The Centre for Sensory Studies is pleased to present

THE FALL SEMESTER SENSORY STUDIES RESEARCH SEMINAR

Algorithms for Social Justice?
Tracking Population Health in the Sensor Society

Speaker: Dr. Martin French, Assistant Professor, Sociology & Anthropology, Concordia University

Andrejevic and Burdon define the *sensor society* as one in which "the interactive devices and applications that populate the digital information environment come to double as sensors" (*Television and New Media* 16, 1, 2014). Building on this conceptualization, this paper considers how the 'infrastructure' of the sensor society may be leveraged to track population health. Drawing primarily on published literature on select, computationally-driven public health surveillance projects, the focus is not only upon the technical accomplishments of these innovations, but also upon their ramifications for public health professions, public health institutions, and citizens. Key areas of exploration concern 1) the specialized knowledge they require and produce; 2) their potential to become disruptive innovations, unsettling the established institutional order; and 3) some ethical implications associated with their reliance upon 'citizen-sensors'. A concluding question considers the complex social justice implications of these projects. Are we witnessing a renewal of public health's social justice legacies, now algorithmically encoded, or something else?

Dr. Martin French's research examines the social dimensions of technology with an empirical focus on communications & information technology and the risks they help to mitigate or aggravate. He is particularly interested in how organizations leverage new communications & information technologies to 'sense' risk.

When: Friday, October 30, 1:00-2:30 pm
Where: Room H-1124, Hall Building, 1455 de Maisonneuve W.
            (Metro Guy-Concordia)

Open to the public. Bring your lunch!

Concordia University
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