

Talent-Based Reality Shows and the American Dream

Session 3

Friday, October 10

9:45-11:45

Eastwoods Room (Level 2)

How do we account for the sudden proliferation of talent-based reality shows in which contestants demonstrate a unique skill that corresponds to marketable, commercially viable products and industries? (Examples include *Top Chef*, *Project Runway*, and *America's Next Top Model*.) Victory traditionally consists of professional security, with a contract or job offer within the field. What are the politics of these shows in terms of consumerism and notions of success?