SOCIAL **JUSTICE**
and the remaking of
TECHNOLOGICAL
CULTURES

Center on Digital Culture and Society
LAUNCH SYMPOSIUM
April 3, 2020

CDCS

CENTER ON DIGITAL CULTURE AND SOCIETY

This international symposium aims to foster conversations around new ways of thinking about digital technology and society. It features the high-impact research of distinguished scholars from multiple academic disciplines. Their work charts new research agendas and helps envision more socially just technological futures.

SCHEDULE

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	**BREAKFAST**

9:00 AM – 9:15 AM

Welcome
John L. Jackson, Jr. *(Penn)*
Guobin Yang *(Penn)*

9:15 AM – 10:45 AM

Digital Labor

Moderator: Julia Ticona *(Penn)*
Brooke Duffy *(Cornell)*
Ben Shestakofsky *(Penn)*
Lin Zhang *(University of New Hampshire)*

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM COFFEE AND TEA BREAK

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Technology, Race, and Gender

Moderator: Sarah J. Jackson *(Penn)*
Moya Bailey *(Northeastern University)*
Kishonna Gray *(University of Illinois at Chicago)*
Carrie A. Rentschler *(McGill University)*

12:30 PM – 1:45 PM LUNCH

1:45 PM – 3:15 PM

Algorithms & Quantification

Moderator: Jessa Lingel *(Penn)*
Angelé Christin *(Stanford University)*
Ezekiel Dixon-Román *(Penn)*
Joseph Turow *(Penn)*

3:15 PM – 3:30PM COFFEE AND TEA BREAK

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Digital Activism

Moderator: David Grazian *(Penn)*
Meredith Clark *(University of Virginia)*
Jun Liu *(University of Copenhagen)*
Jen Schradie *(Sciences Po)*

5:00 PM – 6:15 PM

Closing Keynote - Are Digital Futures Choice or Fate?

Craig Calhoun *(Arizona State University)*
Introduction by Barbie Zelizer *(Penn)*

6:15 PM – 7:30 PM **Reception**

John L. Jackson, Jr.

Dr. John L. Jackson, Jr. *(@johnljacksonjr)* is the Walter H. Annenberg Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication and Richard Perry University Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. He was previously Dean of the School of Social Policy & Practice and Special Adviser to the Provost on Diversity at Penn. His research examines ethnographic methods in media analysis, the impact of mass media on urban life, media-making as a form of community-building and knowledge production, globalization and the remaking of ethnic/racial diasporas, visual studies, urban anthropology, critical race theory, and ethnographic film. He is the author of *Harlemworld: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America* (University of Chicago Press, 2001); *Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity* (University of Chicago Press, 2005); *Racial Paranoia: The Unintended Consequences of Political Correctness* (Basic Civitas, 2008); *Thin Description: Ethnography and the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem* (Harvard University Press, 2013); *Impolite Conversations: On Race, Politics, Sex, Money, and Religion* , co-written with Cora Daniels (Atria/Simon & Schuster, 2014), and *Televised Redemption: Black Religious Media and Racial Empowerment* (NYU Press, 2016), co-written with Carolyn Rouse and Marla Frederick. He is also editor of *Social Policy and Social Justice* (2016), distributed by the University of Pennsylvania Press. His most recent film, co-directed with Deborah A. Thomas, is *Bad Friday: Rastafari after Coral Gardens* (Third World Newsreel, 2012), and he is currently part of the production team completing *Making Sweet Tea: The Lives and Loves of Southern Black Gay Men.*

Guobin Yang

Dr. Guobin Yang *(@yangguobin)* is the Grace Lee Boggs Professor of Communication and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication and Department of Sociology. Yang's research focuses on social movements, online activism, digital culture, cultural sociology, historical sociology, critical theory, global communication, environmental communication, and media and politics in China. He is the author or editor of nine books, including the award-winning *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* (Columbia University Press, 2009) and *The Red Guard Generation and Political Activism in China* (Columbia University Press, 2016), and has published more than 70 refereed journal articles. At Penn, he serves as the Annenberg School's Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, the Director of the Center on Digital Culture and Society,

and Deputy Director of the Center for the Study of Contemporary China. In addition to communication and sociology, he is also a faculty member in the Graduate Groups in History, East Asian Languages and Cultures, International Studies, the Center for East Asian Studies and the Asian American Studies Program.

Algorithmic Precarity in Platformized Cultural Labor
Brooke Erin Duffy

Dr. Brooke Erin Duffy *(@brookeerinduffy)* is an associate professor in the Department of Communication at Cornell University, where she also holds a faculty appointment in the Program in Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies. Her areas of interest include digital and social media industries; gender, identity, and inequality; and the impact of new technologies on work and labor. She's the author of *(Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work* (Yale University Press, 2017) — which *Wired* named among its "Top Tech Books of 2017" — and *Remake, Remodel: Women's Magazines in the Digital Age* (University of Illinois Press, 2013). She is also co-author of the forthcoming book *Platforms and Cultural Production* (Polity Press, 2020) with collaborators Thomas Poell and David Nieborg.

