SLAMmag is the quarterly electronic magazine of the School of Letters, Art & Media in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, providing updates on the activities of the School and celebrating our research and teaching achievements.

In this issue:
- Head of School welcome
- School news and events
- Welcome to new staff
- Department news and events
A warm welcome to SLAMmag, the School’s new electronic newsletter for staff, students and alumni. SLAMmag replaces the former SLAM newsletter, with a number of significant differences. Rather than emphasising future events, which are currently catered for across a wide number of university platforms, including the What’s On site for external readers and the FASS newsletter for staff and students, SLAMmag reports on events and publications that have occurred in the last quarter, celebrating our research and teaching achievements and paying tribute to incoming or departing staff. It will represent the School both as a collective and as a group of individual units. And it will try to build on the good feeling created by our ‘New Faces staff welcome’ and our twice monthly morning teas by putting faces to names, with a good sprinkling of photographs in each issue. Look out in this issue for feature articles on Widening Participation and Gallipoli as pilgrimage site. Happy reading!
2015 SLAM Annual Prizegiving Ceremony

Congratulations to our 2015 Prize winners

Words by Elizabeth Connor

On 30 April, the School of Letters, Art and Media held its annual Prizegiving Ceremony to celebrate the achievements of its outstanding students.

Over 150 attendees, including Prizewinners and their families as well as staff, gathered in MacLaurin Hall in The Quadrangle, with The Dean, Professor Duncan Ivison, and Head of School, Professor Vanessa Smith.

After the presentation prize-winners joined their families for celebratory drinks in the Hall.

The School would like to warmly congratulate all prize winners.

A complete list of all the prizewinners can be viewed here.

The occasion also celebrated the winners of the annual English Literary Prizes and Media and Communications International Fellowships.

Professor Smith acknowledged the efforts of our students and expressed the School’s gratitude to all prize donors for their continuing support.

Image courtesy Lucy Baird
On 26 March the School came together for a lunch to welcome new members of staff who had joined SLAM since the end of 2014. Sandwiches and hot pastizzi were served, and the new staff were welcomed by the Head of School. Prior to the lunch, each new staff member had been invited to introduce themselves in their own words, and these are reproduced on the following pages.

Images courtesy Maria Barbagallo
**Lucy Baird**  
**Art History and Film Studies Admin Officer**  
Before I started with SLAM I spent some time working with Billy Blue College of Design, as College Administrator and then Academic Services Officer where I supported academics in the process of course renewal and the maintenance of courses within the College database. I am currently also a Secondary Visual Art teacher with majors in Film and Photography and have spent the last four years teaching at Freeman Catholic College. I am a little bit obsessed with Instagram at the moment and use it to connect with like-minded photographers from around the world, drop by and follow me mrslbaird.

**Lurdes de Oliveira**  
**Executive Assistant to Head of School**  
Prior to joining SLAM, I worked in HR Business Support (now HR Strategic Solutions) at the University for almost four years. Originally from Perth, I lived in the UK and Ireland for over 10 years before returning to Sydney. My interests include travel, philosophy and photography. I spend a lot of my free time hiking, reading and day-dreaming about travelling.

**Mark De Vitis**  
After completing my PhD at USYD in 2012 I joined the Art History department at the National Art School, though most recently I’ve been working on a research project at the Getty Research Library in Los Angeles, focused on their collection of seventeenth-century prints. One of my goals for the semester is to establish a discussion group on dress- a major research interest of mine. I enjoy Rossini and Tetrazzini, both as musicians and as pasta dishes.

**Nick Enfield**  
I work on language and cognition in cultural and social context, with a specialisation in the languages of mainland Southeast Asia, especially Laos. My most recent ‘hobby’ was playing drums in a band but this has been somewhat crowded out by the arrival of our incredible two daughters, Nyssa who has just turned 2, and Nonnika who has just turned 7 months.

**Sebastian Fedden**  
Before coming to Sydney, I was a postdoctoral research fellow in the UK working on the grammar of indigenous languages of New Guinea. I did my PhD at the University of Melbourne, so although I am from Germany originally, I’m kind of back in Australia.

**Stephen Gilchrist**  
For over a decade I have been a curator of Indigenous Art in Australian Public Galleries and at University Art Museums in the US. In my spare time, I like to go to the movies and as a relatively new arrival to Sydney, I like exploring NSW beaches with my family.
Olivia Murphy
My background is in Jane Austen studies, but my current research project is on experimentation in the Romantic period, and I'm also doing some work on the Romantic origins and legacies of Science Fiction. Outside of research I spend a good deal of time inappropriately anthropomorphising my dog, and less time knitting (mostly toy dinosaurs, of late).

Venetia Robertson
I am a PhD candidate and Teaching Fellow in the department of Studies in Religion, working on digital cultures, personal spirituality, and other-than-human identities, and teaching a unit on World Religions this semester. I am also the Social Media Manager for the Religious Studies Project, which brings together my interests in the internet and religious expression very neatly and is lots of fun!

Shelagh Stanton
Digital Technology Officer, Audio
My background is in audio production, including live sound and radio – I spent 6 years at community station FBi in its early days, and have freelanced mixing and recording bands ever since I was old enough to get into venues. Outside of SLAM, you might catch me braving the Inner West's roads on my trusty bicycle, usually with my kelpie Wulfric running alongside – I rarely leave home without him!

