



# SEMINAR SERIES

2017 • 2018 | DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM & PEDAGOGY

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## UNDERSTANDING CURRICULUM & PEDAGOGY IN A TURBULENT NEO-LIBERALIST WORLD

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▶ **September 29** | Scarfe 310 | 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

### **University Responsibilities, Values, and Value: Scholarship in the Age of Plenty**

**Kirk Madison**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Science | **Barbara Weber**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education

What are the University's responsibilities? To whom is it responsible? And how are its role and value perceived by society? Such questions around the university's role, values, and value are as old as the institution itself. Yet while they are at the heart of everything we do at UBC, not many of us spend much time thinking about how the answers to those questions influence our scholarship and research.

In this talk, we examine how the modern discussion and debate around these questions has suffered from a significant narrowing due to language loss. While not as apocalyptic as the cultural diversity collapse Wade Davis describes in his book "The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World", the decrease of diversity in our vocabularies has modified the original meanings of education, research, and scholarship. To illustrate this, we focus on the question of "value" and show how the modern debate has suffered from a fundamental category error: The notion of "value" is forced into the category of instrumentalism where quality is equated with quantity and the term is subsumed into a transactional or market-based definition of value. This neoliberal language pervades many aspects of modern institutions, and while it is seemingly clean and efficient, this redefinition is at odds with the notion of the university itself. In contrast to this view, we suggest that the meaning and value of research may also include aspects outside its direct application to the economic world. Specifically, we posit that the creation of knowledge may also lead to the disclosure of richer ways of being in the world and raise the quality of human experience.

**Kirk Madison** is an associate professor in the Department of Physics & Astronomy in the Faculty of Science. His research focus is on the experimental exploration of quantum many-body phenomena; this work involves the use of lasers to control clouds of isolated atoms. He also has an interest in the quality of teaching and has published on physics education research.

**Barbara Weber** is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education as well as the Chair of the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program at UBC. Her research focuses on philosophical, psychological and pedagogical theories around rationality, empathy, embodiment and Human Rights. Her philosophical background is in phenomenology, hermeneutics, contemporary political philosophy and the Frankfurt School. Most recently she has been exploring how the neo-liberal climate is influencing university research and scholarship.

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\* Light refreshments will be served at 2:00 p.m.

\* Lecture will commence at 2:30 p.m.



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