



The Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society (CRRES)

presents

The Schematic State

Race, Transnationalism, and the Politics of the Census

How and why do states define, engineer and manipulate racial classification schema and with what effects? *The Schematic State: Race, Transnationalism, and the Politics of the Census* (forthcoming, Cambridge UP) explores this broader question by examining the political development of racial classifications on the national censuses of the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. Through a comparative analysis of over one hundred years of census-taking in these three countries of the Black Atlantic, the book maps the changing nature of the census from an instrument historically used to manage and control racial populations to its contemporary purpose as an important source of statistical information, employed for egalitarian ends. Emphasizing the constitutive and often transnationally-textured relationships among statistics, state-building, and race-making, the book argues that the modern state is neither the pluralist's neutral arena nor the benign state of an imaginary post-racial world. Rather, the state is fundamentally *schematic*. This framework exposes race-making as a process marred by contestation and contradiction and demonstrates that the primary goal of the schematic state is to make the population legible, turning the fluid and politically contested substance of race into stable, identifiable categories to be used as the basis of law and policy.

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Thursday, April 9, 2015

Persimmon Room, Indiana Memorial Union
4:00-5:30pm



Debra Thompson is an assistant professor of political science at Ohio University. She received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Toronto (2010) and was a SSHRC Post-Doctoral Fellow with the Department of Government and Center for American Political Studies at Harvard University in 2010-2011. Her book *The Schematic State: Race, Transnationalism, and the Politics of the Census*, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press. She is also working on a comparative project that examines the rise and fall of affirmative action policies and programs around the world, especially in institutions of higher education.