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MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS



DON'T LET THE MISOGYNISTS GRIND YOU DOWN: POPULAR FEMINISM AND *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2019

5.15-6.45PM

THE MCCORMICK FOUNDATION CENTER FORUM
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT: Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel turned Hulu serialized drama *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985, 2017, respectively) arrived as a chilling forewarning during the early days of Donald Trump's presidency. Both the novel and the serialized television drama engage the politics of gender, race and right-wing political regimes, and both can be considered examples of what I call "popular feminism." In this talk, I contend with how, and in what ways, the rise of popular feminism in the twenty-first-century North American and European context has encouraged both a response and an intensification of popular misogyny. What does reading a novel or watching a series about the oppression of women involve, and what kinds of resistance or collective activism to the politics of contemporary moment might *The Handmaid's Tale* engender?

SARAH BANET-WEISER is Professor of Media and Communications and Head of the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics. Her research interests include gender in the media, identity, citizenship, and cultural politics, consumer culture and popular media, race and the media, and intersectional feminism. Her research is deeply interdisciplinary, as is her scholarly editorial work. She is currently the current co-editor of the International Communication Association journal, *Communication, Culture, Critique*. Professor Banet-Weiser is a Distinguished Faculty Fellow at the Center for Excellence in Teaching at the University of Southern California. She comes to LSE after 19 years in the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Southern California, where she was Professor, Vice Dean and the Director of the School of Communication.

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