The Okefenokee Swamp: The Past, Present, and Future of “Trembling Earth”

April 7, 14, 21 & 28 @ 6:30pm-7:30pm via Zoom

Moderated by: Dr. William D. Bryan, a 2014-2015 Fox Center Postdoctoral Fellow

The Okefenokee is a mirror into how Americans – and especially Southerners – have thought about the conservation of land and water, and the awkward ways that these priorities have been balanced with the keen need for development in economically depressed areas. In an age of climate change, the Okefenokee offers us important lessons about the fate of the wildest places in the United States and how to manage the impacts of climate on these areas. Twenty years ago, after a years-long struggle with environmentalists and federal officials, executives at DuPont agreed to abandon their plans to mine titanium at a site close to the Okefenokee and earlier this year a company announced plans to mine heavy metals near the Okefenokee Swamp, touching off clashes over how to balance protection of this unique environment with rural Georgia’s desperate need for jobs. These incidents have become emblematic of the Okefenokee, but they are just the latest debates over how to manage and protect the unique resources of the swamp. Using these two clashes as our starting point, this seminar will trace the environmental history of this distinctive landscape, from Native American settlement to the present.

The seminar will be moderated by environmental historian Dr. William D. Bryan, a 2014-2015 Fox Center Postdoctoral Fellow, and will meet via Zoom from 6:30pm-7:30pm on the following Wednesday evenings during the 2021 spring semester: April, 7, 14, 21 & 28. Participation is limited, and reservations are required. The Zoom meeting link will be sent via email the day before each session date. Everyone from the Atlanta community is welcome and invited to join us for this free seminar. For further information and to reserve a spot on a “first-come basis,” email the Fox Center at foxcenter@emory.edu.

We are grateful to Georgia Humanities for its support of this program. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in these seminars do not necessarily reflect those of Georgia Humanities.