawberry plant death by killing soil pathogens. Regulatory focus has specifically turned to application protocols, technologies to manage the chemicals in time and space, so to mitigate worker and community exposure. Yet, despite these welcome efforts to address farmworker health issues, regulatory discussions and proposed mitigation technologies persistently favor some lives over others, often in quite subtle ways, and even industry economic viability is troped as a health issue. More healthy fresh fruit for the masses! In this talk, Professor Guthman will discuss her new research about soil fumigant regulation in California’s strawberry industry, focusing on how biopolitical concerns about protecting life are articulated in ongoing regulatory discussions about fumigant use.

**Julie Guthman** is a geographer and professor of social sciences at the University of California at Santa Cruz where she teaches courses primarily in global political economy and the politics of food and agriculture. She has published extensively on contemporary efforts to transform the way food is produced, distributed, and consumed, with a particular focus on voluntary food labels, community food security, farm-to-school programs, and the race, class and body politics of “alternative food.” Her publications include two multi-award winning books: **Agrarian Dreams: the Paradox of Organic Farming in California**, now out in its second edition, and **Weighing In: Obesity, Food Justice, and the Limits of Capitalism**. Her newest research is examining how California’s strawberry industry is coping with the phase out of methyl bromide, a soil fumigant that is internationally prohibited. She is also interested in the production and practice of nutritional science.

*This talk is co-hosted by UC Davis Geography Graduate Group and the American Studies Program.*

*For more information about our Fall 2014 Distinguished Speaker Series please visit* [http://geography.ucdavis.edu/news/events](http://geography.ucdavis.edu/news/events)