

The Program on Science, Technology, and Society (STS) at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government presents

Explaining Religion: Naturalism With and Without Scientism

BARBARA HERRNSTEIN SMITH

Braxton Craven Professor of Comparative Literature and English, and Director, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Science and Cultural Theory, Duke University; Distinguished Professor of English, Brown University



Monday, April 14, 4:00-6:00
Fong Auditorium, Boylston Hall

Smith's talk is concerned with a series of recent studies that offer to explain various features of religion on the basis of current research and theory in evolutionary biology and cognitive science, a project that she calls the New Naturalism. In discussing the project and some of the conceptual, methodological, and ideological issues it raises, she focuses on Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (2001). She also discusses Walter Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (1995), which she takes as representing a significantly broader intellectual tradition in the naturalistic study of religion.