



What Could it Mean to Democratize Science?

Lecture by Mark B. Brown

Moderated by Holger Straßheim

Monday, June 4, 2012

2 p.m., Room A 305

Invitation

Public controversies over issues ranging from global warming to biotechnology have politicized scientific expertise and research. Some respond with calls for restoring a golden age of value-free science. More promising efforts seek to democratize science. But what does that mean? Can it go beyond the typical focus on public participation? How do the politics of science challenge prevailing views of democracy?

In his book *Science in Democracy*, Mark Brown argues that the familiar dichotomy between politics and science reinforces a similar dichotomy between direct democracy and representative government. He then develops an alternative perspective based on the mutual shaping of participation and representation in both science and politics. Political representation requires scientific expertise, and scientific institutions may become sites of political representation. Different institutional venues, he shows, mediate different elements of democratic representation. If we understand democracy as an institutionally distributed process of collective representation, Brown argues, it becomes easier to see the politicization of science not as a threat to democracy but as an opportunity for it.

Mark B. Brown is Associate Professor in the Department of Government at California State University, Sacramento. He is the author of *Science in Democracy: Expertise, Institutions, and Representation* (MIT Press, 2009).

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