



COLLOQUIUM SERIES

## **“Pitfalls in the Constitution of Personhood”**

**Nils-Frederic Wagner**

**Mind, Brain and Neuroethics Research Unit,  
University of Ottawa**

The concept of personhood is bogged down by the entanglement of three closely related questions. In this talk, I disentangle (1) the question of what *defines* personhood from (2) the question of whether personhood is a *feature of the real world*. This will then be detached from (3) the question of how personhood is *ascribed* to others. I argue that ignoring these dimensions conflates ontological and normative considerations as to what constitutes personhood. Particularly, widespread ‘cognitivist’ views are threatened by invalid inferences from normative premises to factual conclusions. I end with some preliminary remarks on how evidence from developmental psychology and social neuroscience may be of use in setting the stage for a more plausible view of personhood.

**Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**Room: 3228 River Building**

**Time: 3:00 pm**

***All are welcome!***