CEAS Lecture Series
ft.
Ruth Rogaski
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“Authenticity and Liberation: Chinese émigrés in the making of America's New Age Movement”

Prof. Rogaski will examine the post-war global context of the work of Gia-Fu Feng, the resident "Taoist mystic" at California's center for New Age wellness ideas, Esalen Institute, and the creator of a best-selling 1972 translation of the *Daodejing*. She focuses in particular on the cross-fertilizations between Feng and practitioners of Gestalt therapy, many of whom, like Feng, were exiles from their native countries. She argues that the origins of the American New Age movement must be understood within the context of US immigration policy, American racism, and European Jewish émigrés escaping Nazi Germany. At the same time, the origins of the New Age can also be told as a Chinese story of hybrid East-West childhoods spent in treaty-port cities, attenuated transmissions of Confucian heritage, and the consequences Communist revolution.