

PROGRAM IN EXPERIMENTAL CRITICAL THEORY
SPRING 2022 LECTURE SERIES

**“Counting to Two and Counting to Three:
Comparative Imaginaries of Freedom of Speech”**

With [Matei Candea](#)
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Debates over freedom of speech and its proper limits have become a recurrent feature of European and American public life in recent years. This talk examines the inherently comparative logics of these debates, the ways in which they figure and refigure differences between countries, legal systems, periods, generations, societies, cultures, sometimes ‘epochs’ or ‘civilizations.’ Building on earlier work on the comparative logics of anthropology, this paper suggests that, while some forms of comparison can help us discover new objects and imagine new possibilities, others rehearse the same problems and assumptions over and over again to no clear benefit. Taking the example of debates which followed the Charlie Hebdo killings in 2015, this paper points to the limits of a recurrently binary comparative imaginary in these debates. By tracing a more entangled story of divergent and recombinant visions and versions of freedom of speech in contemporary France, the paper suggests that it might be worth learning to count to (at least) three.

Monday, March 28th
12:00 PM PST via Zoom
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