Mitchell Hobbs
I am a passionate educator and researcher in media and communications, who previously worked in political public relations for Prime Minister Julia Gillard. A resident of the Inner West, my extracurricular interests include bushwalks, the theatre, small bars and running around Blackwattle Bay in my new USYD t-shirt.

Gwen Hyslop
Before coming to Sydney I was working as a Research Fellow in Linguistics at the ANU. I specialise in documentation of endangered languages, with a focus on languages of the Himalayas, especially Bhutan and Northeast India.

Kimberley Knight
Prior to joining the History of Emotions project I was at the University of St Andrews where I wrote my doctoral thesis on religious weeping in the thirteenth century. My new project is on love and marriage in Old Norse literature. Aside from thinking about emotions, I am a keen runner and am starting to explore Sydney by pounding its streets. Despite having a poor sense of direction, the Sydney heat is proving to be my biggest challenge.
Lukasz Swiatek

I am one of the faculty’s Postgraduate Teaching Fellows for 2015 and a PhD student in the Department of Media and Communications, researching awards and prizes from a media perspective. My other area of interest is confectionery and desserts: not researching them, just eating them; I have a real sweet tooth, which I’m trying to curb (sometimes).

Tarrin Wills

I am a graduate and former postdoc of SLAM and have just returned from the University of Aberdeen, where I happily taught in English and History for 7 years and less happily endured the Scottish weather and food. In case you’re interested, I love, among other things, canyoning and food, especially in good company, although these days I don’t do much of the canyoning.

Liliana Zavaglia

Lecturer in Australian Literature

Prior to completing my PhD in 2012, I worked at senior administrative and research positions in state and federal parliament as well as the SBS and ABC. I have been a research assistant for the Chair of Australian Literature, and tutored for SLAM in Australian Literature. My area of interest is in recent Australian writings and I am currently working on a manuscript for a forthcoming book on Apology and Apologia in recent Australian reconciliation literature. Outside of work I like eating a lot, and going on bush walks to work that off.
During the first third of the year, the Department welcomed new colleagues; Stephen Gilchrist, whose expertise in curating and teaching Indigenous Australian Art strengthens immeasurably our ability and commitment to teaching Aboriginal Art as part of our curriculum, and Mark de Vitis, a scholar of early modern European art, and now leading our first year unit, “Art and Experience”.

We celebrated several important publications. Firstly, Mary Roberts’ Istanbul Exchanges, which was published to much acclaim by University of California Press, and which confirms her preeminence as a scholar of global exchange.

We also held a book launch for Mark Ledbury’s James Northcote, History Painting, and the Fables (Yale University Press), the first monograph on this fascinating painter and creator, one hundred years before Max Ernst, of elaborate and humorous collages. The book was launched by Angus Trumble, the director of the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra.

Bruce Isaacs and colleagues from English organised the very successful Caméra-Stylo conference in April, and Jennifer Milam’s Sydney Intellectual History Network continued its ground-breaking work with the Rethinking Intellectual History 2015 conference in the same month.
Both conferences drew distinguished guest speakers and created great intellectual interest, demonstrating the depth and breadth of Department members’ research commitments. Meanwhile Roger Benjamin guest lectured in Tunis, and Donna Brett helped to organise and chair a highly successful collaborative symposium with the Art Gallery of New South Wales, in conjunction with their innovative show, The Photograph and Australia. The Symposium, entitled Trafficking Images featured contributions by artists, curators and scholars and was both well-attended and lively.

We also opened applications for the inaugural Frank McDonald Memorial Travel Scholarships, funded by a generous gift to The Power Institute by James Fairfax, and by contributions from alumni and friends, which will enable travel by ambitious Honours students to sites and collections to assist their research and scholarship.

The Power Institute continued its series of lectures by prominent international scholars with a talk by the Princeton-based art historian and critic, Hal Foster, and in May hosted the influential historian of performance art, Amelia Jones, and the critic and theorist of contemporary art, David Raskin.

Also in May, a special event funded by Power brought scholars and students from Yale University, and guests from Turkey, to Sydney for a special research seminar sharing student research on 21 May, a talk by Mellon Professor Tim Barringer also on 21 May, and a Symposium on Gallipoli in Turkish memory featuring two preeminent Turkish voices at the Art Gallery of New South Wales on 22 May.

Perhaps the most significant of Power events took place in early January, when we launched our Getty Foundation sponsored grant initiative, Ambitious Alignments: New Histories of Southeast Asian Art with an initial workshop bringing together a dozen scholars from Australia and Southeast Asia to inaugurate a project that will last eighteen months and take us to Indonesia and Singapore. See here for more information on the project.
The Celtic Studies programme provides teaching in the languages, literatures and history of the Celtic-speaking peoples. It receives generous support from donors and community groups in offering a range of teaching in Celtic Studies.

