



*Department of Anthropology
Gehman Lecture*

THE PANDEMIC WORKPLACE

Dr. Ilana Gershon

Professor of Anthropology, Rice University

Beginning from the assumption that the US workplace has become a key site in which Americans develop their political imagination of what it means to be a democratic citizen, in this talk I explore what the pandemic has revealed about how the workplace functions as site of private government. I address the complexities of learning fundamental lessons about governing through how today's workplaces organize control, authority, and decision-making. In the context of the pandemic, many Americans began to interpret workplace interactions through classic social contract theory, returning to foundational questions about the sacrifices asked of individuals for the common good, and what democratic participation should look like in deliberative decision-making processes. I ultimately argue that what the pandemic and our current political climate reveals is an urgent need to see contemporary American workplaces as laboratories of different approaches to democratic practices that can demonstrate (or fail to demonstrate) to American workers the value and effectiveness of participating in a deliberative democracy.

Monday March 27th, 11:00am
Social Science Center 3018

Western  Social Science

Supported by the Social Science Student Donation Fund