

**The Philosophy Club at UCI
is proud to present**



**Professor
Frank
Benjamin
Wilderson, III**

Thursday, June 7

6:30 PM

HG1010



**Afro-Pessimism
and the Ruse of Analogy**

The expanding field of Afro-Pessimism elaborates a paradigmatic critique of the Human that reckons civil society's perverse and parasitic relation to the hydraulics of anti-Black violence. This talk will explain how this regime of anti-Black violence elaborates and positions Black people as internal enemies of civil society; and why an anti-Black regime of violence cannot be analogized with the regimes of violence that elaborate and position the Gramscian subaltern, the postcolonial subaltern, the colored but non-Black Western immigrant, and even the non-Black woman. Until recently, most critical theorists have, for the most part, assumed the opposite—that though structural violence performs differently on different populations, an essential regime of violence undergirds the subjugation of all sentient beings; and, furthermore, it is claimed, all sentient beings are Human beings. Afro-Pessimism interrogates the explanatory power of these claims by demonstrating how the cultural production and ontological coherence of the Human is secured through the impossibility of analogizing the violence that subjugates the subaltern and the violence that subjugates the Black (or Slave). Afro-Pessimism argues that the ruse of analogy is, more often than not, the besetting hobble of critical theory's first principles: that all sentient beings possess the capacity to transform limitless space into nameable place, and endless duration into recognized and incorporated events. In short, to wield cultural objects and, in so doing, change the fundamental nature of their lives. At every scale of abstraction, from psychoanalysis's topography of the psyche or the Bakhtinian chronotope, ascending to Gramsci's civil society or the dream of a new, postindustrial Commons calved from the glacier of globalization, cultural optimism, or optimism in culture production, prevails—as though the transformative powers of discursive capacity were hardwired into being itself. The presentation interrogates this logic and reflects on the stakes for critical theory and revolutionary politics.

**Free Admission
Snacks & Beverages**

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