



**PROF. DR. MONICA HELLER**  
(University of Toronto)

**DECEMBER 4, 2017, 16:15–18:00**  
**MAIN BUILDING – HOCHSCHULSTRASSE 4 – ROOM 120**

**“DR. ESPERANTO: LANGUAGE, HOPE AND INEQUALITY IN MODERN CAPITALISM”**



In this talk, I will look at some of the ways people have engaged in inventing languages as a way to overcome or get around some of the differences and inequalities associated with modern and late-modern capitalism — differences and inequalities associated with national metropolises, the regulation of international relations, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and more recently the globalized new economy. The talk will take us from one historical moment of enthusiasm for inventing languages, the late 19th to early 20th century (when Esperanto was only one of about 500 such languages invented) to today's taste for conlangs (constructed languages like Klingon), asking what political economic conditions explain the development of invented languages for utopian, antimodern or alter-modern projects; or for regulating international (and mainly) commercial relations in ways that underlie what we now know as applied linguistics. The trip back and forth between dream and technê will also move us from central and eastern Europe to Hollywood — via La-Chaux-de-Fonds and Geneva.