Philosophy for All Fargo Moorhead

Philosophy for All Fargo-Moorhead is open to everyone interested in philosophy. Its aim is to approach philosophical problems in a non-technical way to enable everyone to participate in discussion and debate. It aims to combine serious philosophical activity with an informal exchange of ideas and views.

***Special meeting co-sponsored by the Institute for Philosophy and Public Life, UND***

Where have all the women gone? Social accounts of science and the need for women scientists

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Thursday, Feb. 24, 7PM

Presentation Center, Plains Art Museum

704 1st Ave, N., Fargo

Since the 1970’s, the number of women earning doctorates has tripled but the number of women full-time professors has only increased by half that; women are especially underrepresented in science and engineering. Traditionally, philosophers might claim this isn’t a problem: the knower isn’t as important as the knowledge itself. In other words, it doesn’t matter if the scientist is a man or a woman; all that matters is the knowledge he or she produces. Many scientists agree. They claim that the underrepresentation of women scientists may be a political, ethical, or sociological problem, but it has nothing to do with science, with what we can know.

In this discussion, I will look at those who challenge this claim. I will examine the assertion that science is a social practice, and that objectivity is dependent on the people and practices of diverse communities of scientists. If this is the case, the underrepresentation of women is a problem for the production of scientific knowledge itself.

In the process of this discussion, I will report on interdisciplinary research that I have conducted on actual scientific communities. This research is designed to explore the structure of scientific communities and to test strategies that can help recruit excellent women scientists and engineers.

Carla Fehr is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Iowa State University. She works in the philosophy of biology, feminist philosophy and feminist science studies. She is also a co-Principal Investigator for ISU Advance a $3.3 million National Science Foundation grant designed to test strategies for promoting the advancement and retention of women and minorities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Carla Fehr holds two awards for excellence in undergraduate teaching. She is in North Dakota as a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Philosophy in Public Life, at UND.

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