This semester has seen the introduction of a new course focusing on the ‘otherworld’ journeys that are such a celebrated motif in Celtic literature. This is taught by Professor Jonathan Wooding. The teaching of Scottish Gaelic enters its second year as again our most popular language unit. Late in 2014 we launched the book Colloquial Scottish Gaelic: The Complete Course for Beginners (Routledge) by our Gaelic lecturer Dr Katherine Spadaro (whose co-author Katie Graham is a previous Gaelic teacher on our programmes). The Gaelic programme has recently received a generous endowment from a benefactor that enables us to offer it on a regular basis over the next few years.

Recent publications by programme staff include Jonathan Wooding’s published lecture, St Fursey: Pilgrim and Visionary (Norwich: Fursey Pilgrims, 2015).

The Celtic Studies Foundation recently hosted two well-attended evening events, with lectures by Dr Nick Card (University of the Highlands and Islands) and Dr David Caldwell (President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland). Anyone wanting to join our mailing list for upcoming events can send an email to Jonathan Wooding. 2016 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Celtic Studies Foundation and an international conference is planned to mark the event.
During this semester, the Department welcomed two new staff members who will play important roles in research and teaching into the immediate future: Dr Olivia Murphy, who takes up the position of Postdoctoral Research Fellow, and Dr Tarrin Wills, teaching and researching early medievalist literature while Associate Professor Dan Anlezark is on a Future Fellowship. Both new appointments enhance the Department’s extensive historical sweep of literature, one unique in Australia.

The Department of English in association with the Department of Art History and Film Studies organised the highly successful international conference Camera-Stylo: Intersections in Literature and Cinema in March. The conference drew contributors from as far afield as Finland, and featured a quartet of internationally-respected speakers from Australia, the United States and Britain. The conference also provided the platform for work by a host of talented local postgraduates. One immediate outcome from the enthusiastic response to the conference was the decision to set up the Sydney Research Network on Literature and Cinema. The group will act as a focal point for research in this growing and exciting component of SLAM offerings, one co-ordinated by the Director of Film Studies, Dr David Kelly.

Associate Professor Kate Lilley was chosen as the inaugural United States Studies Centre-Indiana University Creative Arts Fellow. The Fellowship takes Professor Lilley to Indiana University Bloomington later in the year, where she will conduct research at the Lilly Library and the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction in Bloomington.

Work began this semester on the Large Educational Innovation Grant, ‘Being Part of the FASS Learning Community’, organised by Dr Rebecca Johinke. The project was awarded $35,000 to carry out research and test practical activities that improve learning outcomes and student retention. During 2015, two first year English units, ‘Constructing the Fictive Self’ and ‘Narratives of Romance and Adventure’, will be used to test a range of new approaches to teaching and learning, the results of which will be transmitted both within the Faculty and beyond through publications, conferences and workshops. The aim is to make the project an important stepping-stone to better teaching and learning outcomes for all staff and students.

As part of the Sydney Writers Festival, the Department’s Dr Melissa Hardie interviewed the acclaimed American writer, Jonathan Lethem, at a special event for University of Sydney staff and students held on campus. Lethem is one of the foremost contemporary writers in the United States, and the event cements a relationship with the Writers Festival that the Department is keen to develop further.

L-R Jonathan Lethem, Melissa Hardie
Judith Beveridge wins the 2015 Porter Prize

For the fourth year in a row, the authoritative QS Worldwide University Rankings survey rated the Department among the top 20 English Language and Literature departments in the world, and the best in Australasia. The rankings aim to measure academic reputation, employer reputation and research impact, and while, as the Dean, Professor Duncan Ivison, observed, ‘they don’t measure everything we value’, they are an accepted mark of international recognition.

Recent publications from English Department Honorary Associates: Professor Adrian Mitchell published *The Profilist: The Notebooks of Ethan Dibble* (Mile End, SA: Wakefield Press) and Dr Helen Young edited *Fantasy and Science Fiction Medievalisms: From Isaac Asimov to 'A Game of Thrones'* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press).

Congratulations to Judith Beveridge, who has won the 2015 Peter Porter Poetry Prize for her poem ‘As Wasps Fly Upwards’. Morag Fraser named Judith as the overall winner at a ceremony at Collected Works Bookshop in Melbourne. Judith receives $5,000 for her poem, which was selected from a field of around 600 poems.

Judith is already recognised as one of Australia’s leading poets, and the prize fittingly rewards that talent.

The other shortlisted poets included Toby Fitch, a doctoral candidate in the Department of English. Toby receives $500.

Judith’s latest poetry publications are *Devadatta’s Poems* and *Hook and Eye*, which has just been published by George Braziller for the US market. Judith teaches creative writing in the Department of English.
Members of the English Department are involved in the ‘Widening Participation in English’ project designed to introduce pupils from outside the usual catchment areas for Sydney University to the University.

At our first school visit in 2012, Melissa Hardie, Brigid Rooney and I watched as then-Postgraduate Teaching Fellow David Large blew the minds of about forty 15-year-old students at Blacktown Boys High School. As Dave performed an intricate narratological breakdown of a video game, the widening of their eyes was visible. Six months later, under Huw Griffith’s direction, these same Blacktown Boys (many of whom migrated to Australia from Asia, Africa and the Middle East in the last 5 or 10 years) volunteered to gouge Gloucester’s eyes out, delivering the most enthusiastic and animated Shakespearean dialogue of the year.