The Future of Work in the Financialized Organization
Benjamin Shestakofsky

Dr. Benjamin Shestakofsky *(@bshestakofsky)* is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. His research centers on how digital technologies are affecting work and employment, organizations, and economic exchange. His book project, *Working Algorithms*, draws on 19 months of participant-observation research at a high-tech startup company to investigate how relations between workers and technology evolved over three phases of the firm's development. The findings show how the dynamism of the globalized organizations in which software algorithms are produced and implemented will contribute to human labor's enduring relevance in the digital age. An article based on this project has been published in *Work and Occupations*; another was awarded the James D. Thompson Award for an Outstanding Graduate Student Paper by the ASA's Section on Organizations, Occupations, and Work. Manuscripts in progress examine the social construction of online markets; how diverse sets of users

are brought in line with — and challenge — a digital platform's design; and the relationship between venture capital, organizational cultures, and organizational change.

The Entrepreneurial Labor of Reinvention

Lin Zhang

Dr. Lin Zhang *(@LinZhang9)* is an assistant professor of communication and media studies at the University of New Hampshire. She graduated from the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, University of Southern California, with a PhD in Communication, and she holds an MA from NYU's Department of Media, Culture and Communication. Her research revolves around the cultural economy of information capitalism as it intersects with issues of class, gender, nation, and race. Currently, Zhang is working on a book project about digital entrepreneurship and emerging labor practices in China as the nation restructures its economy (under contract with Columbia University Press).

Moderator: Julia Ticona

Dr. Julia Ticona is an assistant professor at the Annenberg School for Communication, where her research investigates the ways that digital communication technologies shape the meaning and dignity of precarious work. She uses qualitative methods to examine the role of mobile phones, algorithmic labor platforms, and data-intensive management systems in the construction of identity and inequality for low-wage workers. She also collaborated on an amicus brief on behalf of Data & Society for *Carpenter vs. U.S.* before the U.S. Supreme Court. Her book, about the "digital hustles" of high and low-status freelancers in the gig economy, is under contract with Oxford University Press. Previously, she was a postdoctoral scholar at the Data & Society Research Institute. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Virginia, and her B.A. from Wellesley College. You can find her work in *New Media & Society*, *Information, Communication, and Society*, as well as *Wired*, *FastCompany*, and *Slate*.

TECHNOLOGY, RACE, AND GENDER

Towards an Ethical Digital Culture

Moya Bailey

Dr. Moya Bailey's *(@moyazb)* work focuses on marginalized groups' use of digital media to promote social justice as acts of self-affirmation and health promotion. She is interested in how race, gender, and sexuality are represented in media and medicine. She currently curates the #transformDH Tumblr initiative in Digital Humanities. She is also the digital alchemist for the Octavia E. Butler Legacy Network. She is an assistant professor in the department of Cultures, Societies, and Global Studies and the program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Northeastern University.

Intersectional Tech: Oral, Visual, and Textual Traditions of Marginalized Users

Kishonna Gray

Dr. Kishonna L. Gray *(@kishonnagray)* is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois – Chicago. She is also a faculty associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. She previously served as a MLK Scholar and Visiting Professor in Women and Gender Studies and Comparative Media Studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Dr. Gray is an interdisciplinary, intersectional, digital media scholar and digital herstorian whose areas of research include identity, performance and online environments, embodied deviance, cultural production, video games, and Black Cyberfeminism. Dr. Gray is completing a manuscript, tentatively titled *Intersectional Tech: Black User in Digital Gaming* (LSU Press, 2020). She is also the author of *Race, Gender, & Deviance in Xbox Live* (Routledge, 2014) which has been described by T.L. Taylor as "an insightful, original, and compelling piece of research," and by Tressie McMillan Cottom as "an important contribution to the sociology of race in the digital era."

Bystander Activism and the Attention Economies of Social Media

Carrie Rentschler

Dr. Carrie Rentschler's *(@RentschlerC)* research examines feminist activism, media making, gender violence, and the politics of witnessing. She is the

author of *Second Wounds: Victims' Rights and the Media in the U.S.* (Duke University Press, 2011) and co-editor of *Girlhood and the Politics of Place* (Berghahn Books, 2016). She is currently writing two histories: one on contemporary bystander culture, and another on student activism against sexual violence on campuses. She is the William Dawson Scholar of Feminist Media Studies at McGill University, where she teaches in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies and is associate faculty in the Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies.

