

Energy and Resources Group Spring 2009 Colloquium Series (ER295)

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**Global Knowledges: Science, Power
and Truth-Making in the World Trade
Organization**

110 Barrows Hall / 4:00 p.m.

The ambitious harmonization of food safety standards envisioned in the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), coupled with the advent of a formalized dispute settlement mechanism has led to an unprecedented concentration of regulatory authority at the global level. The role that is laid out for science in the SPS Agreement, including the requirement that national standards be “based on” scientific principles, has spawned a particular set of politics surrounding defining scientific knowledge, and articulating different norms of knowledge production (claims about how knowledge should be produced).

I will discuss a number of aspects of these politics, exploring novel forms of “epistemic sovereignty” that have been articulated in response to global acts of knowledge-production, and arguing that the mutual construction of epistemic and legal authority between the WTO and the joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission has been critical for constituting and stabilizing a global regime for the regulation of food safety.