

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
COLLOQUIUM LECTURE

"MATERIALISM, IMMATERIALISM, AND SCEPTICISM ABOUT THE EXTERNAL WORLD"

MELISSA FRANKEL
CARLETON UNIVERSITY

In his 1710 work, *A Treatise Concerning The Principles of Human Knowledge*, Berkeley argues that we should abandon materialism, writing that “it is no matter whether there is such a thing [as matter] or no, since it no way concerns us: and I do not see the advantage there is in disputing about we know not *what*, and we know not *why*” (§77). His view is roughly that materialism leads to scepticism – that the materialist can give neither a positive account nor even a relative account of the material world. In 1827, Mary Shepherd publishes her *Essays on the Perception of an External World*; against Berkeley, she argues that we have good reasons to believe that our sensory ideas are caused by a material world. But can Shepherd meet Berkeley’s sceptical challenge? In this paper, I outline Shepherd’s proposed rehabilitation of materialism in light of the Berkeleian challenge. I consider whether or not Shepherd can meet the challenge, and whether – or to what extent – her argument(s) for materialism improve on the earlier materialisms of the 17th and 18th centuries.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2019
1201 RICHCRAFT HALL
1:00 P.M.

EVERYONE WELCOME!

CARLETON UNIVERSITY