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HANNAH LANDECKER

EATING HISTORY: READING EPIGENETIC SCIENCE FOR A METABOLIC ETHICS

Wed. Nov 6 | 2:30 - 4pm | Cone 210

Hannah Landecker (Prof. Sociology and Director of the Institute for Society and Epigenetics, UCLA) is the first speaker in our Epigenetics Series. Prof. Landecker is the author of *Culturing Life: How Cells Became Technologies* (Harvard UP, 2007).

ABSTRACT: Using the tools of history and sociology of science, this talk explores connections between microbiome science and epigenetics, two areas of research which have exploded in recent years, but are rarely considered in relation to one another. Mapping the relationship between eating, microbes, and epigenetic gene regulation is of considerable practical interest, bearing as it does on frameworks for understanding human health and wellbeing, particularly concerning metabolic disorders arising from industrialized food and sleep patterns. At the same time, these alimentary questions are also philosophical ones, concerning agency, individuality, and responsibility. While the biochemistry of one-carbon metabolism or the characterization of cellular exosomes might not seem the usual topic for critical humanistic inquiry, this talk works through the science in an accessible way to show how directly implicated genome integrity is in the politics of the food supply. The talk aims to think through epigenetic science toward a metabolic ethics, a framework for viewing human action in relation to (human) biology that foregrounds understanding of life as a metabolic process.