

# Ringvorlesung

# Begegnung und Unterwerfung

## 28.06.2017 – 18 Uhr – Senatssitzungssaal

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### **Police Power: Revisiting Althusser, Rethinking the State and the Subject**

This paper revisits the Marxist theory of the state in light of the growing prominence of police power in the contemporary moment, both as an increasingly militarized force and as pervasive and invisible modes of surveillance. I present a reading of Louis Althusser's famous essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes toward an Investigation)" to highlight a fundamental ambiguity at its heart, one that concerns the distinction between repression and ideology. I argue that the figure of the police in the famous scene of interpellation crystallizes this ambiguity, pointing to a lack or lapse of rigor that ultimately prevents Althusser from arriving at a proper conception of the police. Building on Michel Foucault's account of the police within the genealogy of governmentality and bringing it to bear on Althusser's conception of the state, I put both thinkers in conversation in order to propose a theory of the police that connects the social reproduction of capitalism with differential forms of subjectivation that necessitate a distinct modality of government reducible neither to violence nor to the complex operation of ideology.