

Mark B. Adams, History and Sociology of Science

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Mark Adams

Mark B. Adams, an associate professor in the history and sociology of science department of the School of Arts & Sciences, died on May 9. He was 79.

Dr. Adams received his BA, MA, and PhD in the history of science from Harvard University, then he joined Penn's faculty in 1970 as an assistant professor of history and philosophy. He taught graduate and undergraduate courses in the history of Russian science; the history of biology, science and literature; and the sociology of science. In 1973, he became an assistant professor of history and sociology. He was named the Janice and Julian Bers Professor in the Social Sciences in 1974. He was a resident faculty member of Van Pelt House for many years and as undergraduate chairman of his department.

Dr. Adams introduced and taught an annual course called "The Emergence of Modern Science Fiction." When it began in 1970, it was one of the first college courses on science fiction in the U.S. At that time, there was very little scholarly literature dedicated to the topic, so Dr. Adams created his own science fiction library to explore the genre and its history. Eventually, this collection grew to include more than 5,000 items, most of which are housed in the Mark B. Adams Science Fiction Collection at the Penn Libraries.

Dr. Adams received Penn's Mary F. Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching in 1984 (*Almanac* April 24, 1984 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v30pdf/n31/042484.pdf>)). He won a Research Foundation Award in 1989 for *Genetics and Evolution in Russia and America: The Dobzhansky-Filipchenko Correspondence* and another in 1999 for *The Soviet Nature-Nurture Debate: Eugenics and Medical Genetics in Russia, 1900-1990*. He served on the University Council committee for Student Affairs in 1973 and later served as a University Council representative of constituencies in 1979.

In 1995, Dr. Adams joined the Penn's 25-Year Club. He retired and took emeritus status in 2014.