

# Philosophy Department Colloquium Series

**Friday, January 18, 2019**

**2:00 p.m.**

**D-632**

**Everyone is welcome**

## “A Critical Analysis of the Ontology of Gender: Intersex as a Case Study”

Michaela Thompson (Graduate Student)

Department of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge

Despite the common tendency to believe one has clear conceptions of sex and gender, the debate between gender essentialism and gender constructivism rages on. Though gender essentialism is considered to be widely discredited, it seems to me that we have not moved away from the essentialist viewpoint in any real sense. In fact, it seems to be the case that we have no clear idea of what gender, or sex for that matter, are *at all*.

This complex issue manifests itself in political, religious, and personal spheres, but also directly impacts individuals that are considered “intersex” both socially and medically. The sex/gender debate influences the medical fraternity, policy makers, and researchers, and given the genetic component of sex development, recent advances in genetic therapy techniques (CRISPR-cas9) have further complicated the issue of intersex treatment. I propose that we must attempt to reconcile several viewpoints on sex and gender before reasonable policy around intersex management can be decided.

