CARNAL NETWORKS: AFFECTIVE COUNTERPUBLICS AND THE ACTIVIST VIDEOS OF #BLACKLIVESMATTER

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Fake news, filter bubbles, hate comments, and dataveillance – according to recent public debates and media theoretical discourses, contemporary public spheres face new and ongoing threats. But as plausible as the warnings against the new waves of outrage, online propaganda, and algorithmic distortions might appear, the subsequent call to reason remains reductive. It relies on the false dichotomy of reflection and affection, rationality and irrationality, and fails to acknowledge the complex affective entanglements in existing networked publics.

With recourse to affect studies, media theories of the network (Galloway/Thacker, Bratton etc.), queerfeminist critiques of classical concepts of the public sphere (Butler, Warner etc.), and by reconsidering Arendt’s notion of sensus communis, the talk advocates a new understanding of publics and counterpublics in the context of digital media networks. Through close analyses of witness videos in the context of the antiracist network #BlackLivesMatter in the U.S. and other types of web video activism, the talk critically examines recent emergences of affective counterpublics and suggests an alternative framework beyond techno-optimist and techno-pessimist approaches.

WEDNESDAY
10. JANUARY 2018
6.15 PM
C HS 5
(LECTURE HALL 5)