

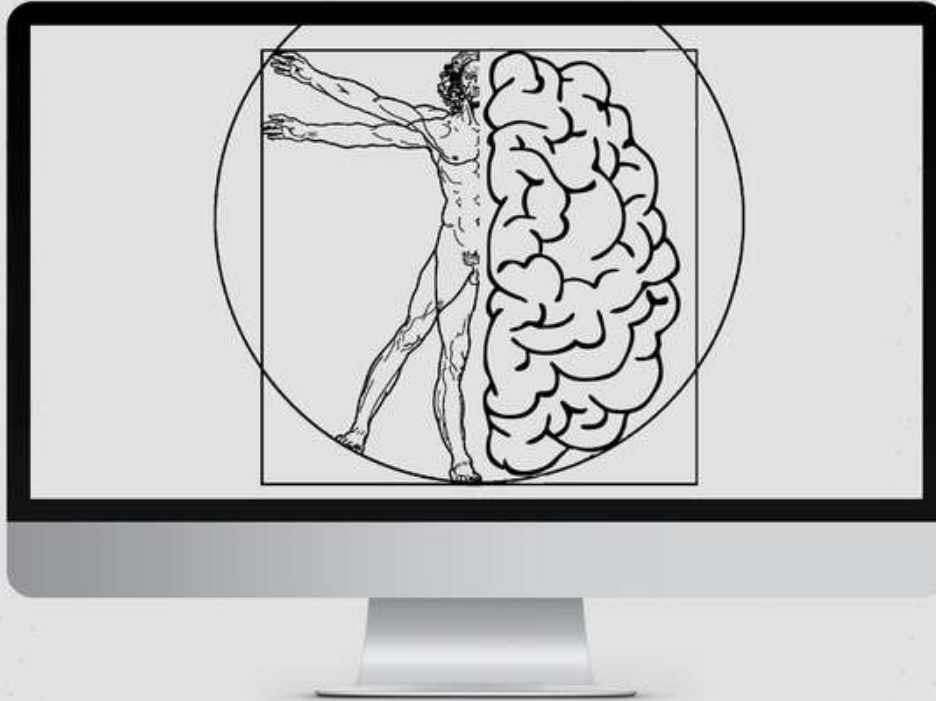
Zoom link to participate:
shorturl.at/kxEPU
(Meeting ID: 814 2531 9539)



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SCREENS AND THE DIGITAL MEDIASCAPE
(IN PANDEMIC TIMES)

Pandemic Mediation: Screening Covid-19

Even before its inception the COVID-19 pandemic has been a global media event, an outbreak of radical mediation. This pandemic has been premediated by prior zoonotic viral outbreaks like Ebola, SARS-1, or H1N1. It has in addition been premediated in novels like *Severance* or *Station 11* or films like *Contagion*. For the better part of a year Covid-19 has dominated periodic media with aperiodic emergency coverage—daily, weekly, and special shows on the virus among print, televisual, and networked news media. In fact for the longest time Covid-19 was known primarily and for the vast majority of the global media public primarily as a media event. Or put differently, whether we know Covid-19 through a neighbor's, friend's, celebrity's, or family member's disease, or the loss of jobs or health insurance, we know these also as media events, as instances of media narratives, of remediations and premediations of past and future pandemics. The coronavirus pandemic has generated a state of media, social, and political exception, which to paraphrase Walter Benjamin "is not the exception but the rule" But to call the pandemic an event of radical mediation is not in any sense whatsoever to say that it is not real, that it is not a virological, medical, social, economic actant or event. In fact it is to say the opposite. In this lecture I will explore the functioning of pandemic mediation in relation to the double logic of mediation informing our media screens. I will also take up the ongoing controversy over masks as screens, which work both to screen out virus particles coming into and going out of the body and to screen our faces or identities from view.



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