



"Astonishing, fascinating, revelatory, exhilarating."—MIKE WALLACE

# LANGUAGE CITY

The Fight to Preserve Endangered  
Mother Tongues in New York

ROSS PERLIN



## NEH Oral History Talk: Ross Perlin

**Language City: The Fight to Preserve Endangered Mother Tongues in New York**

- **DATE:** Thursday, April 18, 2024
- **TIME:** 1:00pm-2:30pm
- **PLACE:** Room E-255

*Oral History in Interdisciplinary Community College Pedagogy: Centering the Community in the Classroom* (<https://oralhistory.common.gc.cuny.edu>) is funded by the National Endowment of Humanities (NEH) for 2023-2025 to introduce oral history techniques to community college faculty's pedagogical practices.

**Abstract:** Home to over seven hundred languages, early 21st century New York City is a last improbable refuge for many Indigenous, endangered, and primarily oral languages, even as language endangerment is accelerating worldwide. Neither the languages themselves, nor the knowledge they contain nor the new urban linguistic diversity of which they are a part, have been adequately documented. But the settling of many speakers in cities with communities of linguists, language activists, language enthusiasts, and others concerned with linguistic diversity presents an opportunity. While linguists have responded with the new field of language documentation, initiating large-scale corpora to probe the lexicons and grammars of the languages themselves, there is significant unexplored overlap with the methodologies and concerns of oral history.

The presentation is open to the college and everyone in the college community is welcome to attend. For more information about the event, contact the project website (<https://oralhistory.common.gc.cuny.edu>) or Thomas Cleary ([✉ tcleary@lagcc.cuny.edu](mailto:tcleary@lagcc.cuny.edu) / 📞 (718) 482-5434).