

Laurence Bruce: Scottish Tyrant or Shetland's Hero?

**Speaker: Kate Zubczyk, University of Guelph,
Department of History**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 3 – 4:30
MACKINNON 132, COA BOARDROOM**



After his appointment as *foude* or sheriff of Shetland for the first time in 1571, Laurence Bruce's fate as one of the most puzzling, and fascinating, figures in Shetland's history was sealed. Having gained the position through the favour of his half-brother Robert Stewart, the illegitimate son of James V, Bruce became notorious for abusing his authority and cheating his subjects. His exploitation eventually resulted in an official investigation that saw more than seven hundred Shetlanders testify against him. However, by 1593 the Shetlanders faced a new and more powerful tyrant in the form of Bruce's nephew, Patrick Stewart. Years of ill will between the two men fostered a surprising change in Bruce's character and reputation: he became a champion for the Shetlanders' cause and Patrick's most vocal opponent, eventually playing a key role in Patrick's trial and execution.

