



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, SPRING 2023 COLLOQUIUM SERIES

What is Anti-Science? Science, Scientists, and COVID-19 Misinformation and Conspiracies



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In February, 2020, when COVID-19 infections had started to spread globally, the World Health Organization warned against an accompanying “massive infodemic.” In the months that followed misinformation and conspiracies regarding COVID spread like wildfire and critically impacted healthcare provision all across the world. These misinformation and conspiracies also led to widespread calls to urgently tackle the growing anti-science attitudes and, as one scientist called it, “anti-science movement.” The concern with conspiracies and misinformation is understandable and we need to deal with them effectively.

However, what do we mean by the term anti-science? Is such a classification, instead of helping to fight misinformation, hinders our efforts. This presentation, based on an ongoing study, will highlight how misinformation and conspiracies regarding the COVID pandemic regularly utilized the credibility of science, scientific journals, and scientists and in the spread of misinformation scientists were involved as well. More broadly, the presentation will show that in order to better understand misinformation and conspiracies we need to situate them as well as our understanding of science/anti-science in the social and historical context.

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