



## The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities – EXPO 2025

### GUEST SPEAKER

**Dr. Joshua Guitar, Ph.D.**

**Assistant Professor**

**Department of Communication, Media, and Journalism**

**Center for Academic Success**

**Kean University**

Live Oak Ballroom of Setzer Center

April 24, 2025 - from **9:15 – 10:00 am**

### SHORT BIOGRAPHY:

After completing a BA in Communication at Adrian College, Joshua Guitar earned his MA and PhD in Communication from Wayne State University. Joshua currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Communication at Kean University where he teaches classes in rhetoric, critical media studies, and political communication. Joshua employs both classical and critical methods of rhetorical inquiry to examine mediated political discourse, oftentimes to interrogate the rhetorical manifestations of ideology that inhibit democratic discourse, civil liberties, and political equity. Joshua's research has been featured in communication journals like *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *Communication and Democracy*, and *Western Journal of Communication*. Joshua recently authored a book entitled *Dissent, Discourse, and Democracy: Whistleblowers as Sites of Political Contestation*, published by Lexington Books in 2021. Joshua is also an editor for a forthcoming volume with State University of New York Press. The edited collection is entitled *From a Whisper to a Movement: Investigating the Shared Rhetorical Spaces of Whistleblowing and Social Protest*. Joshua has also won numerous awards for his research, including the 2019 Top Paper Award in the Political Communication division of the National Communication Association, the 2022 James Madison Prize for Outstanding Research in First Amendment Studies, the 2023 Robert M. O'Neill Top Paper Award in the Freedom of Expression division of the National Communication Association, and a 2024 Emerging Scholar Award from the Communication Research Network. Joshua also enjoys serving as a research mentor to undergraduate and graduate students, and he has received institutional recognition for his collaborations with mentees.

### LECTURE: From Polarity to Plurality

Societal progress often results from citizens who publicly actualize democracy's core tenets of liberty and equality. Yet, recent discourses surrounding such activism have augmented a polarizing political landscape. In this lecture, I explain how an ideology of polarity undergirds our perceptions of democracy and fosters the present polemics within our public sphere. In response to this predicament, I advance the theory of *amongness* as a way to extract truth from the rhetorical tensions across these discourses. This process serves two epistemic functions. First, it assists in raising public consciousness to the threats to a free and equal society. Second, it helps us recognize how these strained discourses expose the broader state of a democratic public. I will demonstrate how we can situate the health of a democracy by evaluating the rhetorical currents among discursive tensions to inform, in turn, a move from a problematic polarity to an ethic of plurality.



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