



Institute of World Culture

J. Craig Venter: Genomic Explorer



Lecture with Discussion: Sat., November 13, 2010
4:00 – 5:30 pm
Concord House, 1407 Chapala St, Santa Barbara
Presenter: Russ Lewin

In 2000, Dr. Craig Venter led the first science team to ***map the human genome*** using new tools and techniques. Since that time, Dr. Venter has extended his research to include ***mapping the genome of the ocean – environmental genomics***. Collecting microbe samples aboard his research vessel, the *Sorcerer II*, Dr. Venter is mapping the genomes of the microbes that live in the ocean and account for over ½ of the biomass on earth - compared with animals that account for only 1/1000th. He refers to our biodiversity as *the planet's greatest treasure*. The oceans are almost completely unexplored.

In 2010, Dr. Venter and his team ***created synthetic DNA that was booted up in a living cell***. This landmark achievement is being used to create new organisms to make useful products like vaccines and biofuels. In response to these breakthroughs, President Obama has asked the White House bioethics commission to complete a study on the issues raised by ***synthetic biology***.

We will seek to understand these new breakthroughs in science and their possible implications. Dr. Venter's work has opened a new door that has the potential to deepen our understanding of chemistry and physiology. Dr. Venter said, "This is a philosophical advance as much as a technical advance."

For more information, please call 967-1055 or go to <http://www.worldculture.org>.
