

## **Dr. Fern Brunger – Biography**

Fern Brunger is a medical anthropologist whose research and teaching is at the interface of bioethics and anthropology. Her areas of specialization include cross-cultural clinical ethics and the ethics of health research involving socially identifiable populations. Her research examines the cultural and political-economic contexts in which “ethics” itself is produced, understood and applied, in particular in relation to population-based research.

Dr. Brunger is Associate Professor of Health Care Ethics in the Faculty of Medicine at Memorial University of Newfoundland. As part of that appointment, she holds a clinical ethics position with the Eastern Health region of Newfoundland. She is part of the ethics team providing ethics consults, policy development, and ethics education for the province through the Provincial Health Ethics Network of Newfoundland & Labrador (PHENNL). She is also co-chair of the provincial Health Research Ethics Board, under the newly established provincial Health Research Ethics Authority. She teaches ethics in undergraduate and postgraduate medicine, and provides graduate supervision and education in the Division of Community Health & Humanities in the Faculty of Medicine.

Dr. Brunger’s unique position as an anthropologist working in ethics has allowed her to contribute substantially to national scholarly discussion about research ethics in relation to culture. She was a member of the board of the National Council for Ethics of Health Research (NCEHR) and has contributed to various national working groups and policy statements on research ethics, including CIHR Privacy Best Practices (2005), and CIHR Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples (2006). Dr. Brunger focuses on culture as a place where power relations are constituted and contested. Her contribution to the field of ethics has been to push the boundaries of what we define as encompassing “ethics”, including re-thinking the research questions one can and should ask, as well as exploring new methods and hybrid theories for answering those questions.