

Genomics Salon Discussion Guide Sheet  
November 29, 2018  
Communications 202

**Our discussion goals are threefold:**

1. Introduce the lines of inquiry that stem from our respective disciplines in response to such studies and discuss from those vantage points.
2. Find differences in those lines of inquiry and have a discussion about how sharing across our disciplines could help make all of our research more relevant to one another and additional publics (such as the popular reading of the Pinker Article).
3. Offer cultural and related humanities studies' lenses on the history of disciplinary knowledge formations that would challenge this recent turn apprehending “scientific knowledge.”

The following questions represent key interventions made by our respective disciplines in reaching these goals, so while we will start here, they are truly starting points as begin the difficult work of translating expertise across disciplines.

To that end, please explain jargon or field-specific terms when you use them. If someone does use a term you do not know, ask for an explanation. To maintain a collegial atmosphere, we will also all endeavor to respect that each of us come with a set of assumptions built into and stemming out of our disciplinary research fields. We are all here to make our research and corresponding both inter- and extra-university implications more effectively interdisciplinary.

**Time Outline:**

**4:30 – 4:40** Food, warm-up, etc.

**4:40 – 4:50:** Introductions

**4:50 – 4:55:** Framing Guidelines

**4:55 – 5:00:** Read through questions; note “jargon”; write own questions about questions.

**5:00 – 5:30:** Opening framing from Chandan. Question/discussion period.

## Key Questions for Discussion

**Q Set** from Prof. Chandan Reddy from GWSS and CHID:

1. What is the scientific mindset for Pinker?
2. If there really is just one “scientific mindset” that is the foundation of all genuinely scientific knowledge?
  - a. When did this “mindset” emerge as a norm among the sciences in your opinion?
3. Can there only be one scientific mindset?
4. Can science have more than one mindset and still be science?
5. What is Pinker’s investment in reducing “science” to the singular in such a way?
6. Ultimately, is this about “science” or politics? That is, is Pinker really concerned about the denigration of scientific thinking among privileged people (such as university scholars) who should know better or is he concerned about the loss of a universal politics, a liberal cosmopolitan politics as the purpose of the university?
7. Why does he need to make science the foundation for this cosmopolitan politics?

**Q Set** from Ph.C. Jey Saung from GWSS:

1. How can we do interdisciplinary work in a way that acknowledges the histories of the disciplines and the conditions of power under which they emerged?
2. How do we continue to do interdisciplinary work while recognizing the ways in which power continues to operate within academia (through funding, recognition of methods/methodologies, etc.)?

**Q Set** from Katherine Xue from the Genome Sciences:

1. What do practicing scientists have to learn from the humanities and social sciences, and particularly the field of science studies?
2. What do scholars in the social sciences and humanities have to learn from the sciences?
3. What concepts and terms are common sources of misunderstandings between the sciences and the humanities?

4. To what extent have academic debates about the status of science contributed to or drawn upon the political "war on science"?

ATTENDEE NOTE SPACE