

Democracy and Diversity in Science

Winter 2009

Science at its best—well functioning science—is often taken to exemplify democratic ideals of deliberation: the high value placed on the open exchange of ideas, requirements of public reporting not only of the results of inquiry but of their bases, and the emphasis on collective practices of critical scrutiny are key examples of deliberative processes that are presumed necessary for, or central to, successful science. Dewey characterized democratic deliberation as an experimental process, while contemporary “proceduralist” theorists of science reframe ideals like objectivity in terms of well functioning processes of community deliberation which ensure that scientific inquiry draws on a rich and diverse a range of epistemic resources as possible. A growing body of historical and socio-cultural scholarship reinforces these normative arguments for broad critical engagement, throwing into relief the crucial contributions made to the sciences by diversity among its practitioners, and the forms and contexts of its practice. The goals of the Winter quarter SSNet seminar are to assess these lines of argument for recognizing the importance of diversity in science, and to articulate more clearly exactly how scientific practice is, or should be, informed by ideals of (democratic) deliberation.

Core Seminar Organizers

Graduate Fellows

- Julie Homchick (Communication)
- Jentery Sayers (English)

Faculty Fellows

- Sareeta Amrute (Anthropology)
- Angela Ginorio (Women Studies)
- Andrea Woody (Philosophy)

Schedule

- **January 12:** Curriculum Initiative & Democracy in Science planning meeting
- **January 26:** Genetic Testing and Social Identities (led by *Sareeta Amrute*)
- **February 2:** HUM596 - Well-ordered Science: Democratic on the Inside? (led by *Andrea Woody*)
- **February 9:** "The Politics of Nutrition" - Kelly Moore (University of Cincinnati)
- **February 23:** Democratizing Science and Social Justice: Case Studies and the "Who" and "How" (led by *Angela Ginorio*)
- **March 2:** Intelligent Design and Pluralism (led by *Julie Homchick*)
- **March 9:** "Can You Fix My Computer?" Or, Science, Technology and the Participatory Question (led by *Jentery Sayers*)