Indebted: How Families Make College Work at Any Cost

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Abstract: The struggle to pay for college is one of the defining features of middle-class life. As costs have risen beyond what any could have predicted, students and parents alike agonize over whether to take on the burden of loans to try and achieve the promise of higher education. This talk will reveal the hidden consequences of that tension, drawing on wide-ranging interviews with parents and students to examine how these conflicting contemporary pressures have transformed family life.

Bio: Caitlin Zaloom is a cultural anthropologist and an associate professor of Social & Cultural Analysis at New York University. She studies the cultural dimensions of finance, technology, and economic life. In addition to her latest book, Indebted: How Families Make College Work at Any Cost, Zaloom is also author of Out of the Pits: Traders and Technology from Chicago to London, Editor in Chief of Public Books, and co-editor of the recent volumes Think in Public and Antidemocracy in America. Zaloom’s research has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, and Stanford University’s Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and her work has been featured in outlets including the New York Times, NPR, and The Atlantic. Twitter: @caitlinzaloom