In this project, a strategic interdisciplinary approach is utilized to examine the connections between Intelligent Design (ID), science, and sexual politics. I argue that despite its scientific appearance, ID is best understood as a conceptual framework for motivating collective beliefs and actions in regards to policing gender and sexuality. This project has three stages. First, I challenge the scientific status of ID by establishing its continuance with earlier antievolution movements that were primarily focused on social - not scientific - elements. Next, I query the function of science in ID discourse and argue that it is used symbolically as a source of authority and as a tool for both attack and defense. The second stage of this project focuses on examining the epistemological landscape of ID. I suggest that ID entails a Christian perspective in a stronger but more subtle way than its antievolutionary forerunners by showing that key ID tenets are best understood as scientized versions of the Genesis story of special creation and Logos theology of creation from John’s Gospel. I also examine various ID media to argue that ID discourse entails an epistemology of ignorance in which “ignorance” is not simply a lack of knowledge but is a substantive practice that creates and maintains a pliable collective. The third stage of this project addresses the references to gender and sexuality that permeate ID discourse. I discuss how ID revives a simplified version of natural law to assert a strict gender dimorphism, compulsory heterosexuality, and gender-specific moral obligations. I conclude with a brief survey of ID-inspired activity in Canada and suggest possible sites for future research.

SHARON EMILY WOODILL
BA Honours (Music), Saint Francis Xavier University, 2007
MA (Women and Gender Studies), Joint – Mount Saint Vincent University and St. Mary’s University, 2009

INTERDISCIPLINARY PHD PROGRAM

TITLE OF THESIS: INTELLIGENT DESIGN, SCIENCE, AND SEXUAL POLITICS

TIME/DATE: 10:00 am, Tuesday, August 19, 2014

PLACE: Room 3107, The Mona Campbell Building, 1459 LeMarchant Street

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:
Dr. Carla Fehr, Department of Philosophy, University of Waterloo (External Examiner)
Dr. Arthur McCalla, Department of Religious Studies, Mount Saint Vincent University (Reader)
Dr. Gordon McOuat, Contemporary Studies Programme and History of Science and Technology Programme, University of King's College (Reader)
Dr. Christopher Helland, Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University (Reader)
Dr. Letitia Meynell, Department of Philosophy, Dalhousie University (Supervisor)

DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVE: Dr. Jack Duffy, Interdisciplinary PhD Program, Dalhousie University

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