

CSPO enLIGHTeNING LUNCHESES

Join the Consortium for Science, Policy and Outcomes for quick, edifying lunchtime presentations and discussions. Each enLIGHTeNING lunch will include pizza, a 20-minute presentation, and 20-minute discussion.

Unintended Consequences: How strictly ergonomic design criteria can inhibit social change in the workplace

Claire Gordon

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ASU School of Human Evolution and Social Change

Occupational health, safety, and performance depend, among other things, on clothing, equipment, and workstations that fit our bodies well. Good ergonomic designs are adapted to human body size variation, and in order to optimize fit for the largest percentage of users, most designers are taught to rely on body size and shape statistics from representative samples of the target population. But when representative samples are used, what happens to minority subgroups whose body size/shape distributions differ substantially from the majority?

Using examples from her 24 year career as the Army's senior anthropologist, Dr. Gordon will explain how uncritical use of representative samples in establishing ergonomic design criteria essentially reinforces demographic inequity in the workplace, and she'll illustrate ways in which the problem has been overcome in military systems where increasing gender and racial/ethnic diversity is desired and planned for in ergonomic design criteria. Barriers to similar changes in the civilian workplace will be outlined, and should provoke some interesting and animated discussion.

Tuesday, May 1st, 12:00noon, COOR 5536

enLIGHTeNING Lunches will return in the Fall

For more information, contact cspo@asu.edu or visit www.cspo.org

