

JOINT SEMINAR

Presented by the Departments of Biological Sciences and Philosophy & Religion Studies
with the Sub-Antarctic Biocultural Conservation Program

Dr. Brendon Larson

University of Waterloo, Canada

Metaphors for Environmental Sustainability: A Seminar



Science cannot function without metaphors, yet many of them originate in everyday language and thus resonate with value connotations despite their scientific meaning. In this talk, I will demonstrate how this entanglement of facts with values creates a “metaphoric web” linking science and society. Accordingly, it is not just the epistemic dimensions of scientific metaphors that matter, but also their social ones. This is particularly the case in the environmental realm, where scientists tend to adopt metaphors that come up short because they reinforce prevailing values that are inconsistent with the sustainability outcomes many of us seek. These metaphors, after all, are not just words, but entail conservation actions. Drawing on a variety of past and present examples, I will argue for more reflective selection of metaphors in environmental science that not only exemplifies a more moral form of science but one in which normal citizens are more engaged.

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2:00 PM

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