UCL Anthropology & CROC RRG invite you to

**Cosmologies of destiny**

*One-day workshop on the ethnography of predestination, temporality & freedom*

**Tuesday 30 June 2015**

UCL, Anthropology Department (DFSR) & Main Building (SW G12)

What does it mean to live a life that has already been written? How does one understand the past and prepare for the future when superior forces mingle with human agency? Distinctly from notions of fortune and coincidence, ‘destiny’ evokes conceptions of human lives and futures that are pre-determined: be it by high political powers, cosmic forces, or transcendental entities. The question surrounding humans’ capacity to act and affect change in a world where life and possibility are understood as being partially or wholly determined by external, often non-negotiable, powers has long been at the core of many theological and philosophical traditions, as well as informing different forms of divinatory and future-oriented practices. Yet, anthropology has often left the concept of destiny as the hazy background for its ethnographic and theoretical discussions. With this workshop, we wish to position destiny at the heart of our anthropological thinking. Bringing together at UCL Anthropology academics and early career scholars working on ethnographic conceptions of ‘destiny’ in a variety of social and religious settings, we aim to start a fresh and collaborative discussion on the anthropological study of destiny and its salience in contemporary forms of political and intimate life.
Programme

Morning: UCL Anthropology, Daryll Forde Seminar Room

9:00 – 9:15  Welcome & opening

9:15 – 9:30  Anthropologies of destiny
Alice Elliot (UCL) & Laura Menin (University of Milano-Bicocca)

9:30 – 10:15  God’s gifts: temporalities of luck and destiny in Sierra Leone’s mines
Lorenzo D’Angelo (Catholic University of Milan)

Response: Rebecca Empson (UCL)

10:15 –10:30  Coffee

10:30 – 11:15  The problem of predestination: suffering, individual agency and divine destiny in northern Irish Pentecostalism
Hilary Foye (Queen’s University Belfast)

Response: Allen Abramson (UCL)
11:15 – 12:00 “Travelling Souls”: gendered mobilities, written futures and moral anxieties in Central Morocco
Laura Menin (University of Milano-Bicocca)
Response: Alex Pillen (UCL)

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch break

Afternoon: UCL Main Building, South Wing G12 Council Room

13:00 – 13:45 The right time, the right action: managing risk and securing good outcomes in Hindu South India
Soumyha Venkatesan (University of Manchester)
Response: Alison Macdonald (UCL)

13:45 – 14:30 Narrating Failure: the poetics of destiny in the Old City of Sana’a
Luca Nevola (University of Milano-Bicocca)
Response: Igor Cherstich (UCL)

14:30 – 14:45 Coffee

14:45 – 15:30 Another crisis foretold: imagining the future in contemporary Portugal
Marta Magalhães Wallace (University of Cambridge)
Response: Charles Stewart (UCL)

15:30 – 16:15 Closing comments – Living with consequences: facing destiny as an ethnographic object and an anthropological theory
Samuli Schielke (Zentrum Moderner Orient)
Open discussion

All welcome!

Organised by Alice Elliot & Laura Menin, in collaboration with the UCL Cosmology, Religion, Ontology & Culture (CROC) Reading & Research Group

For info, please contact a.elliot@ucl.ac.uk