When Dave delivered his video game presentation, he tapped into the boys’ particular interest, expanding their expectations of the discipline of English. When the boys stepped up at our campus event, it was our expectations that expanded.

The program has run for three years, offering a succession of these surprises. We didn’t expect our partner teacher at Broken Hill to improvise in front of us a creative short story about a suicidal shopping trolley. We didn’t expect an enraptured student from Bankstown Girls High School to tear-up at the sight of Jane Austen’s signature in the Rare Books collection. Nor did we expect the next year that it be the male students from Coonabarabran that would offer the most eager responses to Nicola Parsons’ new media activity on Pride and Prejudice and the Lizzie Bennett Diaries. And we didn’t expect that these students would so consistently display an intellectual independence and a confidence for open-minded provocation.

Most strikingly, we didn’t expect how much we’d be enriched. We get a lot out of this work – it offers a genuine opportunity to collaborate among our academic team, and to find intersections between research and teaching interests. We also appreciate the opportunity to work in this kind of context with our undergraduate and postgraduate volunteers.

The program also brings us together as staff sharing in a very rewarding experience. One final anecdote: Last year, our Bankstown Girls creative writing mentees presented their completed Year 12 major works at a “Meet the Author” function their school had staged. The “Supreme” (what the girls call their teacher) baked cakes and caramel slices. Their principal popped champagne. And Melissa Hardie, Kate Lilley and I choked up as the girls gave author readings and signed printed copies of their short stories for supportive peers, family members, teachers, and us.

It sounds pretty cheesy when you write it down. But we’re very pleased to be able to do it, and even more pleased that the Nelson Meers Foundation’s generous pledge of $50,000 for the project over 2015 is helping this work to continue and expand. There are very real benefits to investing in Widening Participation – for these students and for ours, for the University and staff – and these are some of the unanticipated benefits the program offers up.

Bankstown Girls High School students swamped by their peers at their ‘Meet the Author’ event in 2014

Image courtesy Kieryn McKay
This semester, one of the English Department’s most respected and long-standing members, Professor Will Christie, left to take up the position of Head of the Humanities Research Centre at the ANU. The Centre is the premier research institute in the country, and although the Department was sad to see Will go, we wish him well and aim to forge closer links with the Centre.

Drinks were held on 1 April in the Woolley Common Room to farewell Professor Christie with great and genuine affection.
It’s hard to strike the proper tone here, hard to bury Caesar when he’s still looking so well, and equally hard to praise him – Will’s bone-deep, Presbyterian allergy to compliments makes him an awkward, moving target, and, unhelpfully, there’s an enormous amount to praise. And so, instead, I’ll provide a brief list of things that I’ll miss when Will is no longer pent mid Woolley’s cloisters dim:

1. Dr. Christie’s Health Warnings, or, Hints Towards Bodily Economy for Scholars: There are two stern warnings Will gives to any prospective research student: the first is the usual blood-curdling review of the state of the academic job market; the second concerns a more intimate scholarly affliction: “The haemorrhoids, Elias!”. Will is also the only conference chair I’ve ever seen encourage an audience to get up and have a stretch between papers – and, more remarkably, actually manage to get the audience to do so.

2. Jurassic Type, or, The Terrible AppleMacasaurus: If from the common way you turn your steps, dear listener, and find yourself outside Will Christie’s office – dally on the threshold a moment, and take in the interesting scene before you. Behind a vast desk, behold a long, lean, theropodal creature folded up in a small chair, eyes narrowed in concentration, stabbing at the keyboard with the two long claws on each forearm – growling quietly as it answers emails. Considering the creature’s technique, we must marvel, if only as Natural Historians, at its productivity.

3. The Invisible Man, or, Godzilla on Tiptoe: Several years ago, while teaching a class, I was suddenly halted mid-sentence by an apparition at the door of N384. “It was of stature tall, a span above man’s common measure”, and it preceded, as we watched, to enter the room in an extraordinary pantomime of stealth – it stilted to my chair on tiptoe, and, in a rich, deep voice, asked: “Elias – what was the name of that Thai place on King St?”. Having satisfied this presence with the name of Thai La Ong, I watched it depart in the same antic fashion. Will’s talent for drawing attention to himself in the moment of trying not to draw attention to himself is remarkable, and, over the years, I’ve watched him leave or enter rooms in exactly the same exaggerated manner, providing the visual equivalent of a dog-whistle to anyone optically attuned to this peculiar behaviour.


   “Dear Elias, It’s fine. Best, Will.”

   “Will! How was your break?”

   “Oh, G’day Elias – it was fine.”

   “What’d you think of the argument in chapter 1? I was worried I’d made a bit of a leap…”

   “Elias, it’s fine.”

   “Will, we can always reschedule our meeting – if your tooth has broken, that’s a pretty good excuse to avoid work today.”

   “Elias, I’m fine.”

5. The Magic Finger: My first acquaintance with William Christie occurred on a winter afternoon in N395, in one of those Honours prerequisite courses now lost to time and efficiency. After electrifying us awake with a reading of Keats’ ‘On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Again’, the tall, strangely dressed man at the pulpit “launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind”. My transport was cut short, however, when, while enumerating a point, our preacher raised an enormous middle finger, and proceeded to tap it with the fingers of his other hand, while the prodigious digit flexed back against this pressure. Since then I’ve seen Will un-holster this pistol digit in every setting imaginable.

