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**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES**



SUSAN STANFORD FRIEDMAN

University of Wisconsin-Madison

TRIBALOGRAPHY in INDIGENOUS OCEANIA

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Tribalography in Indigenous Oceania: LeAnne Howe's Storytelling Theory and Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner's Poetry Performances

Professor Susan Stanford Friedman
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Influential in North American Native studies, LeAnne Howe's concept of tribalography encompasses a decolonial perspective and methodology that has rich contributions to make to transnational Indigenous Studies. This talk explores how her concept based in the continental U.S., including a strong Native attachment to tribal lands, might be adapted to include the Indigenous cultures of Oceania, where identification is not with the islands alone, but with an expanded notion of archipelagic land-and-sea as sites of home, voyaging, and diasporic migration. Drawing on the archipelagic theory of Epila Hau'ofa and Eduard Glissant, the talk adapts Howe's tribalography to encompass the work of Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, the Marshallese storytelling poet/performer viewed by some half-million times on YouTube. As an example of an archipelagic tribalography in Oceania, I feature "Anointed" (2018), Jetnil-Kijiner's video story poem performance of her return voyage to Bikini and Enewetak, the furthestmost atolls of the Marshall Islands where the United States conducted atomic bomb tests during the 1950s-1960s, causing decades of radiation sickness and environmental damage. Drawing on *Iep Jaltok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter* (2017), her volume of poems, I also spotlight her tribalographic address to the United Nations Climate Summit in 2014.

Kathy's "Anointed": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEVpExaY2Fs&t=28s>

Kathy's speech at the UN Climate Leaders Summit in 2014: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mc_lgE7TBSY

Biography

Susan Stanford Friedman is the Virginia Woolf Professor Emerita of English and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the U.S.A. She has published widely in modernist studies, feminist studies, narrative theory, migration studies, and most recently archipelagic studies. Publications include *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (Columbia UP 2015), *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* (Princeton UP 1998), *Contemporary Revolutions: Turning Back to the Future in 21st-Century Literature and Art* (ed., Bloomsbury 2019), and *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses* (co-ed., Johns Hopkins UP 2013), among others. She is co-founder of the prize-winning journal *Contemporary Women's Writing* (Oxford UP) and the recipient of the Wayne C. Booth Award for lifetime achievement in narrative theory (2009). Her work has been translated into 11 languages. *Sisters of Scheherazade: Diaspora, Religion, and Contemporary Muslim Women's Writing* is in progress.