Exploring the politics of the Philippine Refugee Processing Center in Morong, Bataan, this talk considers the Filipino English teacher as a critical figure in the U.S. program for refugee rehabilitation. Recruited as an ideal figure of instruction and rehabilitation, the teacher illuminates the intersections of colonial language instruction, state development, and international human rights discourse. The US-based English language training journal Passage offers insight into the critical role that English language training played in the transformation of the refugee for eventual relocation. I analyze one piece published in that journal: an epistolary text by instructor Ruby Ibañez in which the teacher assumes the voice of the refugee student in ways that conform to and confound the proposed vertical relations of the processing center. This talk focuses on one chapter of Postcolonial Configurations: Dictatorship, the Racial Cold War, and Filipino America (Duke University Press, 2023), which theorizes a configuration as the racial and gender formation that comes into visibility at the intersections of transpacific multistate collaborations. The book reconceptualizes the meanings of Filipino America during the period and the politics of unmaking that people practiced to move beyond narrow ideas of subjectivity prescribed by a new world order.

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FACULTY HOST: Alden Sajor Marte-Wood

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