Moderator: Sarah J. Jackson

A scholar of the public sphere, Sarah J. Jackson *(@sjjphd)* studies how media, journalism, and technology are used by and represent marginalized publics, with a focus on communication by and about Black and feminist activists. Her first book *Black Celebrity, Racial Politics, and the Press* (Routledge 2014) examines the relationship between Black celebrity activism, journalism, and American politics. Her second book *Hashtag Activism: Networks of Race and Gender Justice* (MIT Press 2020) focuses on the use of Twitter in contemporary social movements. Her work has appeared in the Journal of Communication, the International Journal of Press Politics, and Feminist Media Studies, among others. Jackson is frequently called on as an expert by local and national media outlets including NPR, PBS, the Associated Press, and the New York Times.

ALGORITHMS AND QUANTIFICATION

The Ethnographer and the Algorithm
Angèle Christin

Dr. Angèle Christin *(@AngeleChristin)* is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and affiliated faculty in the Sociology Department and Program in Science, Technology, and Society at Stanford University. She studies how algorithms and analytics transform professional values, expertise, and work practices. Her forthcoming book, *Metrics at Work: Journalism and the Contested Meaning of Algorithms* (Princeton University Press), focuses on the case of web journalism, analyzing the growing importance of audience data ("clicks") in web newsrooms in the U.S. and France. Drawing on ethnographic methods, Angèle examines how American and French journalists make sense of traffic numbers in different ways, which in turn has distinct effects on the production of

news in the two countries. In another project, she studies the construction, institutionalization, and reception of predictive algorithms in the U.S. criminal justice system. Angèle received her PhD in Sociology from Princeton University and the EHESS (Paris). She is an affiliate at the Data & Society Research Institute.

Voiceprints, Bio-Profiling, And The Future Of Freedom: The Rise of the Voice Intelligence Industry
Joseph Turow

Dr. Joseph Turow *(@JoeProf)* is the Robert Lewis Shayon Professor of Communication at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. Turow is an elected Fellow of the International Communication Association and was presented with a Distinguished Scholar Award by the National Communication Association. A 2005 New York Times Magazine article referred to Turow as "probably the reigning academic expert on media fragmentation." In 2010, the New York Times called him "the ranking wise man on some thorny new-media and marketing topics." In 2012, the TRUSTe internet privacy-management organization designated him a "privacy pioneer" for his research and writing on marketing and digital-privacy. He has authored eleven books, edited five, and written more than 150 articles on mass media industries. His most recent books are *The Aisles Have Eyes: How Retailers Track Your Shopping, Strip Your Privacy*, and *Define Your Power* (Yale, 2017) and *Media Today: Mass Communication in a Converging World* (Routledge, Fall 2016; Serbian edition in two volumes, 2015).

Data Capitalism and the Counter Futures of AI Ethics
Ezekiel Dixon-Román

Dr. Ezekiel Dixon-Román *(@EDixonRoman)* is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. His interdisciplinary scholarship is focused on the cultural studies of quantification and critical theories of difference. In particular, his research program seeks to make cultural and critical theoretical interventions toward rethinking and reconceptualizing the technologies and practices of quantification. He co-guest edited "Alternative Ontologies of Number: Rethinking the Quantitative in Computational Culture" (Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies, 2016) and is the author of *Inheriting Possibility: Social Reproduction & Quantification in Education* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

Moderator: Jessa Lingel

Dr. Jessa Lingel is an assistant professor at the Annenberg School for Communication, where she studies digital culture, looking for the ways that relationships to technology can show us gaps in power or possibilities for social change. She received her Ph.D. in Communication and Information from Rutgers University. She has an MLIS from Pratt Institute and an M.A. from New York University. Lingel's research focuses on three key areas: Alterity and appropriation, and investigations of how information and technology is altered, tinkered with, subverted and articulated by marginalized groups; Politics of infrastructure, where systems of categorization, organization and design can reveal underlying ideologies and logics; and technological activism as a way of exploring how socio-technical practices can contribute to projects of social justice.

DIGITAL ACTIVISM

Called Out, Called In, Cancelled: The Evolution of Accountability Practices in Social Media Activism

Meredith Clark

Dr. Meredith D. Clark (*@MeredithDClark*) is a former newspaper journalist whose research focuses on the intersections of race, media, and power. Her award-winning dissertation on Black Twitter landed her on "The Root 100," the news website's list of the most influential African Americans in the country, in 2015. She's a regular contributor to Poynter.org's diversity column, and her research has been published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, the *Journal of Social Media in Society*, and *New Media & Society.* Dr. Clark is a graduate of Florida A&M University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and she is currently an assistant professor of media studies at the University of Virginia.

From Affordance to Repertoire of Contention: The Missing Link in Digital Activism Studies

Jun Liu

Dr. Jun Liu is an associate professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. His research covers political sociology and communication technologies. He has won several awards from the Information Technology and Politics Section of American Political Science Association, the International Communication Association's Mobile Communication Interest Group, and the International Communication Association Mobile Preconference. His monograph on digital activism across the globe, *Shifting Dynamics of Contention*, will be published by Oxford University Press in May 2020.

