


BROWN Lecture



Professor Oliver Reiser
University of Regensburg

PURDUE
S C I E N C E

James Tarpo Jr. and Margaret Tarpo
Department of Chemistry
Purdue University

March 31, 2026

4:30 PM, WTHR 104

*Reception immediately following the seminar
in the Leighty Commons (5:30-6:30 PM)*

Host: Professor Ming-Yu Ngai



“When the Same is Not the Same: Divergent Reactivity of Radicals Generated from Different Metal Complexes or Organic Dyes through Photoredox Catalysis”

ABSTRACT: The generation of radicals through photoredox catalysis has seen great success in initiating organic reactions. Usually, a substrate can be reduced or oxidized by a single-electron transfer from a light-activatable metal complex or organic dye with the right reduction or oxidation potential. The radicals produced can participate in organic transformations. In this seminar, I will present examples of seemingly identical radicals that exhibit divergent reactivities, influenced by interactions with the metal- or organo-photocatalyst used to generate them.

Biography

Education:

- 1986 Diplom (M.Sc.), University of Hamburg, Germany
- 1986 Visiting Scholar (3 months) with Prof. M. Rabinovitz, University of Jerusalem, Israel
- 1986 Visiting Scholar (6 months) with Prof. K. N. Houk, UCLA, USA
- 1989 Dr. rer. nat. (Ph.D.) in Chemistry, University of Hamburg, Germany
- 1989/90 Postdoctoral Fellow with Dr. R. D. Miller, IBM Research Center, San Jose, USA
- 1990/91 Postdoctoral Fellow with Prof. D. A. Evans, Harvard University, USA

Positions:

- Habilitand (Assistant Professor), University of Göttingen, Germany (1992-1996)
- Associate Professor, University of Stuttgart, Germany (1996-1997)
- Professor, University of Regensburg, Germany (1997 - today)
- Chair, Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy, University of Regensburg (2002-2005)
- Vice President (Research), University of Regensburg, Germany (2009-2011)
- Dean of Research, Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy, University of Regensburg (2011-today)
- Coordinator of the EU-ITN Network Mag(net)icFun (2012-2017)
- Coordinator of the International Ph.D. network PEC (Photoelectrocatalysis; Elitenetwork Bavaria, Germany; 2022-2030)

Research:

The research activities of the group of Oliver Reiser are concerned with the synthesis and catalysis of natural products and fine chemicals from renewable resources. Currently, the group focuses on photoredox catalysis using earth-abundant metal complexes.

Selected Honors and Awards:

Visiting Distinguished Professor, IIT Indore, India (2025-2027); Adjunct Professor University of Delhi (2022); Ryudo Professorship, Tokyo Institute of Technology (2014); Fellow "Innovative Teaching", Stifterverband der Deutschen Wissenschaft (2012-2013); JSPS Research Fellow (Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science, 2008), CSIR-Lectureship (Indian Research Council, 2006); Novartis Award for Innovative Organic Synthesis (2001).

Professional Activities:

Advisory Board; Ministry of Science Bavaria (2015-2019; 2017-2019 chairperson); President and Vice President, International Society of Heterocyclic Chemistry (ISHC, 2016-2019); Member at Large, American Chemical Society, Division of Organic Chemistry (2014-2016); Editorial Board, *Chemistry Open* and *Current Green Chemistry* (2011-today); Scientific Advisory Board Dermatology, Schering AG, Berlin (2001-2006); Advisory Board Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes (2001; since 2004 chairperson Regensburg).

Publications:

Together with his group, Oliver Reiser has co-authored over 350 peer reviewed publications and 7 issued patents.

Previous Lilly-Brown Speakers

- 2024:** Professor Eric T. Kool, Stanford University
2023: Professor Chaitan Khosla, Stanford University
2021: Professor Benjamin F. Cravatt, The Scripps Research Institute
2019: Professor Amir H. Hoveyda, Boston College
2016: Professor Richard B. Silverman, Northwestern University
2015: Professor Justin Du Bois, Stanford University
2013: Professor Samuel Danishefsky, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Columbia University
2011: Professor Karen Wooley, Texas A&M University
2010: Professor Scott Miller, Yale
2009: Professor Greg Verdine, Harvard
2007: Professor Barbara Imperiali, MIT
2005: Professor Al Meyers, Colorado State
2004: Professor Peter Wipf, University of Pittsburgh
2003: Professor John Wood, Yale
2002: Professor David Evans, Harvard
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History of Brown and Lilly-Brown Lecture Series

The Herbert C. Brown Lecture Series in Organic Chemistry was established in 1984 to honor Purdue Nobel Laureate Herbert C. Brown and to provide a forum for Purdue faculty and students interested in current topics in organic chemistry. Brown is internationally recognized for his contributions to the field of synthetic organic chemistry and Boron chemistry. He was named "One of the Top 75 Contributors to the Chemical Enterprise in the Past 75 Years," C&E News (1998). He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1979 for his work in hydroboration and organoboranes.

By 2002, a new lecture series was established in equal part by Eli Lilly and the Brown Lectureship matching fund. Through the Lilly-Brown Lectureship, professors from the Organic Division nominate individuals from North American institutions to present their exciting research to the curious Purdue students and faculty.

Upcoming H.C. Brown Lectures

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Robert Knowles, Princeton University

Rubén Martín, ICIQ, Spain

Brian Stoltz, California Institute of Technology

John L. Wood, Baylor University