



COLLOQUIUM SERIES 2011-2012

All sessions 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted
All sessions Brown Bag, Zimmer Lounge, Maxcy Hall

February 28, 2011

MAXCY HALL, LOWER GREEN

ZIMMER LOUNGE 12:00 - 1:00 pm

Relational Signals and Institutional Expectations: Ego Networks and Market Value Across Five High-Technology Sectors

Jason Owen-Smith, University of Michigan

Bio: Jason Owen-Smith is a sociologist who examines how science, commerce, and the law cohere and conflict in contemporary societies and economies. He seeks to understand how organizations, institutions, and networks can maintain the status quo while generating novelty through social transformations, scientific discoveries, and technological breakthroughs. Professor Owen-Smith is currently Director of both the Organizational Studies Program and the Barger Leadership Institute. He holds the Barger Leadership Institute Professorship of Organizational Studies and is an Associate Professor in both the Department of Sociology and the Organizational Studies Program at the University of Michigan.

Abstract: We connect ideas about signaling and certification drawn from network research with institutional concerns about legitimacy and distinctiveness to explain differences in the configuration of ego networks and their effects on market value across five high-technology industries. Industry networks are distinguished by the ways in which firms combine disparate activities with different types of partners. Organizations whose networks deviate from the norms of their chosen industry see increases in market value up to a point, but too much distinctiveness diminishes value. The signals of belonging and value that collaborative activities send depend upon the type of partners with which they are undertaken. These findings contribute to the nascent literature that explores inter-organizational networks and their effects in multiple industries while suggesting that important extensions of theory may result from the integration of network and institutional approaches to markets.