



Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology Speaker Series Presents:

The Jean-Sébastien Guy Memorial Lecture in Social Theory

*Beyond Structure and Agency:
Jean-Sébastien Guy and the Promise of Relational Sociology*

Dr. Christopher Powell, Toronto Metropolitan University

The human condition is not Being but being-with-others. Starting from this idea, relational sociologists work to reimagine the fundamental ‘stuff’ that society is made of. Instead of individuals on the one hand and groups or structures on the other, we propose to study everything in terms of relations. Each individual is a cluster of relations; so, too, is each group, each institution, each norm, each idea. This approach unlocks our gaze from old dualisms—structure and agency, history and biography, society and individual—and opens new ways of thinking about power, knowledge, identity, and solidarity. Dr. Jean-Sébastien Guy was a vital member of the community of relational sociologists, in Canada and internationally. In his work, Jean-Sébastien expanded on the systems theory of Niklas Luhmann to develop a highly original theory of metric and nonmetric social relations. In this talk, Dr. Powell will situate Jean-Sébastien’s work in the context of relational sociology, discuss his unique contribution, and return to the implications of relational thinking for generating new openings for research and social action.

Dr. Christopher Powell is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Toronto Metropolitan University. A longtime contributor to critical genocide studies, his most recent work explores how complex systems theory can generate new approaches to socialist economics.

**Friday, November 3, 2023
2:30-4pm, 1116 McCain Building
All welcome!**