

University of Leicester
Department of Media and Communication
Research Seminar Series

4 December, 400 to 530PM

TITLE: The Class Politics of Hyperbole on *Geordie Shore*

ABSTRACT:

Geordie Shore has received attention for the shocking antics of its cast members as they party and have casual sex for the MTV reality show. This paper considers the performance of the young working-class participants from Newcastle, a post-industrial northern British city, against the backdrop of high youth unemployment. Whilst their dubious contracts with MTV mean that their income is mostly generated through publicity appearances outside of the show, this paper considers how new labour relations of performance produce exaggeration and hyperbole where claiming visibility is one of the few routes to value. In the show the emphasis upon the labour of self-work in aesthetic beauty styling for both men and women stages a particular working class aesthetic that is present on the streets of most British post-industrial cities. The constant animating and re-animating of their sexual antics considerably outweighs the actual presence of sex on the screen as participants exaggerate encounters to the point of hilarity. The paper argues that these modes of performance are part of the double-coded nature of social abjection, where working-class youth claim some type of ill/legitimate subjectivity via a set of labour relations created by media visibility.

SPEAKER'S BIO:

Helen Wood is Professor of Media and Communication at the University of Leicester. She has published *Talking With Television* (2009, University of Illinois Press) and, with Beverley Skeggs, *Reality Television and Class* (2011, BFI: Palgrave) and *Reacting to Reality Television* (2012, Routledge). She is also Associate Editor of the *European Journal of Cultural Studies*.