

Department of Computer Science  
University of Houston

**NSF Ethics in Science**

**“Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the  
Fate of America’s Children**

**Professor David Rosner**  
Columbia University



**March 25, 2013**  
**11:00 AM - 12:30 PM**  
**232 Philip G. Hoffman Hall**  
**Host: Dr. Ioannis Pavlidis**

Based on his new book, *Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children*, David Rosner explores the controversy over research at the Kennedy Krieger Institute at John's Hopkins where researchers were accused of engaging in unethical, even racist, research. It will discuss the shifting model of public health from prevention to harm reduction (arguably a form of denialism when applied to environmental policy). The questions posed by the KKI case, as well as advances in environmental science documenting the long term effects of low-level toxins, will hopefully encourage a broader discussion about the relationship of science and society, science and industry, research and patients' rights, and what might be called the conundrum of public health. This discussion will use lead poisoning research to explore the numerous dilemmas public health must face today as it tries to develop prevention strategies for emerging chronic illnesses linked to low levels of toxic exposure.

## About Professor David Rosner

David Rosner, PhD, MPH, is the Ronald H. Lauterstein Professor of Sociomedical Sciences and Professor of History at Columbia University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. He focuses on research at the intersection of public health and social history and the politics of occupational disease and industrial pollution. He has been actively involved in lawsuits on behalf of cities, states and communities around the nation who are trying to hold the lead industry accountable for past acts that have resulted in tremendous damage to America's children. Cases aimed at removing lead from children's environments and compensating parents and governmental agencies for the costs of care and abatement of hazards in the home environment have grown out of his academic work. His work on the history of industry understanding the harms done by their industrial toxins has been part of law suits on behalf of asbestos workers and silicosis victims as well. Prior to joining the Columbia faculty in 1998, Dr. Rosner was University Distinguished Professor of History at the City University of New York. In 2010, he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine. In addition to numerous grants, he has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a recipient of a Robert Wood Johnson Investigator Award, a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow and a Josiah Macy Fellow. He has been awarded the Distinguished Scholar's Prize from the City University and the Viseltear Prize for Outstanding Work in the History of Public Health from the APHA, among others. Dr. Rosner has also been honored by the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health and, with Gerald Markowitz, was awarded the Upton Sinclair Memorial Lectureship "For Outstanding Occupational Health, Safety, and Environmental Journalism by the American Industrial Hygiene Association." Dr. Rosner is an author of many books on occupational disease, epidemics and public health. *Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children*, (University of California Press/Milbank Fund, 2013) details the recent conflicts at Johns Hopkins over studies of children placed in homes with low level lead exposure and what it says about public health research.