

DATA, DISCOURSE & DEMOCRACY WORKSHOP SERIES

African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science

WORKSHOP: ATTENTION, ALGORITHMS, AND POLITICAL AGENCY

Professor Karen Frost-Arnold

8 October 11:00–13:00 SAST

With an African Welcome from our Elders

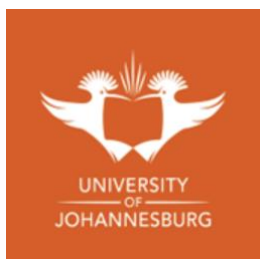
ZOOM LINK: <https://zoom.us/j/93746284833>

VENUE: 11TH Floor Boardroom, [UJ on Empire](#), Johannesburg South Africa

This workshop will examine how social media algorithms shape what online content we see, and what we don't see. These algorithms raise interesting questions about political agency. On the one hand, social media algorithms are proprietary secrets that we cannot choose. On the other hand, algorithms can be trained by users. For example, TikTok users put time into teaching the algorithm to show them content they want to consume. In this workshop, we will discuss how corporate algorithms constrain our democratic agency, and we will discuss actions that citizens can take to regain control of our online public spaces. I will argue that epistemically responsible agents work to train these algorithms, even though they are never fully under our control. I argue that part of this epistemic responsibility is learning how to regulate our emotions so that we can pay attention to challenging material.



Karen Frost-Arnold is a Professor of Philosophy at Hobart & William Smith Colleges in New York and a Visiting Associate Professor at the African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science at the University of Johannesburg. Her research focuses on social epistemology, trust, feminist philosophy, and epistemology of the internet. Her book *Who Should We Be Online? A Social Epistemology for the Internet* was published by Oxford University Press in January 2023.



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ACEPS: <https://www.uj.ac.za/aceps>

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Funding: GES Grant

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