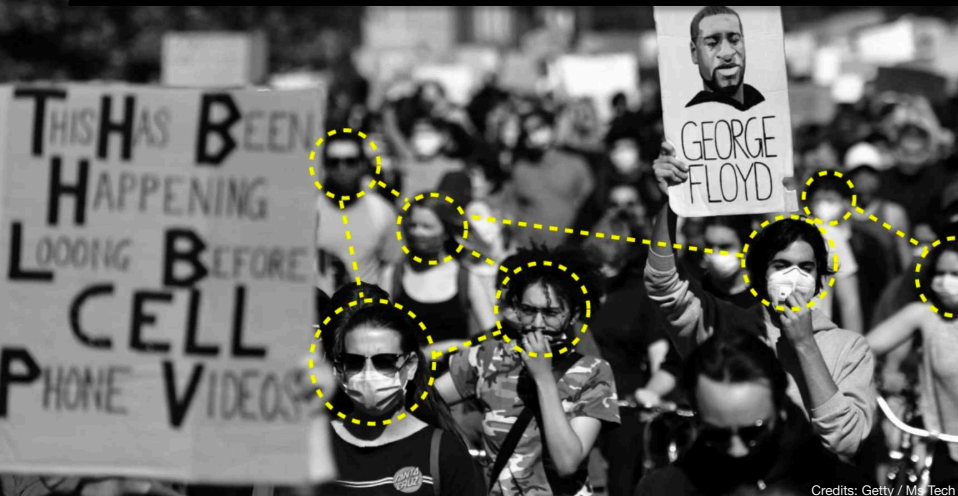


Race and/as Technology

Biopolitics, Engineered Inequality, and Racism



Josef Barla and Vicky Kluzik | Institute of Sociology, Goethe University Frankfurt | Summer term 2021

contents

In the recent years, the relationship between race and digital technologies has gained new momentum. Emergent forms of engineered inequalities, from the governance of life and death through biotechnologies and algorithms to the commodification of bodies in platform capitalism or the biopolitical management of b/ordering are now at the core of the study of the dynamics of power. The aim of this course is to understand how racial logics enter the design of technology and how race itself operates as a tool of division that undermines social justice. Moving beyond both technological determinism and the idea of technological neutrality, we will explore how social practices, norms, and relations are a constitutive part of technological design and function. In doing so, we will not only discuss the role technologies play in the production, stabilization, and destabilization of social (power) relations, democracy, and knowledge, but also how race itself functions as a technology. Unpacking multiple black boxes, we will arrive at a nuanced understanding of intersectional perspectives for the study of race and technology. Reading classics in social theory as well as recent contributions to feminist and critical race studies, the participants will gain a broad understanding of the interstices of the study of race, racism, and technology. In addition, we will consider contributions from art and culture to expand our themes of interest.

We will use a course blog to allow for novel forms of theoretical inquiry and the discussion of concrete examples from politics, art, and technology in the form of blog posts. This also aims to foster mutual engagement with each other's contributions.

Master seminar: willingness to read and discuss difficult texts; basic knowledge in sociology of technology, science and technology studies, and critical race theory

Participation requirements (Teilnahmeschein)

- **two contributions** to the course blog (c. 500 words) and **two comments** to the contributions of others
Alternatively: a review essay (3 pages) for a core text on the syllabus; to be **submitted one week before the respective session**
- **participation in the Zoom meetings**

Examination requirements (Leistungsschein)

- see above
- **term paper** (c. 15 pages); to be discussed with the course instructors; deadline: **15 Oct. 2021**

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schedule and literature

Zoom meetings: 10:30-12:00 | 14:30-16:00

Literature and Zoom links for all meetings are accessible through the OLAT course.

Introduction

14 April 2021

For preparation:

Chun, Wendy H. K. (2012): "Race and/as Technology, or How to Do Things to Race". In: Lisa Nakamura and Peter Chow-White (eds.), *Race After the Internet*, London: Routledge, pp. 38-60.

Session 1: Biopolitics and racialized assemblages

28 May 2021

Foucault, Michel (1997) [1976]: "Society Must Be Defended". *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, New York: Picador, pp. 239-264.

Weheliye, Alexander G. (2014): *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. Chapter "Racism: Biopolitics", pp. 53-73.

