

Friday Seminar

Feb 2 | 1:00 - 2:30PM | NAH 213



Department of Anthropology
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
香港中文大學人類學系

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Unruly Speech: Displacement and the Politics of Transgression

UNRULY SPEECH

DISPLACEMENT
AND THE POLITICS
OF TRANSGRESSION

SASKIA WITTEBORN

Transgressive communication and media practices are a useful starting point for exploring the production of social realities, including spaces in which hierarchies of meanings can be challenged. The talk, which is based on the monograph *Unruly Speech: Displacement and the Politics of Transgression* (2023), introduces the audience to some of these transgressive practices in the context of displacement and diasporic advocacy. In particular, the talk focuses on the Uyghur diaspora in the United States and in Germany to show how transgressive practices travel and are adapted for diasporic purposes. The discussion highlights how transgression can be traced across time and space to identify its historical, institutional, and technological moorings as well as emerging spaces for rights discourses on a global scale. Moreover, the discussion illustrates how diasporic transgression constitutes sociopolitical and technological configurations that have to align with a politicized humanism by Western state and nonstate actors to reach diasporic goals. Overall, the longitudinal, multi-sited research in China, the United States, and Germany provides the basis for a conversation about fieldwork in transnational settings and the conditions that enable and control transgressive practices in contexts of displacement.

Saskia Witteborn is Professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at CUHK. She specializes in critical technology studies and migration. She researches the geopolitics of identity, migrants' technology practices, the datafication of migration, and the link between migration and digitally immersive environments. Saskia was a visiting scholar at Free University of Berlin, at BIM/Humboldt University, Télécom Paris, and the LSE. She is author of *Unruly Speech: Displacement and the Politics of Transgression* (Stanford, 2023), co-editor of *The SAGE Handbook of Media and Migration* (SAGE, 2020), and co-author of *Together: Communicating Interpersonally. A Social Construction Approach* (Oxford, 6th ed., 2005).