There’s more to say here, but all this is just a way of saying how much I’ll miss him, and how the department will seem much emptier without him in it.
Three new department members have joined the Department of Linguistics since the beginning of 2015: Nick Enfield (Professor and Chair) works on the relation between language, cognition, and social interaction, with a field research focus on Laos; Sebastian Fedden works on morphological typology with a field research focus on Papua New Guinea; and Gwen Hyslop works on sound systems and especially the development of tone in languages, with a field research focus on Bhutan.

A new Linguistics Department seminar series is coordinated by Sebastian Fedden, held most Fridays from 12.30-1.30pm.

Several members of the Department of Linguistics, along with colleagues in other USYD departments including Philosophy, History, Anthropology, Sociology, and Conflict & Peace Studies, have received Dean and Pro-Dean for Research Incentive Funding (2015) for a Faculty-wide collaborative research network on ‘Power and Accountability’, led by Nick Enfield.


Sebastian Fedden recently convened an International Workshop “Gender and Classifiers: Areal and Genealogical Perspectives” (held at MPI Nijmegen) in late January, in association with the Surrey Morphology Group.

The Linguistics Department hosted visiting scholar Kenneth Reinecke Hansen, Assistant Professor, Centre for Journalism, University of Southern Denmark: “Applying corpus-based discourse analysis, I will be investigating how current journalistic practice is shifting the focus from the present to the future, including how journalists ‘guess’, i.e. predict and speculate, about the future.” The project is funded by University of Southern Denmark and sponsored by the Carlsberg Foundation.
The Linguistics Department hosted visiting scholar Jennifer Fest: “Working with Dr Monika Bednarek I will work on studying the concept of news values in a corpus of newspaper articles from five different regional varieties of English. The research is based on an operationalisation of different news values into representative linguistic features and aims at describing the distribution of these values with regard to the news topics and varieties to which they are most frequently connected. My stay is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).”

Monika Bednarek was recently awarded a prestigious External Senior Fellowship (one year) under the Marie Curie FRIAS COFUND Fellowship Programme (FCFP), to be taken out at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies from 1 September 2015. Gwen Hyslop was awarded funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation to spend two months (June and July 2015) collaborating with Karma Tshering, George van Driem, and students at the University of Bern, to work on a grammar of Lhokpu.

A symposium was held in February to honour Michael Halliday (inaugural chair and founder in 1976 of the Department of Linguistics) in his 90th year, with support from the Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics Association and the School of Letters Art, and Media: see HallidaySymposium. The event was attended by 140 students and colleagues who gathered to celebrate his visionary contribution to the discipline.

The gathering was chaired by Peter White and opened by Nick Enfield (the newly appointed Chair of Linguistics). It featured keynote presentations by scholars inspired by Halliday’s thinking (J.R. Martin, Clare Painter, David Butt, Geoff Williams, Frances Christie and Christian Matthiessen), in talks addressing functional language typology, language development, the science of meaning, social class and semantic variation in relation to melanoma, language in education and the ongoing evolution of Halliday’s theory (systemic functional linguistics).

The day concluded with a reading of greetings from around the world, a birthday cake, celebratory drinks and nibbles.

It was an energising and moving day as those attending reflected on the impact of Halliday’s work on their thinking about language and the ways his ideas changed their research and practice across a diverse range of fields.
MECO is pleased to welcome a new lecturer, Dr Mitchell Hobbs, and a Postgraduate Teaching Fellow, Lucasz Swiatek, to our Department and this semester.

Mitchell was appointed Lecturer in Media and Public Relations to replace Dr Richard Stanton, who established the Master of Strategic Public Relations degree in 2004, and resigned last year. Mitchell will be teaching Political and Corporate PR to postgraduate students, and Media Relations to our undergraduates. He will also be consolidating our industry connections with this important and rapidly expanding profession, and seeking accreditation for the degree from Australia’s peak body the Public Relations Institute of Australia. His research activities concern political communication and media power, and his publications are regularly assigned as core texts at universities in Australia and the United States.

Mitchell also possesses high-level professional experience in his field, most notably working for Prime Minister Julia Gillard from 2011 to 2012, when he was responsible for the implementation of the Prime Minister’s media and communication activities in her electorate in Melbourne. He also managed key stakeholder relationships for the Government, gaining unique insights into communication power and its capacity for social and political change.

This year has also seen our Media@Sydney public seminar series build from strength to strength, with Dr Benedetta Brevini taking over from the great work done in past years by Drs Fiona Martin and Cesar Albarran Torres. Media@Sydney brings international and local experts across a broad range of media and communications topics to the attention of both the University and broader community.

For information on upcoming lectures, please see the FASS Bulletin. If you would like to be included on the mailing list, please email Cesar Albarran Torres.

Recent MECO publications: Bunty Avieson’s new book, The Dragon’s Voice: How Modern Media Found Bhutan (University of Queensland Press) was released in May. Gerard Goggin has collaborated with Kate Ellis to publish Disability and the Media (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan), and co-edited the volume Locative Media with Rowan Wilken (New York: Routledge).
Congratulations to MECO lecturer, Dr Olaf Werder, who has won the Vice Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Teaching, conferred by the Chair of the Academic Board at the Faculty Graduation Ceremony on 15 May.

