



## **Colloquium Series: On the Grounds for Recognition of Cultural Difference**

Speaker:

Prof Jeremy Webber, Canada Research Chair in Law and Society, University of Victoria

Date / Time:

August 23, 2012 - 3:45pm - 5:30pm

Venue:

10th Floor, Auditorium, Pixel A, APU

Abstract:

Charles Taylor's "The Politics of Recognition" had a decisive impact, establishing recognition as the master concept for understanding cultural accommodation in political theory. But the concept has real limitations. It tends to psychologise cultural claims as fundamentally about affronts to one's amour propre. By treating demands for accommodation in this way, it fails to provide tools for distinguishing between claims and the responses appropriate to them. For example, is minority-language education really about recognition by the other, or is it, above all, about the inherent value of using and transmitting one's language?

This paper argues that recognition, while playing a role in some cases, should not be treated as a master concept. Taylor's oeuvre provides crucial tools for analyzing cultural accommodation but the most consequential are (as Taylor makes clear) those derived from his hermeneutics, especially the analogy of culture to language and his exploration of the nature and conditions of dialogue across cultures.

A Note on the Speaker:

Jeremy Webber holds the Canada Research Chair in Law and Society at the University of Victoria and was named a Trudeau Fellow in 2009. He is also Director of the Consortium on Democratic Constitutionalism (Demcon) based at University of Victoria. He taught in the Faculty of Law at McGill University from 1987 to 1998, was Dean of Law at the University of Sydney (Australia) from 1998 to 2002, and came to Victoria in 2002 to take up the Canada Research Chair. Professor Webber has published widely in the fields of legal and political theory, comparative constitutional law, and indigenous rights (in both the Canadian and Australian contexts), including *Reimagining Canada: Language, Culture, Community, and the Canadian Constitution* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994). He is co-editor of two recent collections of essays: *Between Consenting Peoples: Political Community* and the

Meaning of Consent (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); and *Storied Communities: Narratives of Contact and Arrival in Constituting Political Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011).