



Media Release

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How Do Popular Symbols Affect National Identity? Public Lecture Series June 8-9

Do you wonder how popular symbols reflect or enflame political tensions? A conference being held June 8 – 10 at St. Thomas University and the University of New Brunswick hopes to answer this question.

The Symbols of Canada conference brings together scholars from across the nation to discuss Canadian symbols such as Tim Hortons, Anne of Green Gables, poutine, hockey, and the beaver. In addition, three keynote speakers will explore political symbols in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. These lectures are free and open to the public:

- “Patriotism, Love, and America’s War on Terror” by John Bodnar, University of Indiana / Thurs., June 8 at 7 pm (Reception at 6:30 pm) – Brian Mulroney Hall, Room 101
- “Of chickens and eggs, symbols and nations” by Richard White, University of Sydney / Friday, June 9 at 9 am – Brian Mulroney Hall, Room 101
- “Kiwiana: Settler Nostalgia and Re-Colonisation in Aotearoa/New Zealand” by Katie Pickles, University of Canterbury / Friday, June 9 at 4 pm – Brian Mulroney Hall, Room 101

“Symbols play a crucial role in developing and sustaining national feeling and in defining who is and is not a welcome member of a national community,” says Professor Michael Dawson, Department of History at St. Thomas University and one of the conference’s organizers.

“They can be powerful political tools or sought-after icons for tourists. Whatever form they take, they become short-hand reference points that communicate powerful and very specific conceptions of identity that frequently belie their complicated and contested origins.”

The Symbols of Canada conference is part of a broader Social Sciences and Humanities Council-funded outreach initiative that includes radio/podcast interviews and a book aimed a general audience.

For more information on Symbols of Canada, see www.stu.ca/symbols.

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