Professor Spang will discuss her use of one of the most infamous examples of monetary innovation, the assignats – currency initially defined by French revolutionaries as “circulating land” – to demonstrate that money is as much a social and political mediator as it is an economic instrument, subject to the same slippages between policies and practice, intentions and outcomes, as other human inventions. Moreover, she will examine the crucial role money played in the radicalization of the French Revolution, contributing to the ever-widening gap between political ideals and the realities of daily life.

Rebecca L. Spang is a Professor of history and Director of the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies at Indiana University. She is the author of The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture (2000) and, most recently, Stuff and Money in the Time of the French Revolution, listed as one the Financial Times’ best history books of 2015.

Please RSVP to dvander@stanford.edu

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