

Université   
de Montréal



**DÉPARTEMENT D'ÉTUDES ANGLAISES**  
&  
**THE J. W. MCCONNELL CHAIR IN AMERICAN STUDIES**

PRESENT A LECTURE BY

**OLLIVIER DYENS**

**“The Inhuman Condition”**

**Abstract:** In the last hundred years or so, the impact of technological reality (i.e. the perception of the world through both human and machine's senses) on our understanding of the world has been so great that we have entered the inhuman condition. What is the inhuman condition? It's the inability to determine what a human being is. Knowing that unseen and inaccessible levels of reality (bacterial, viral, atomic, etc.) are what truly define our world, we now believe that our biological perception of reality is at best a partial truth and at worst a simulacrum. Because of technology, we are now caught in a feedback loop of amplifications and interferences: the more we try to define who and what we are, the more post-human we become (amplification) and the farther away slips any possibility of a coherent definition (interference).

**Ollivier Dyens** is Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning at Concordia University in Montréal. His most recent book is *La Condition inhumaine, essai sur l'effroi technologique* published in France by Flammarion. He is also the author of *Metal and Flesh, The Evolution of Man, Technology Takes Over*, published by MIT Press whose French version (VLB Éditeur) was awarded Best Essay by the Société des écrivains canadiens. He has been a guest speaker at the Parson School of Design, at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City, at the Maryland Institute College of Art, at Ars Electronia, and at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21 2008— 4:15 P.M.**  
**ROOM C-8111**  
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