

WINTER 2019 COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Date: Wednesday March 6

Time: 3:15 – 5PM

Location: Social Sciences 1, room 261

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Thinking Across Multiple Social Orders and Leaky Boundaries

Abstract: Ontological perspectivism is not the only theoretical movement in anthropology wrestling with the uneasy legacy that the culture concept has left in its theoretical wake. A growing number of anthropologists are taking on board ontological perspectivists' complicated engagement with the analytical possibilities promised by culture, but starting from a different intellectual first cut. While ontological perspectivists presume Others exist within a single different ontology, multiple social orders (MSO) theorists believe that their fieldwork interlocutors are constantly navigating multiple social orders. They ask: how do people on the ground manage to move between different social orders in their daily lives, social orders that not only ethnographers find contradictory but that the people themselves on the ground sometimes find challenging to live with simultaneously as they move, sometimes rapidly, between these epistemologically and ontologically different ways of carving up the world.

In this talk, I explore how beginning from the premise that everyone lives among leaky multiple social orders encourages anthropologists to explore questions surrounding how the boundaries of social orders are created and maintained, how people, objects, and ideas circulate translated across social orders, and how people navigate the spacetime of different social orders.

Bio: Ilana Gershon is the Ruth N. Hall professor of anthropology and a scholar of new media and work. She has two recent books, *Down and Out in the New Economy: How People Find (or Don't Find) Work Today*, and an edited volume with Natalie Porter, *Living With Animals: Bonds Across Species*, which is a collection of fictionalized ethnographic 'manuals' for how humans and other animals accomplish complicated social tasks together around the world.

