

Urban Research Program

Thursday 15th February 2007

11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Room N55 1.12

Adjunct Professor Tony Hall



Anyone for Scientific Theory?

This event is directed primarily at RHD students in the URP and Environmental Sciences but all interested are welcome

Not only did the physical sciences undergo a dramatic revolution in content during the first half of the 20th century, but the philosopher's perception of science was altered permanently by the work of Karl Popper and those that followed him. The methodology of the social sciences was also greatly affected by Popper's views. The notion of progress through the falsification of hypotheses has permeated methodological thinking to the extent that it has almost become a commonplace.

The talk will attempt to explain how the concept of scientific theory and progress was transformed during the 20th century and how it should now be understood. This will be followed by group discussion of its relevance to contemporary social science.

Although Tony Hall has spent most of his career in the practice and academic study of planning, he started out in the physical sciences. He took his first degree in physics and mathematics at the University of Sussex during its early days when a strong emphasis was placed on achieving an understanding of the workings of science.