



**Dr. Tania Li** is Professor of Anthropology and Canada Research Chair at the University of Toronto. She has published widely on questions of rural development, indigeneity, community and class, with a focus on Indonesia. Her most recent book is *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics*, Duke University Press 2007.

## To Make Live or Let Die? Rural Dispossession and the Protection of Surplus Populations

A biopolitics of the population, when it succeeds in securing life and wellbeing, is surely worth having. It has become urgent in rural Asia, where a new round of enclosures has dispossessed large numbers of people from access to land as a way to sustain their own lives, and neo-liberal policies have curtailed programs that once helped to sustain rural populations. At the same time, new jobs in manufacturing have not emerged to absorb this population. They are thus “surplus” to the needs of capital, and not plausibly described as a labour reserve. Who, then, would act to keep these people alive, and why would they act? I examine this question by contrasting a conjuncture in India, where a make-live program has been assembled under the rubric of the “right to food,” and Indonesia, where the massacre of the organized left in 1965 has left dispossessed populations radically exposed.

Oct. 23 (Friday), 2-4 p.m., Rm. 2125 (Sidney Smith Hall)  
Refreshments will be provided.