



**Western University**  
**Department of Physics and Astronomy**

## **PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY COLLOQUIUM**

**Date:**        **THURSDAY, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

**Time:**        **1:30 p.m.**

**Location:**   **Physics & Astronomy Seminar Room 100**

### **Dr. Robert Cockcroft**

Department of Physics & Astronomy  
Western University

### ***“Indigenous Skies: Increasing Diversity in and Attractiveness of Astronomical Knowledge”***

#### **ABSTRACT**

The Department of Physics and Astronomy is aiming to foster long-lasting relations with the Indigenous community—through individual members of local Six Nations communities, and Western’s Indigenous Services and First Nations Studies Program. It is the long-term goal of the Department to increase both the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing into undergraduate and graduate courses, and the representation of Indigenous peoples at all levels—student, faculty, and staff—in astronomy and science in general. We will discuss how this inclusion and increased representation will not only benefit Indigenous communities by making astronomy more accessible, but it will also benefit all students by increasing the diversity of the academic community and its curricula.

As a first step towards these larger goals, I will describe a nascent project in Indigenous astronomy that we are developing to create a dedicated first-year undergraduate course. This project will draw on local sky lore as much as possible, and I will share an example of the Celestial Bear story from the Cayuga Nation and how it encodes information specific to this region and the time of year it is told. However, it is important to address how such encoding differs for different perspectives—both in time and location—so we also anticipate needing to include other Indigenous sky lore from across Turtle Island.

Rob Cockcroft is a settler originally from the UK. Rob lives and works as a grateful visitor on traditional territories of the Attawandaran, Algonquin, Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Leni-Lunaape Peoples.

***COFFEE + light snacks will be available in the Atrium, 2nd floor, at 1:15 p.m.***