Description: Millions of low-income uninsured across the country are eligible for Medicaid yet approximately 40% enroll. Why? And for the population that enrolls, how do they use Medicaid? This talk shares data from a longitudinal ethnography of 40 uninsured Chicagoans from 2013 to 2016, and introduces a new theoretical framework for understanding how the low-income uninsured apply for and use Medicaid.

Robert Vargas is a Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Sociology and Director of the Violence Lab at the University of Chicago. His research examines how politics, bureaucracies, and law shape the conditions of cities. He received his PhD from Northwestern University, was a Robert Wood Johnson Fellow at Harvard University, and was previously on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.