

**Food+ Research Symposium**  
**February 27, 2015**  
**Faculty Abstract**

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*Between Two Worlds: Technological Controversy and the Future of Food.*

ABSTRACT: Professor Sheila Jasanoff discusses the factors underlying radically different interpretations of innovation in food technology. What is at stake here? Some claim that GMO technology will improve upon nature - making it more orderly and manageable - thus increasing yield and the capacity to feed the growing global population more efficiently. Others (often dismissed as “neo-luddites”) protest against GMO technology, with undertones of socioeconomic conflict and divergent views about the meaning of nature and the natural. Jasanoff’s research looks cross-nationally and comparatively at the kinds of politics that people have constructed around agricultural technologies. For example, in America, a form of “denialism” has sprung up around GMOs, with experts explaining each episode of accidental release as a fault of disparate social actors rather than of the technology itself. She has found that expectations about how public knowledge should be generated and what constitutes legitimate expertise differ across America, Britain, and Germany. Three salient differences can be identified across these three political cultures: expectations about the relations between politics and expertise; the production of trust around technical claims; and decisions about what kinds of products are appropriate to consume. “What kinds of food do we want?” thus translates into “What kinds of politics and ethics do we want?”