Description: The talk draws on an ethnographic community study of two Rust Belt communities to show how broader shifting in American political economy undermined the social institutions that once anchored the two party system. Drawing on observation of the two parties and interviews with citizens, I show how this created opportunities and incentives for new kinds of party activists and candidates, notably those employing a reactionary and nativist appeals long before the 2016 Election.

Josh Pacewicz (Department of Sociology at Brown University) is interested in contemporary American statecraft, particularly the interplay between federal policy and party politics, municipal finance, political advocacy and expertise. His publications include Partisans and Partners: The Politics of the Post-Keynesian Society (2016), which analyzes partisan political change in the American Rust-Belt, as well as recent work focused on municipal fiscal crisis, hyper-policing, and the politics of divergence in the street-level realities of the American welfare state.