The Revolution That Wasn't: How Digital Activism Favors Conservatives

Jen Schradie

Jen Schradie (*@schradie*) is a sociologist and Assistant Professor at the Observatoire Sociologique du Changement at Sciences Po in Paris. Her research areas include the digital divide, digital activism, and digital labor. Her current comparative project focuses on gender and class differences in the start-up economy in France and the U.S., and another examines hate speech online against Muslims. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods with online and offline data, she contextualizes disparities and variation of participation in digital society. Schradie has a new book with Harvard University Press, *The Revolution That Wasn't: How Digital Activism Favors Conservatives.* Her work on digital democracy has been featured on CNN and the BBC and in the *New Yorker*, *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Wired*, *Time*, Vox, and Buzzfeed, among other media. She was awarded the Public Sociology Alumni Prize at the University of California, Berkeley, and has directed six documentary films.

Moderator: David Grazian

Dr. David Grazian is Associate Professor of Sociology and Communication and Faculty Director of the Urban Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania. Prof. Grazian received his B.A. from Rutgers University in 1994, and his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 2000. He teaches courses on popular culture, mass media and the arts; cities and urban sociology; classical sociological theory; and ethnographic methods. In his research he employs a variety of ethnographic and other qualitative methods to study the production and consumption of commercial entertainment in the urban milieu. He is the author of four books: *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs* (Univ. Chicago Press, 2003), *On the Make: The Hustle of Urban Nightlife* (Univ. Chicago Press, 2008), *Mix It Up: Popular Culture, Mass Media, and Society* (W.W. Norton, 2010; 2017), and *American Zoo: A Sociological Safari* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2015). He is currently writing a book on nonstandard urban workspaces in the new economy for the University of Chicago Press.

Are Digital Futures Choice or Fate?

Craig Calhoun

Dr. Craig Calhoun is University Professor of Social Sciences at Arizona State University (ASU). He holds joint appointments in the School of Politics and Global Studies, the School of Public Affairs, the School for the Future of Innovation in Society, the School of Sustainability, and the School of Arts, Media and Engineering. Calhoun's work at ASU focuses on strengthening the ability of the social sciences by working together with the natural sciences, engineering, and humanities to address the most complex challenges facing society today — from crises in democracy to the shifting nature of globalization and the future of place-based communities, the complicated social and ethical issues raised by new technologies, and the need for creativity, solidarity, and determination in order to achieve just and sustainable futures. He is the author or coauthor of 9 books, editor of another 22, and has published more than 70 journal articles and 100 book chapters that address culture, social movements, education, communication, religion, nationalism, the impact of technology, capitalism and globalization, critical theory and philosophy, and contemporary and historical empirical research. His work has been widely reprinted in anthologies and translated into 21 languages.

Calhoun was the inaugural President of Berggruen Institute. From 2012-2016, he was Director and President of the London School of Economics and Political Science, where he remains Centennial Professor. From 1999 to 2012, he was President of Social Science Research Council, and before that was a University Professor of Social Science at NYU. Calhoun has taught at Columbia University and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He has held honorary chairs or been a visiting professor in Asmara, Beijing, Berlin, Bristol, Khartoum, Oslo, and Paris and has been honored for his teaching by awards from students at UNC, Columbia, and NYU. In recognition of his contributions to social science research, Professor Calhoun was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in July 2015.

Barbie Zelizer

Dr. Barbie Zelizer is the Raymond Williams Professor of Communication, Associate Dean for Research, and Director of the Center for Media at Risk at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication. A former journalist, Zelizer is known for her work on journalism, culture, memory, and images, particularly in times of crisis. She has authored or edited fourteen books, including the award-winning *About To Die: How News Images Move the Public* (Oxford, 2010) and *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago, 1998), and over 150 articles, book chapters and essays. Recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Freedom Forum Center Research Fellowship, a Fellowship from Harvard University's Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy, a Fellowship from the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, a Fulbright Senior Scholar, a Fellowship from Stanford University's Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and an ACLS Fellowship, Zelizer is also a media critic, whose work has appeared in The Nation, PBS News Hour, CNN, The Huffington Post, Newsday, Liberation, and other media organs. Coeditor of *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism* and former Director of the Scholars Program in Culture and Communication, she is a past President of the International Communication Association, where she is also a Fellow, and a Distinguished Scholar of the National Communication Association. She is a former Judge of the Peabody Awards for Excellence in Electronic Media, and her work has been translated into French, Korean, Turkish, Romanian, Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew, and Portuguese. She is currently working on a manuscript entitled *How the Cold War Drives the News*.