

“Do languages *really* exist?”



Robert J. Stainton,

Distinguished University
Professor, Department of
Philosophy, The University
of Western Ontario

Thursday, March 7th, 7:00 pm
Woodside Hall, Dominion-Chalmers
355 Cooper Street

Light refreshments will be served

This accessible presentation centers around a seemingly absurd question: ‘Do languages really exist?’ Though the answer seems perfectly apparent, recall that until very recently it seemed obvious that genders and races “really existed”. What’s more, many influential linguists and philosophers have recently provided plausible grounds for answering ‘No’. The aim of the talk is not to answer the question, but rather to consider i) what exactly is at issue (in particular, what is meant by ‘languages’ and ‘really exist’) and ii) why it matters, academically and socially, whether the skeptics are right.