



**Wednesday,
April 12, 2017**

**12:00 pm-1:30 pm
Behavioral Sciences
Building
Room 4105**

**Bring your own lunch--
and we'll supply the
cookies and beverages!**

**White Demophobia:
Race, Media, and the Statisticalization of Latino
Threat**

Michael Rodríguez-Muñiz, Northwestern University

Over the past several decades, demographic change has emerged as a major point of concern and controversy in the United States and Western Europe. Building on the work of Herbert Blumer and recent scholarship on the performativity of statistics, this talk explores the relationship between the media and white anxieties about the so-called "Browning of America." Through an analysis of media discourse in the wake of the 2010 census, I argue – contrary to much public debate and academic research – that feelings of demographic threat are an affectively cultivated, rather than an automatic, response to population trends. This talk highlights two methods of cultivation: *frames of gravity* and *racial juxtaposition*. The particular manner in which these methods charge or invest demographic statistics with racial meaning promote, intentionally or not, a vision of population change as a zero-sum game, which increasingly casts Latinos as demographic winners and whites as demographic losers. In contrast to earlier moments of demophobia, this analysis suggests that media coverage can contribute to white anxieties without recourse to explicitly racialized and racist tropes.

