

FLU FORUM

Winter Quarter 2013 BioFutures Colloquium

The Ethics and Politics of Influenza Research in a Global Context

Friday, 8 February 2013, 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Simpson Center conference room (CMU 202)

Each year as flu season approaches we're alerted to the threat posed by new strains of influenza – evolving in the wild, in laboratories, and in society. In September 2011 flu hit the headlines again when researchers at the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam announced that they had successfully engineered a transmissible mutant H5N1 virus, generating intense debate about the ethics and politics of biomedical research: Is there research that scientists should not undertake? How should research with dangerous organisms be regulated, and what responsibilities do scientists have to assess and to communicate its risks?

The historical geographies in which flu viruses evolve raise still another set of questions. This Flu Forum considers the ethics and politics of influenza research in the context of the global political and economic inequalities that condition devastating pandemics and determine how we respond to these threats.

Panel moderator:

- **Matt Sparke** (Geography)

Presenters:

- **Rob Wallace** (Institute for Global Studies, University of Minnesota) will put contemporary virus research in the context of the long-term, global ecology in which viral pandemics take shape;
- **Celia Lowe** (Anthropology, University of Washington) will address the question of why influenza is now understood as a problem of “security” rather than public health;
- **Jesse Bloom** (Basic Sciences, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center) will report from the front lines on influenza research in an age of reverse genetics;
- **Gaymon Bennett** (Center for Biological Futures, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center) will address the question, “What is the ethical significance of the H5N1 controversy?”

OF RELATED INTEREST

Public Lecture: “Are we researching our way into a deadly pandemic?”

Rob Wallace, Institute for Global Studies, University of Minnesota

Monday, 11 February 2013, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm, Simpson Center conference room (CMU 202)

** Lunch will be provided – please RSVP to suzelong@uw.edu by Thursday, 7 February.

Graduate Microseminar, JSIS 586A: "Influenza Pandemics in Perspective"

A one-credit seminar on political, ethical and historical questions raised by the recurrent threat of global influenza pandemics, and by the research and security regimes in terms of which we respond to this threat.

- *Instructor:* **Celia Lowe**, Anthropology
- *Dates:* participants should attend the Flu Forum, the Wallace lecture, and join three Friday seminar discussions: 9:30-11:20 on January 25, February 1, and February 15 in Denny 211

For more information on the *Biological Futures in a Globalized World* initiative:
<http://tiny.cc/biological-futures>