Session 2: Biometric surveillance and digital epidermalization

2 June 2021

Benjamin, Ruha (2019): *Race After Technology. Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code*, Cambridge: Polity. Chapter "Coded Exposure. Is Visibility a Trap?", pp. 67-94.

Browne, Simone (2015): *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Durham and London: Duke University Press. Chapter: "B@anding Blackness: Biometric Technology and the Surveillance of Blackness", pp. 89-129.

Session 3: Automated futures and digital infrastructures

25 June 2021

Atanasoski, Neda, and Kalindi Vora (2019): *Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, Durham and London: Duke University Press. Chapter: "Technoliberalism and Automation: Racial Imaginaries of a Postlabor World", pp. 27-53.

Eubanks, Virginia (2019): *Automating Inequality. How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*, New York: St. Martin's Press. Chapter: "From Poorhouse to Database", pp. 174-200.

Session 4: Reflection

2 July 2021

Discussion of a topic/text based on the interests of the participants. *Please make suggestions on the topics/texts you would like to discuss in this session by **May 15** at the latest.* Wrap-up and concluding discussion.

Spezialisierung (SOZ10-BA-SP) ♦ Wissen, Technik und Umwelt (SOZ-MA-6) ♦ Geschlecht, Migration und Diversität (SOZ-MA-2) ♦ Spezialisierung (SOZ-MA-8) ♦ Spezialisierung (GS-BA-6) ♦ Spezialisierung (SOZ-BA-SP) ♦ Staat und Demokratie (PT-MA-3) ♦ Gesellschaftstheorie (PT-MA-5a) ♦ Weltordnung und Zivilisierung (IS-MA-2) ♦ M2 Wahlpflichtmodul Exemplary field 'Technologies of Governance' ♦ M4 Wahlpflichtmodul Exemplary field 'Economies of Life'

Further readings

Session 1

- Foucault, Michel (1978): *The History of Sexuality. Vol I: An Introduction*, New York: Pantheon Books. Chapter: "Right of Death and Power over Life", pp. 133-159.
- Lemke, Thomas (2011): *Biopolitics. An Advanced Introduction*, New York: NYU Press, pp. 9-53.
- Mbembe, Achille (2003): "Necropolitics", *Public Culture* 15(1): 11-40.

Session 2

- Benjamin, Ruha (2018): "Black AfterLives Matter: Cultivating Kinfulness as Reproductive Justice", In: Adele E. Clarke and Donna Haraway (eds.): *Making Kin not Population*, Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, pp. 41-66.
- Fanon, Frantz (2008) [1967]: *Black Skin, White Mask*, London: Pluto Press. Chapter: "The Fact of Blackness", pp. 82-108.

Sesion 3

- Chude-Sokei, Louis (2016): *The Sound of Culture. Diaspora and Black Technopoetics*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press. Chapter "Modernism's Black Mechanics", pp. 21-77
- Couldry, Nick, and Ulises A. Mejias (2019): "Data colonialism: Rethinking big data's relation to the contemporary subject", *Television & New Media*, 20(4): 336-349.
- Deleuze, Gilles (1992): "Postscript on the Societies of Control", *October* 59:3-7.

Suggestions for Session 4

- Benjamin, Ruha (2016): "Catching Our Breath: Critical Race STS and the Carceral Imagination", *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society* 2: 145-156.
- Cave, Stephen, and Kanta Dihal (2020): "The Whiteness of AI", *Philosophy & Technology* 33: 685-703.
- Haraway, Donna (2018): "Making Kin in the Chthulucene: Reproducing Multispecies Justice". In: Adele E. Clarke and Donna Haraway (eds.), *Making Kin Not Population*, Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, pp. 134-168.
- Murphy, Michelle (2018): "Against Population, Towards Alterlife". In: Adele E. Clarke and Donna Haraway (eds.), *Making Kin Not Population*, Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, pp. 134-168.
- Reardon, Jenny, and Kim TallBear (2012): "'Your DNA is Our History': Genomics, Anthropology, and the Construction of Whiteness as Property", *Current Anthropology* 55(S5): 233-245.
- Roberts, Dorothy (2011): *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Crete Race in the Twenty-First Century*. Chapter: "Genetic Surveillance", pp. 261-286.