

Call for Papers: The Revolt against Expertise

Spontaneous Generations, a scholarly, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal published by the graduate students of the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Toronto, invites contributions to its 11th volume.

Experts occupy an increasingly contested space in our society. Politicians challenge the expertise of public health officials amidst the COVID-19 pandemic; climate change deniers that of climatologists; creationists that of evolutionary biologists and geologists. Even the rotundity of the Earth has not escaped renewed public scrutiny. Our cultural moment is increasingly defined by a populist revolt against expertise. While this is alarming, even the most stalwart defenders of expertise will acknowledge the risks inherent in excessive deference to experts. They can make mistakes of fact or ethical judgment. They can fall prey to the temptations of conformity. They can be corrupted by corporate or state patronage. A technologically sophisticated society can hardly function without experts, but neither can a democratic one exempt them from scrutiny.

Scholars involved in the study of science, technology, medicine, and mathematics are well-positioned to explore the pressing issues surrounding expertise. As experts who study other experts, they have a unique vantage point. The editors of *Spontaneous Generations* welcome contributions which explore the challenges inherent to expertise in an increasingly distrustful society. Questions which contributors might take up include, but are not limited to:

- How can the rights of marginalized individuals or communities be protected against the potential abuse of expertise? How can those of a democratic society?
- Has a particular historical episode or philosophical problem especially illuminated the risks & opportunities inherent in expertise?
- What public good results from your expertise? How would you fruitfully engage with a politician, layperson, or administrator who expressed skepticism about it?
- How has studying the expertise of others informed your own perspective and identity?

We invite contributions in the following formats:

- Reflective or conversational pieces, 2-3,000 words in length. Please include an abstract, 150-250 words in length.
- Research articles, 8-12,000 words in length, on the same theme. Please include an abstract, 150-250 words in length.
- Reviews of recent scholarly books (published no earlier than January, 2019) touching on expertise, 1-1,200 words in length for single reviews, 1,400-1,600 for double reviews.

Traditionally, *Spontaneous Generations* focuses on the history and philosophy of science. However, we are happy to consider contributions from other disciplinary perspectives. All contributions should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition (footnote and bibliography), should be formatted in MS Word, and should be received no later than May 31, 2021. We will also be happy to review abstracts before that time. Please send all inquiries or contributions (along with your institutional and departmental affiliation) to Daniel Halverson at daniel.halverson@mail.utoronto.ca.