As the 2014 winner of this award, Dr Werder is a highly dedicated and motivated teacher, who has availed himself of every opportunity to keep abreast of the best and latest research and practice. This award follows from his Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence (Design and Practice) in 2012.

Since then, Dr Werder has widened his interest in teaching scholarship and practice by completing the Graduate Certificate, presenting at the Sydney Teaching Colloquium, participating in multi-institutional workshops and conferences, and conducting research on teaching for publication. He has brought his wider understanding to bear on his own teaching and curriculum design in ways that promote the best teaching ambitions of the University. Through interdisciplinary teaching, now including the Charles Perkins Centre, Olaf is spreading his knowledge of teaching practice, his philosophy of education, and his paedagogic skills to the wider university community.

Recently published books from the department
FAREWELL to Steven Maras

Extracted from a tribute by Raveen Hunjan

After ten years of working within the Department of Media and Communications, Associate Professor Steven Maras has resigned.

As a Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, Postgraduate Research Coordinator, Honours Coordinator, Internship Coordinator, Director of Degree and Chair of Department, Steven Maras has accomplished much in his time at the University of Sydney.

It is with great sadness that the department of Media and Communications bids him farewell for a new chapter in his life as Associate Professor at the University of Western Australia.

Not only has Steven taught video production and media, law and ethics units of study with dedication, he has worked tirelessly to secure new computers, equipment and labs for the department. He has authored two books as well as numerous journal articles.

Beyond Steven’s professional achievements, his personal impact on his colleagues has been profound.

PhD candidate, Lukasz Swiatek, describes Steven’s caring and perceptive nature, above all emphasising his generosity.

“I think we can learn a lot from Steven’s generosity”, says Lukasz. “He’s an amazing role model for caring for students in the whole teaching and learning process. He’s also a very productive scholar.”

Current Chair of the Department, Dr Fiona Giles, repeats much of this sentiment, admiring Steven as “a real thinker”.

“He is a man of uncommon cognitive ability”, she says.

“But his thoughtfulness is about the other kind of thoughtfulness, too. Not just cognitive ability but consideration, kindness, communication.”

Images courtesy Maria Barbagallo
The Medieval and Early Modern Centre (MEMC) continues to be a meeting-point of many activities in the School, the Faculty and the University.

In 2015 we welcome Dr Kimberley-Joy Knight, a graduate of the University of St Andrews, who joins the Sydney node of the History of the Emotions project. Her on-going special research interest is the role of tears in medieval hagiography. A current project is to broker an interdisciplinary symposium on Emotions in the Courtroom, drawing together an international field of scholars of law and literature, as well as the emotions.

In July 2014, the Centre for the History of Emotions passed the halfway point in its funded life. It was reviewed by a panel of ARC representatives who described its progress as ‘exceptional’. The Panel particularly singled out the work of the Sydney Node (Director Dr Juanita Feros Ruys): ‘The research has been highly innovative and The Panel was particularly pleased to note the Centre’s linking of research into historical emotions to issues of current public interest, such as reactions to traumatic events and suicide’.

Reading groups in such languages as Latin, Modern German, Middle English, Old Irish, and Old English have recently been joined by the revival (through the recent appointment of Dr Tarrin Wills) of the Old Icelandic reading group. These gatherings (rigorous, but also social!), allow us to provide the essential skills for research in a diverse field. For further information on any of the MEMC groups please contact the Centre Director, Jonathan Wooding.

A monograph (Marianne O’Doherty The Indies and the Medieval West: Thought, Report, Imagination) for the MEMC series Medieval Voyaging (Brepols) was recently awarded the prize for best first book in the category ‘Cultural Studies in English’ by the European Society of the Study of English at its meeting in Kosice.

Keagan Brewer (‘Wonder and Skepticism in the Middle Ages’) and Tahlia Birnbaum (‘Shame in Anglo-Saxon England’) recently completed their PhD dissertations with the Centre. We wish them well for the examination process.

We have recently been joined by Kiera Naylor and Robert Cutrer to undertake PhDs in the Centre.
This year we have been pleased to welcome Venetia Robertson, awarded a Teaching Fellowship in the Department. Venetia's research is further confirmation of our strength in the areas of religion, popular culture and new media; which provides valuable intersections with scholarship and programs throughout the School. She is particularly interested in online communities, and in July will present at the interdisciplinary conference at Leicester University on ‘Fandom and Religion’.

This range of work in the Department can be further demonstrated by some recent staff publications. Carole Cusack has collaborated with Katherine Buljan (who received her PhD through the Department) to publish the co-edited volume *Anime, Religion and Spirituality Profane and Sacred Worlds in Contemporary Japan* (Equinox). This study examines Japanese animation as a new site for religious and spiritual inspiration, worldwide.

However, the Department has also produced substantial new work in more traditional areas, such as historical religions and their texts. The first major product of Iain Gardner’s recent ARC-funded project at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, where he is editing a five hundred page papyrus codex from the early fifth-century, has appeared as a series of collected essays by the team: Iain Gardner, (with Jason BeDuhn and Paul Dilley), *Mani at the Court of the Persian Kings* (Brill 2015).

