# Guest Lecture
# Monica Heller

**Prof. Dr. Monica Heller** is professor emerita at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto. Her research has focused on the role of language in the construction of social inequality, ideologies of language, nation and state, as well as linguistic commodification in the globalized new economy.

## On the post WWII "origins" of "sociolinguistics": a slightly revisionist genealogy

**Wed 27 April 2022 | 17.15-19.00 | UniS | S003 | University of Bern**

The usual story about the origins of the field of sociolinguistics emphasizes a US-based critique of Chomskyan linguistic theory and its evacuation of the social. In this talk I will reframe this story in the context of the Cold War, situating anglophone sociolinguistics in neo-colonial development projects meant to counter Communism as a means of wealth redistribution. This sociolinguistics was a liberal one focused on nation-building through modernization in such forms as management of linguistic variability, and standard language literacy. The result was an evacuation of a political economic understanding of inequality and difference. This genealogy contrasts with the emergence of the field in France, shaped by Communist Party emphases on class, at the expense of colonialism or multilingualism. I will suggest that such a reflexive re-assessment of the conditions of sociolinguistic knowledge production allows us to better grasp the relationship between what we want to accomplish and the conditions of our work, as well as to critically assess our theories and methods.

We kindly ask you to register for this lecture on Eventbrite: Click here

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