Panel 63: *Whistleblowing Nation: The History of National Security Revelations and the Cult of State Secrecy*
Co-Chairs/Co-Organizers: Hannah Gurman, New York University, and Kaeten Mistry, University of East Anglia

Other Discussants:
Lida Maxwell, Boston University
Richard Immerman, Temple University
Beverly Gage, Yale University

Book Page: https://cup.columbia.edu/book/whistleblowing-nation/9780231194174
Project Page: https://wp.nyu.edu/whistleblowing/

Panel Abstract:

The twenty-first century has witnessed a new age of national security whistleblowing in the United States. Disclosures by Thomas Drake, Chelsea Manning, John Kiriakou, Edward Snowden, and Reality Winner, among many others have stoked heated public debates about the ethics of exposing institutional secrets. The catalyst for impeachment investigations into President Donald Trump was the revelation by whistleblowers. Yet little is known about the deep history of the phenomenon. This panel examines how and why national security whistleblowing requires a multi-disciplinary approach – including foreign relations, politics, law, and culture – and considers disclosures and state secrecy from the World War I-era to the present. The politics, motives, and ideologies behind the revelation of state secrets are complex and cut against reductive characterizations of whistleblowers as heroes or traitors. State retaliation and civic contests over the legitimacy and significance of exposures are also common. National security whistleblowing relates to the growing power of the executive branch, First Amendment rights, and the rise of vast classification and censorship regimes within the national security state. The panel marks the publication of a new volume, *Whistleblowing Nation*, that sheds new light on the tensions of secrecy and transparency, security and civil liberties, and the politics of truth and falsehood.