The Department runs a regular research seminar for staff (everyone invited!) and graduate students. The following papers have been read this semester:

- 10 March, Guest speaker Dr. Kranti K. Farias, a former President of the Church History Association of India, “Of Tales, Trails and Travails: History of the Jewish Communities of India”.

- 24 March, Elizabeth Miller, PhD candidate in the Department of History, “Our God is Three in One (and Our Church is Too): Hillsong’s Attempts to Order Members’ Lives”.

- 14 April, Professor Carole Cusack, Studies in Religion, “Sufism and the Gurdjieff ‘Work’: A Contested Relationship”.

- 28 April, Professor Adam Possamai, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Religion and Society Research Centre, University of Western Sydney. “Post-Secularism and neo-liberalism: towards the i-sation of society?”.
By the time tourist coach 150 began its slow journey along the single carriage road that snakes around the Gallipoli Peninsula at 6.30 PM on Anzac Day, the events of the centenary commemoration of the landings at Anzac Cove in 1915 were already fading into a sepia-tinged memory. We felt immense gratitude for the opportunity to attend this ‘once in a lifetime’ experience, but were facing the strange disappointment that many a pilgrim has felt, that the special place we’d journeyed to, and the yearned-for event, were somehow less in reality than in imagination.

The build-up created by the long vigil sitting on hard chairs wrapped up warmly against the chill for 10 hours from arrival at the site at 7.30 to the solemn ritual of the Dawn Service at 5.30 AM was powerful. The soothing sound of water lapping the shores was audible for brief moments when the short documentaries showing on the big screens, or the musical performances on the stage, were in abeyance. The Dawn Service was preceded by ‘Spirit of Place’ at 5 AM, in which William Barton played didgeridoo, Warren Brown spoke of the Anzac Cove landings, the names and epitaphs of the fallen were projected onto the screens, and after a period of silence, in which the sound of the waves assumed great significance, women from the New Zealand Defence Force sang the Karanga, a Maori call to gathering. From the vantage point of departing the peninsula, it was clear, to me at least, that this brief prelude to the Dawn Service was in fact the highlight of the day: the sound of the waves, the haunting strains of the didgeridoo and then the women’s voices ringing out in the dim, gloomy half-light of the morning. Attendees were roused from their drowsiness in anticipation.

As the light grew stronger throughout the Dawn Service, and we listened to uninspired speeches by John Key and Tony Abbott, the Prime Ministers of New Zealand and Australia, it was difficult to maintain the sense of wonder at the natural setting, and the sheer profane everydayness of crowd control after the Dawn Service ended cemented this ‘flatness’. There were 10,000 Australians and New Zealanders at the event, a larger number than the site usually permitted, and although the Lone Pine service did not start till 11 AM, so crowded were the paths that we arrived with barely five minutes to spare. Another brief hour, in which more politicians and family members of the fallen spoke amidst musical interludes, was soon over. The service at Chunuk Bair for New Zealanders at 1.45 was projected onto the screens at Lone Pine, and then there was just the waiting, for hours and hours, as the crowds were gradually bussed from the site. An old man seated near us quipped at 6 PM that the evacuation of Gallipoli in December 1915 had been a speedier process. Yet the waiting and the lack of coffee, the chill and the security checkpoints, and finally the scarce and truly appalling toilets, all created cumulative camaraderie among the pilgrims; when all is said and done, we all were satisfied to say that we had been there, at the centenary of Anzac.
There have been some interesting developments at Performance Studies over the last 18 months. We have included theatre in the department’s title, acknowledging our teaching and research interests in the development, rehearsal and presentation of theatre (drama, dance, contemporary performance, live art), while continuing our commitment to investigating social/cultural activities and events as performance. We have also developed and presented a 1st year unit of study for the first time. Student numbers have exceeded expectations across 2014 and 2015, and the flow-on affect has been very positive for our 2nd and 3rd year units. Students have begun to display increased thematic and disciplinary understandings as they engage in senior units across our major, and Associate Professor Ian Maxwell should be commended for his excellent design, implementation, leadership and teaching of this 1st year unit. The companion to PRFM1601 (Performance: Process and Collaboration), PRFM1602 (Dangerous Performances) will have its first outing in Semester #2 this year. Ian will be leading the implementation and teaching of this unit as well, in collaboration with Dr Laura Ginters.

Recently we have had the pleasure of hosting a SLAM Visiting Fellow – Dr Penelope Woods, postdoctoral research fellow with the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotion, University of Western Australia. Penelope has been completing her book Spectatorship Revived: Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre Audiences Now and Then, contributing to departmental discussions, giving papers, and keeping us entertained with stories of her time at the Globe and her intention to join the Globes travelling Hamlet in May.

Finally, this edition of the SLAM newsletter features the work of Ian Maxwell and Honorary Associate Mark Seton. Ian and Mark’s project is timely, with its interdisciplinary approach and industry focus.
There are over 12,000 actors listed on the Australian database Showcast. We don't know a lot about them; we tend to know about the successful ones, but we also know (kind of) that the unemployment rate for actors is high. We assume that they are (kind of) well paid for what they do, and that what they do is fun and rewarding. But really, we don't know very much about the lives of actors.

