



AAEP and Arts Priori present the 2018 "Manuel Barkan Dissertation Award" Lecture

YouTube beauty vlogs: How social media blurs social boundaries

Friday, April 6, 2018

12:30-3:30 pm

Sullivant Hall Room 141

1813 N. High Street

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Bio: Kelsi Stoltenow is a Ph.D. candidate at The Ohio State University. Her areas of expertise are the philosophy and science of human beauty, social media, and college teaching and learning. In 2017 she was awarded Ohio State's Graduate Associate Teaching Award. Before returning to graduate school Kelsi was a newspaper reporter and editor, having graduated from the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri.

Presentation Abstract: YouTube beauty vlogs reveal just how contradictory the terms "social" and "media" are. As YouTube has grown so have options for monetizing one's vlogging, turning what was once a medium for intimate social interaction into a platform for launching a (potentially) lucrative career. In this contradictory space many traditional social boundaries are blurred, like the boundary separating social and commercial behavior. This means many viewers of beauty vlogs aren't sure if they're friends with vloggers, or simply customers of their YouTube channels.

While researching YouTube beauty vlogs for my dissertation I also saw users re-negotiating the gender norms (a particular set of social boundaries) that dictate who can beautify to make themselves look classically glamorous. Intrigued by this boundary, I launched a philosophical inquiry rooted in Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and Virginia Postrel's theory of glamour. My interpretive finding for this inquiry is that by being, for example, black, older than 40, a man, or plus-size, some beauty vloggers regularly defy traditional gender norms.

