

The Psychological & Medical Anthropology Seminar Series at UC San Diego Presents:

"Public Religions and Sensorial Forms" - Dr. Paula Montero, University of São Paulo Brazil

Inspired on Birgit Meyer's work on "material religions," this presentation will explore the process by which Christian religions modified the urban visual landscape of São Paulo by their architectural devices, their music, their public spectacles, and monuments. The talk will concentrate on the comparative analyses of the Catholic/Evangelical public performance taking as empirical examples the Catholic Cathedral da Sé (1954) and the Evangelical Solomon Temple (2014) construction process in Sao Paulo. My main interest is to tackle the relations between religions and politics in Brazil, giving special attention to a Brazilian neopentecostal church called The Universal Church of the Reign of God. The end of the dictatorship in 1985 and the new Constitutional Chart in 1988 stimulated and created the necessary conditions for the strategic use of different public arenas by new religious leaderships searching for political legitimacy. Religious public performances in which sensorial perceptions of the sacred are central become a new political strategy to gain political power and popular hegemony.



Paula Montero studied Social Sciences at the Université de Paris VIII, France. She is a full professor at the Department of Anthropology at the University of São Paulo Brazil. Her anthropological studies have focused on Afro-American traditions, stressing healing practices, witchcraft, and possession. In recent years, she has focused on issues on intercultural relations and multiculturalism; she has published a book on Christian missions among the Amazonian Indians. At present, she is studying new forms of religious organizations and has published numerous articles on issues concerning their activities in the modern sphere.

Monday January 27, 2020 at 9:30am – Social Science Building 107