

OSTROM WORKSHOP **TOCQUEVILLE LECTURE SERIES**

Christopher Sebastian Parker

Department of Political Science, University of Washington

“The Great White Hope: Donald Trump,
Race, and the Crisis of American Politics”

Friday, APRIL 13, 2018

12:30–2:00 p.m. • Woodburn Hall 218



The election of Donald Trump caught many by surprise. As a nominee of a major party, he displayed a level of political ignorance unparalleled in recent memory. Most important for our purposes, he won the White House with the type of race-baiting not seen since George Wallace’s *unsuccessful* campaign in the 1960s. How does one account for his victory? What are the political implications? We argue that the outcome of the latest presidential contest is simply an extension of a long process that began with the Know Nothing Party of the 19th Century. In the process, we demonstrate that economic anxiety and attitudes about global trade deals, the conventional account for his win, had virtually nothing to do with motivating his core voters. Instead, we demonstrate that Trump’s rise was fueled by a sense of existential threat: the belief that “real American” culture is under siege. We also illustrate the political implications of the sense of existential threat Trump symbolizes. Further, we explore another application of threat: the threat the election of the 45th president poses to the progress of people of color (POC). We demonstrate that POC who felt threatened by Trump’s candidacy were far more politically engaged, mobilized, and felt more solidarity with other POC, rather than those who felt less threatened.



Christopher Sebastian Parker is a professor in the department of political science at the University of Washington. A graduate of UCLA and the University of Chicago, Parker also served in the United States Navy. He is the author of *Change They Can’t Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America* (Princeton University Press, 2013), and *Fighting for Democracy: Black Veterans and the Struggle Against White Supremacy in the Postwar South* (Princeton University Press, 2009). He resides in Seattle ([website](#)).

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Presentations are open to the public, and you are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855–3151).