The Actors’ Wellbeing Study is an interdisciplinary project being undertaken by Ian Maxwell and Mark Seton from the Department of Performance Studies and Marianna Szabó from the School of Psychology, in collaboration with the Equity Foundation of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, the union representing actors in Australia. The initial phase of the study involved the use of an online survey, completed by nearly 800 participants, to gather data on Australian actors’ training, income, work experiences, the strategies they use to manage the stresses and challenges of their work, as well as a range of health- and wellbeing-related measures.

The headline findings of the research to date present a mixed picture. While actors generally express satisfaction with their lives, male actors tend towards high levels of depression, and use alcohol at significantly unhealthy levels. Male and female actors also report using drugs - over-the-counter, prescribed and illicit - at levels which suggest the potential for negative health outcomes.

And while actors are highly educated, their incomes are extremely low; the significant majority rely on other means of income to support themselves and their families. Actors acknowledge the pressures associated both with extended periods of unemployment, and with the nature of the work when they are employed. They report that their training as actors does not necessarily prepare them for either set of challenges. For example, while most actors report using a regular warm-up routine as part of their preparation for performance, very few use a cool-down to ‘come down’ from performance. Instead, they report that they are more likely to go out for a drink after the show, or, indeed, to go home and have a drink alone.

These initial findings of the first phase of the study will be published in About Performance, the journal published by the Department of Performance Studies, in a special issue titled “The Lives of Actors”. The issue will include contributions from scholars in the United Kingdom and North America, as well as Australia, taking up the question of what it is to be an actor from a range of disciplinary and methodological perspectives, and will be launched at the annual conference of the Australasian Association of Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, to be hosted by the Department of Performance Studies in June.

Around the same time, the research team will be launching the next phase of the study in New Zealand, in collaboration with Equity NZ and Otago University.

The findings will be developed in more detail in a book, ‘It will be alright on the night’, to be published by Intellect Press (UK), in 2016.
The Writing Hub

Words by Associate Professor Susan Thomas | Director

Now in its sixth year of operation (its third in SLAM), The Writing Hub continues to grow and expand its programs. Three new lecturers have joined us this year, all with research expertise in EAL (English as an Additional Language) and/or EAP (English for Academic Purposes). Dr Bronwen Dyson and Dr Louise Katz have relocated from the FASS Teaching and Learning Network, and Dr Janice Hinckfuss has replaced Dr Lindsay Tuggle. Bronwen’s work focuses on providing targeted writing support for EAL HDR students, including two semester-long courses on thesis writing, while Louise coordinates two new FASS academic support units of study, Academic English for Postgraduates and Academic Literacies for Postgraduates. Janice is primarily responsible for coordinating WRIT1000: Writing: Style and Method, but contributes to other Writing Hub units of study.

The Student Writing Fellows program continues to thrive under the leadership of Frances Di Lauro, with a record number of students signing up for drop-in consultations with the writing fellows during the expanded hours of 9 to 5, Monday to Thursday. We are also now offering consultations by appointment via a new online booking system, and are trialling online consultations. Further on the online theme, we are busily preparing for the launch of our first fully-online UoS in 2016: WRIT1002 Argumentation, for which we received an eLearning development grant.

With our undergraduate operations now fine-tuned, we are focusing on expanding our presence in postgraduate coursework and research. We have begun supervising our first doctoral student, with several other supervisions in the works. We have also launched two new postgraduate Professional Writing units of study, Professional Writing and Professional Editing. These are linked to the new EMASS degree, but are open to all students. In Semester 2, we will launch our Writing Research Seminar Series, with Ben Miller giving the inaugural seminar paper. We will also continue the popular “How I Write” lecture series with a visit from Distinguished Professor Chris Anson from the University of North Carolina.

We have had a busy year of consulting and community outreach, having administered a successful “Writing Week” for Scots College students and a professional development day for English staff at Hornsby Girls High School. Susan Thomas was the keynote speaker at the English Teachers’ Association Conference in February, where she discussed the incorporation of rhetoric into the Stage 6 syllabus.

We are thrilled to congratulate Mr Steven King (Tutor and Student Writing Fellow), who was awarded SOPHI’s Nicholson Prize for Classical Literature in Translation at the School’s prizes ceremony on 5 May. The Nicholson Prize is awarded annually on the recommendation of the Professor of Classics to the student who demonstrates greatest proficiency in a senior course in Greek and Roman Literature provided that the work is of sufficient merit.

We also congratulate our intrepid group of tutors and writing fellows who have succeeded in establishing the University’s first Writing Society through USU, which is now affectionately known as “WritSoc” in The Writing Hub (or “wet sock” if said really quickly). It has been great to see the bust of Aristotle (part of the WritSoc logo) gracing tables at Open Day and other University events, and students discussing passionately the virtues of rhetoric and dialectic.
The following departments and programs are located in the School of Letters, Art and Media:

- Art History
- Celtic Studies
- English
- Linguistics
- Media and Communications
- Medieval and Early Modern Studies
- Museum Studies
- Studies in Religion
- Theatre and Performance Studies
- The Writing Hub