



RESEARCH GROUP ON POWER, POLITICS AND GOVERNING

KEYNOTE LECTURE: WILLIAM WALTERS

OF SPIRITED STRUGGLES: REVISITING FOUCAULT'S *SOCIETY MUST BE DEFENDED* IN AN AGE OF RIGHT-WING POPULISM

What does Foucault's thought offer scholars interested in the rise of far-right politics? While some have mooted the idea of populist governmentality this lecture makes a different move. It revisits Foucault's 1975-76 lecture series, 'Society must be defended'. In those lectures Foucault reflects on war, race struggle, class conflict, historical feuds and resentments, societies divided into rival camps, and in the final lecture, state racism, biopolitics and genocide. I argue there is something about the tenor of those lectures that has a strong political and emotional resonance with our own, very fractious time. I pay special attention to Foucault's reflections on the discourse of race struggles which he excavates from the chronicles of obscure European historians of the early modern period. Building on Grahame Thompson's reading of Foucault on race struggles, I develop a concept of *spirited struggles* which I argue can illuminate features of far right politics, but also aspects of leftist and decolonial movements in our political present. Foucault-influenced scholarship has a great deal to say about genealogies of governance, rather less on the theme of genealogies of politics. With this focus on spirited struggles I make a case for greater attention to genealogies of politics.

WILLIAM WALTERS is Chancellor's Professor of politics at the department of political science and the department of sociology and anthropology at Carleton University, Canada. He is the author and editor of numerous publications on governmentality and Foucauldian theory, including *Governmentality: critical encounters* and the recently published *Handbook on governmentality* (together with Martina Tazzioli).

WHEN: August 20 10.30 – 12.00

WHERE: Sjöströmsalen 1B309