Simon Fraser University, School for International Studies
Lecture by Professor Hugh Gusterson

“Drones, ethics, justice”

Details:
Date: Thursday, March 13th, 2014
Time: 7pm
Location: SFU Harbour Centre (515 West Hastings Street), room 1600

Abstract: Drones transform the spatial and temporal experience of war. By removing the drone operator from the immediate battlefield and slowing down war for the drone operator even as it is radically accelerated for the target, drones create a situation structurally more akin to torture than to war. This structural reality is glossed by a liberal rationalized discourse, endorsed by some human rights organizations, that valorizes drone warfare for its ability to minimize civilian casualties and move warfare asymptotically toward a humanitarian ideal. Actual targeting practices, on the other hand, use high technology to revitalize an older style of colonial war.

Bio: Hugh Gusterson is Professor of Cultural Studies and Anthropology at George Mason University. He received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Stanford University, and taught at MIT from 1992-2006. Gusterson is the author of Nuclear Rites (University of California Press, 1996) and People of the Bomb (University of Minnesota Press, 2004). He is co-editor of Cultures of Insecurity (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), The Insecure American (University of California Press, 2009), and Why America’s Top Pundits Are Wrong (University of California Press, 2005). He has a regular column for the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, and has also published in the Los Angeles Times, the Boston Globe, Science, Nature, New Scientist, American Scientist, and The Sciences.

From 2009-2012 Gusterson served on the Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association, in which capacity he co-chaired the final phase of approval of the Association’s new ethics code.