



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences
Bloomington

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Cross-listed with the Department of Anthropology

Dr. Todd Sanders

Associate Professor

Department of Anthropology

University of Toronto

Trustworthy Knowledge? Social Sciences, Public Policy and Global Environmental Change

Abstract: Truthiness, alternative facts, fake news – these are good times to insist that science should guide public policy. Science, after all, yields trustworthy knowledge. And in policymaking, science serves to mediate disparate interests and engender trust in government. Yet the basis on which citizens are willing to trust public institutions – including science – is changing. Greater openness and public involvement are increasingly required. Rarely these days can public institutions simply assume or command trust. They must earn it through hard work.

This talk explores some of the ways Euro-American institutions draw scientific knowledge into policy realms today in an effort to garner public trust. It focuses on the global environmental change science/policy arena. In this arena, as elsewhere, new requirements are emerging for what counts as trustworthy, policy-relevant science; and this has implications for what sciences do, how they do it, and how likely particular sciences are to gain traction in policy arenas. For human geographers, social anthropologists and other interpretive social scientists, the implications are sobering: in today's world, producing trustworthy knowledge for policy may require radically retooling or even abandoning some of our time-honoured knowledge practices. This raises important questions about how the interpretive social sciences might figure in public policy if we cannot, or will not, meet these requirements.

Friday, March 22, 2019

3:35 p.m. in Student Building 005

(Refreshments provided at **3:15 p.m. in Student Bldg. 018**)

Questions: Dr. Taehee Hwang, (812) 856-2846