Lisa Kerr
Doctoral Candidate in Law and Trudeau Foundation Scholar, New York University

“The Chronic Failure to Control Prisoner Isolation in US and Canadian Law ”

Tuesday, February 25, 2014
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm
• Room 123, Faculty of Law (1822 East Mall)
• For directions to Allard Hall click Here:
• L&S calendar: http://www.greencollege.ubc.ca/ &
• http://www.law.ubc.ca/seminars/law_society_events.html

The decision to isolate a prisoner can profoundly intensify the severity of a legal sanction of imprisonment. While Canada and the United States have distinct constitutional traditions, and distinct practices of isolation itself, the formal legal controls over solitary confinement in each country are strikingly similar. American courts have articulated protections for the severely mentally ill, but no court has found indefinite isolation to be constitutionally barred. Litigation under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms could have a different outcome, but the US experience of litigating solitary reveals the limits of judicial intervention as a means to generate effective controls over prisoner isolation.

Lisa Kerr is a doctoral candidate in law and Trudeau Foundation Scholar at New York University, where she also completed an LLM in 2009. She graduated from the UBC Faculty of Law in 2005 before clerking at the B.C. Court of Appeal. Lisa articled at Fasken Martineau and worked as staff lawyer at Prisoners’ Legal Services in Abbotsford, pursuing strategic litigation on human rights issues in federal and provincial prisons. Lisa works with Pivot Legal Society in pursuit of the decriminalization of sex work in Canada. Her doctoral research is a comparative study of the ways that legal systems regulate prisons.