Laura Nader
Professor of Anthropology
University of California, Berkeley

“Energy and Human Frailty”
Keynote talk of the Nature, Culture, Action! series at YCEI

4 p.m., Tues., March 25th, 2014
10 Sachem St, room 105

*Food and Refreshments will be served.*


Additional Events on Tuesday, March 25th

- Book talk, Culture and Dignity: Dialogues Between the Middle East and the West.
  11:30 a.m. – 12:30, room 208, Whitney Humanities Center.

- Film screening: Losing Knowledge: 50 Years of Change in Oaxaca, Mexico.
  2:15 p.m. – 3:30, Burke Auditorium, Kroon Hall, Yale F&ES.

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In *Culture and Dignity: Dialogues between the Middle East and the West*, renowned cultural anthropologist Laura Nader examines the historical and ethnographic roots of the complex relationship between the East and the West, revealing how cultural differences can lead to violence or a more peaceful co-existence. It outlines an anthropology for the 21st century that focuses on the myriad connections between peoples—especially the critical intercultural dialogues between the cultures of the East and the West. It takes an historical and ethnographic approach to studying the intermingling of Arab peoples and the West. It demonstrates how cultural exchange between the East and West is a two-way process. And, it presents an anthropological perspective on issues such as religious fundamentalism, the lives of women and children, and notions of violence and order.

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  4 p.m., room 105, 10 Sachem St, Yale Department of Anthropology.

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Losing Knowledge: 50 years of Change
Film Screening and Discussion with the director, Laura Nader.

2:15 p.m. – 3:30, Tues., March 25th, 2014
Burke Auditorium, Kroon Hall, Yale F&ES

This profound ethnographic documentary explores the myriad of ways in which centuries-old indigenous knowledge is rapidly vanishing throughout the world. The film focuses on the southern Mexican village of Talea, Oaxaca. For half a century, the Zapotec people of this region have experienced rapid modernization: The creation of a road linking the village to cities, the arrival of electricity, and the introduction of computers and Internet have all transformed the texture of daily life. However, the people of Talea have often experienced "progress" as a double-edged sword. Farmers are now able to export coffee and other cash crops, but many of their children have migrated to the United States and today, fertile fields lay abandoned. Governance was once a village affair, but state and national government has disrupted and sometimes displaced local political autonomy. Most new buildings in Talea are constructed with imported concrete, not with regional materials. And traditional healing practices are rapidly being displaced by Western biomedicine. By exploring the transformation of agriculture, governance, architecture, and medical practices in the village, filmmaker/anthropologists Laura Nader and Roberto Gonzalez pose a series of provocative questions: Is it possible that 50 years of "development" has done more to unravel local culture than 500 years of conquest? What are the long-term implications of the knowledge that has been lost? Is there any possibility these processes might be reversed? The film also examines how disappearing indigenous knowledge isn’t just a Zapotec problem. It is a global problem, for throughout the world, local knowledge developed over centuries -- a priceless intellectual treasure trove -- is withering away at an alarming rate.

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