

MICHIGAN STATE
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Department of
Sociology, College of
Social Science

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Speaker
Series



Peter Bearman

Jonathan R. Cole Professor of the
Social Sciences, Columbia
University



The neural foundations/signatures of status and the emergence of dyadic reciprocity in human groups

Berkey Hall 457

Friday, April 14, 12:00-1:30pm

Humans are a fundamentally social species, and the social networks in which we are embedded significantly determine our physical and psychological well being, shape what is possible for us to achieve and imagine, and provide the context for social action. Given their importance and their complexity, it makes sense to think that the effectively navigating the interactions within these networks requires efficient mechanisms for processing complex multivalent social information about network members. This ability is so important that it may be among the foremost computational challenges that influenced our evolution, particularly the dramatic development of our “social brains.” This talk considers a set of findings from socializing cognitive social neuroscience that captures neural and social network data at multiple time points for interacting groups. One group involves students who volunteered to organize workers in very difficult social situations on the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer, in the summer for respect movement. Other groups are task and leadership groups from a professional school. We believe that we can identify neural mechanisms for the reproduction of inequality in popularity in small groups. We likewise discover a truly interpersonal mechanism for the emergence of reciprocity, the building block of social solidarity. We show that we can predict from neural signatures who group members will like five months in the future.