This talk examines contemporary developments in epigenetics, circadian biology, and cancer metabolism in social and historical context. How and why did we come to think of food as fuel and the body as a motor, or nutrition as the supplier of "building blocks" to a metabolic machine? New developments in a variety of biomedical research fields are challenging distinctions between information and energy, generating new frameworks for both scientific and cultural attitudes toward food, development, and health.

Speaker biography

Hannah Landecker holds a joint appointment in the life and social sciences at the University of California Los Angeles, where she is the Director of the Institute for Society and Genetics, and an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology. Her PhD in Science and Technology Studies from MIT was followed by a postdoc at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, and several years teaching medical anthropology at Rice University, before moving to UCLA in 2008. She is the author of Culturing Life: How Cells Became Technologies (Harvard, 2007), and a body of work on the use of film technology in the life sciences. Her current research looks at transformations to the metabolic sciences wrought by the rise of epigenetics, microbiomics, cell signaling and hormone biology. A related project concerns the history of metabolic hormones after 1960 and the rise of the cellular "signal" as a central category of thought and practice in the life sciences.

Event Details

Wednesday 9 September, 12:30 pm, All Welcome
Seminar Room, Level 3, Medical School South