More Togolese per capita apply for the US Diversity (Green Card) lottery than those from any other African country, with winners attempting to game the system by adding “spouses” and dependents to their dossiers. The US consulate in Lomé knows this gaming is going on and constructs ever-more elaborate tests to attempt to decipher the authenticity of winners’ marriages and job profiles – and of their moral worth as citizens – tests that immediately circulate to those on the street. This presentation explores the cat-and-mouse game between street and embassy, situating it within the post-Cold War conjuncture – of ongoing crisis, of an eviscerated though-still-dictatorial state, of social death and the emptiness of citizenship under such conditions, of a sprawling transnational diaspora and the desires and longings it creates, of informationalism and its new technologies, of surveillance regimes and their travails, and of the way in which mobility/immobility and sovereignty are newly entangled and co-constitutive in the contemporary moment.

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Wed., Oct 25, 2017
5:30 pm in E51-275