

6th Annual Dr. Mary Baskin-Waters Lecture:

# RACE TO THE FUTURE? REIMAGINING THE DEFAULT SETTINGS OF TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY



with Dr. Ruha Benjamin

Thursday, March 31st | 6 p.m.  
via Zoom ([Register here](#))

**About the Lecture:** From everyday apps to complex algorithms, technology has the potential to hide, speed, and deepen discrimination, while appearing neutral and even benevolent when compared to racist practices of a previous era. In this talk, Ruha Benjamin presents the concept of the “New Jim Code” to explore a range of discriminatory designs that encode inequity: by explicitly amplifying racial hierarchies, by ignoring but thereby replicating social divisions, or by aiming to fix racial bias but ultimately doing quite the opposite. This presentation takes us into the world of biased bots, altruistic algorithms, and their many entanglements, and provides conceptual tools to decode tech promises with historical and sociological insight. She will also consider how race itself is a tool designed to stratify and sanctify social injustice and discuss how technology is and can be used toward liberatory ends. In doing so, Ruha challenges us to question not only the technologies we are sold, but also the ones we manufacture ourselves.



Ruha Benjamin is Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University, founding director of the Ida B. Wells Just Data Lab, author of the award-winning book *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code* (2019) and the forthcoming book *Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want* (2022) among other publications. Her work investigates the social dimensions of science, medicine, and technology with a focus on the relationship between innovation and inequity, health and justice, knowledge and power. Ruha earned a BA in Sociology and Anthropology from Spelman College, MA and PhD in Sociology from UC Berkeley, and completed postdoctoral fellowships at UCLA's Institute for Society & Genetics and Harvard's Science, Technology & Society Program. She is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships including from the American Council of Learned Societies, National Science Foundation, Marguerite Casey Foundation 2020 Freedom Scholar Award, and the President's Award for Distinguished Teaching at Princeton. For more info, please visit [www.ruhabenjamin.com](http://www.ruhabenjamin.com).



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