

# **The New Epigenetic Biopolitics of Environmental Health**

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This talk synthesizes my research on public health approaches to the problem of methylmercury exposure through seafood consumption to explore how epigenetics is changing the biopolitics of environmental health. Environmental epigenetics is a "hot" new field of post-genomic science that offers an entirely new and dynamic understanding of the relationship between environments, genes, bodies, and health. Epigenetic mechanisms are those that influence not genetic sequences themselves, but how genes are expressed; environmental epigenetics as a field studies how environmental stimuli (broadly defined to include everything from toxic exposures to nutrition to social stressors) affect these mechanisms. Emerging from this is an entirely new, non-reductionist model of biological life as plastic, i.e. changeable. Arguing that methylmercury in seafood is a paradigmatic case, I explore the new ideas about race and gender that emerge through epigenetic biopolitics.

**Friday, March 21, 2014**  
**Derby Hall Room 1080**  
**3:30-5:00 pm**



**GEOGRAPHY**

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