



CoCo Seminar Series Spring 2016

A Personal Historical Perspective on Systems Studies at Binghamton & Elsewhere

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Wednesday March 2nd, 2016 8:30-9:30am
Engineering Building H-9
(Knoll-MacDonald Commons / Watson Commons)

The concept of making systems the basis of its own field of study has a fascinating history. It involves prominent scholars from truly diverse backgrounds and perspectives recognizing profound commonalities in their various fields of interest. Systems studies as a field began to coalesce around the middle of the 20th Century, and many of the characters involved at the time had extraordinary biographies.

Starting in the late 1960s, and for perhaps a quarter century thereafter, the Binghamton campus played a very significant role in this “systems movement” and had its own set of fascinating characters. Yet it appears this history is largely unknown to many people at Binghamton University today, even those intensely interested in systems, and this seems to me tragic for a variety of reasons.

One purpose of this talk will be to draw attention to some of the little known aspects of this history both in the wider world and specifically at Binghamton. Because it is billed as a “personal perspective”, I will feel free both to express my frank views and to make it truly personal. At the same time, I will strive to be fair and quite objective in my reflections. I personally experienced only part of this history. In recent weeks I have been reviewing documentary sources and conducting interviews to fill in some of my own gaps, and even I am amazed at some of what I have recently discovered.



Dr. Harold Lewis is an Associate Professor in the Department of Systems Science and Industrial Engineering at Binghamton University. His research interests include intelligent systems, fuzzy control, and soft computing.

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