

**University of Washington
Department of Philosophy
Spring 2012 Colloquium**

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"A Case for Pluralism in Science"

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I define and defend an "active normative epistemic pluralism", whose ultimate purpose is to improve science by cultivating multiple systems of knowledge. There are two types of benefits of plurality. Benefits of toleration arise from simply allowing multiple systems simultaneously, which provides insurance against unpredictability, compensation for the limitations of each system, and multiple satisfaction of any given aim. Benefits of interaction arise from the integration of different systems for specific purposes, the co-optation of beneficial elements across systems, and the productive competition between systems. Pluralism should not be confused with an abdication of judgment: each pluralist has the freedom and responsibility to evaluate the quality and value of scientific work. Pluralism can deliver its benefits without a paralyzing relativism or an uncontrolled dissipation of resources. It has concrete implications for scientific practice, and also gives new purpose and approach to the history and philosophy of science, in line with my vision of "complementary science".

Hasok Chang is Hans Rausing Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge. He received his PhD in Philosophy at Stanford University in 1993 after an undergraduate degree at the California Institute of Technology, and taught for 15 years at University College London. He is the author of *Is Water H₂O? Evidence, Realism and Pluralism* (Springer, 2012), and *Inventing Temperature: Measurement and Scientific Progress* (Oxford University Press, 2004), which was a joint winner of the 2006 Lakatos Award. He is also co-editor (with Catherine Jackson) of *An Element of Controversy: The Life of Chlorine in Science, Medicine, Technology and War* (British Society for the History of Science, 2007), a collection of original work by undergraduate students at University College London. He is a co-founder of the Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice (SPSP), and the International Committee for Integrated History and Philosophy of Science.

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