SLAMmag is the quarterly electronic magazine of the School of Literature, 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
Welcome to the Spring edition of SLAMmag, the School’s electronic newsletter for staff, students and alumni. This will be my final issue in the Head of School role, but we can look forward to further years of excellent copy under Lurdes’ editorship and Annamarie’s oversight. Many thanks to those staff members who have contributed to making SLAMmag a success this year, and to the many readers who have sent us positive feedback - it’s much appreciated.

Our ‘New Faces’ section this time welcomes staff appointed this semester some of whom will begin working with us over the coming year. It’s very exciting to have academics from across the globe join the SLAM community.

You’ll also note that the SLAM acronym has slightly altered its signification. The Faculty has supported the change of the School’s name to the School of Literature, Art and Media, a more accurate and up to date reflection of the work we produce.

Happy reading!

Professor Vanessa Smith
The Teaching Awards ceremony had a different, much improved format this year. The location shifted from the always unpleasantly overheated Woolley Common Room to the Darlington Centre, where, following the presentations and speeches, guests were treated to canapés and entertainment from a jazz ensemble.

SLAM recipients were:

**Teaching Excellence:**
Bruce Isaacs (Art History)  
Janice Hinckfuss (The Writing Hub)

**Dean’s Citations for Tutorials:**
Catherine Blake (Art History)  
Chloe Collins (MECO)  
Raphael Lataster (Studies in Religion)  
Venetia Robertson (Studies in Religion)  
Kim Wilkins (English)

Congratulations to all the awardees.
Jay Chandra, SLAM Finance Manager, has been nominated for a Financial Sustainability SHINE! award. In a letter to Jay, Mark Easson, Chief Financial Officer, said:

“This quarter, we sought nominations for individuals and teams that had evidenced work that went above and beyond their normal role, specifically in relation to the value ‘Financial Sustainability’. On behalf of the Finance Leadership team, I congratulate you on receiving the recognition of your peers and for living the core value of ‘Financial Sustainability’ in your work. Keep up the great work.”

Well done, Jay.

Congratulations to Professors Annamarie Jagose and Nick Enfield, who have been elected Fellows of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.
Last semester a ‘Research Buddies’ scheme was trialled for the first time in SLAM, with twelve members of the School participating. Researchers from different disciplines were paired, and encouraged to meet a few times across the course of the semester to share work and offer feedback over a coffee or lunch. A Gleebooks voucher was given to each buddy, but the real attraction was probably the lack of formal reporting involved, which created a relaxed atmosphere for the sharing of ideas. The scheme nonetheless received very positive informal feedback. Karina Aveyard, who was paired with Brigid Rooney, reported that the experience was “definitely worthwhile. When we met up we talked about research but also about our career paths and trajectories and found we had a bit in common, or at least common concerns.”

Mark De Vitis, paired with Olivia Murphy, wrote: “I have enjoyed great benefit from the buddy scheme – it has helped me set and keep deadlines, and provided me with a rare kind of feedback – which relies on knowledge developed through regular contact with ideas, as they unfold and develop. It has also offered a perspective on my work from outside my own discipline. All very valuable.”

Jonathon Hutchinson and Richard Smith are working up an area of collaborative research that brings Jonathon’s social media research to Richard’s new models of film critiques, and Donna Brett and Marita Bullock are beginning a co-authored project - two outstanding outcomes for the scheme.
Umberto Grassi

I am a member of the Sydney node of the ARC Centre for the History of Emotions. I’m from Pisa, Italy, where I earned my MA degree and my PHD. I have been studying the history of homosexuality for many years. I am now working on sexual and affective relationships between Christians and Muslims in the early modern Mediterranean world.

I am confident I will achieve a lot while working as a research fellow in SLAM.

Meanwhile, I am enjoying Asian food and the amazing Australian sea.

Isabelle Hesse

I grew up in Luxembourg, a tiny country in the heart of Europe, and before coming to Sydney, I lived in the UK for 8 years. I completed my PhD in contemporary world literatures at the University of York, UK, and subsequently held a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Humanities Research Centre there.

My current research examines how narrative tropes in relation to Israel, Palestine, and the Holocaust are circulated in British and German culture.

In my free time, I like reading, travelling, cycling, swimming, and camping (a summer without camping doesn’t feel like a real summer – I guess this is what being in the scouts for over 20 years does to you).

Jonathon Hutchison

I am a newly appointed continuing lecturer in MECO, effective from Feb. 2016. I will be teaching both undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Online Media, Online Journalism and Social Media Communication. My experience is across all media platforms, including broadcast, video, print and online media, with a specialisation in online and social media.

On the weekend, you’ll find me down on the NSW South Coast enjoying the surf, brewing craft beer, fathering two young boys and eagerly awaiting the arrival of a third son. As a recent immigrant to NSW and Sydney, I am also a keen music fanatic and enjoy the local music scene.
Fiona Lee

My research investigates the history of 20th century decolonization in Southeast Asia, particularly the Malay world, through the prisms of literature and visual media. Before joining the English department as Lecturer, I was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, and earned my PhD in English at The Graduate Center, City University of New York.

An avid listener of talk radio, I am interested in exploring the podcast as a medium of thinking and creative expression.

Alyssa J. O'Brien

I'm delighted to join the Writing Hub and Writing Program. Currently an Advanced Lecturer at Stanford University, my research focuses on intercultural communication for leadership, visual rhetoric, and the role of digital technologies in global citizenship. Having won the Phi Beta Kappa Outstanding Teaching Award, I'm excited to teach rhetoric and writing, public speaking, and professional communication across diverse media.

I also plan to spend many evenings on Sydney ferries, soaking up the beauty of the city.
Maïa Ponsonnet

I am a DECRA Postdoctoral Researcher in the Linguistics Department. I work on Australian Indigenous languages of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory and my research focuses in particular on the way emotions are expressed in these languages. I completed my PhD at the Australian National University, and just before joining the University of Sydney I was a Postdoctoral Researcher with the French CNRS.

I am French but have lived alternatively in France and Australia since my early twenties. Hence Australia is also home and I am very pleased to be closer to my Australian friends, to avoid the European winters and to swim every week in an Olympic outdoor pool.

Omid Tofighian

I’m a lecturer, researcher and community advocate, combining philosophy with interests in rhetoric, religion, pop culture, transnationalism, displacement and discrimination. Over the past eleven years I’ve lived variously in the UAE, Belgium, the Netherlands and intermittent periods in Iran. I’m passionate about finding creative ways of connecting academia with wider society. I’m also committee member for MAP USYD (Minorities and Philosophy); faculty at Iran Academia; board member for Powerhouse Youth Theatre; and member of the Religion, State & Society Network (USYD). I often contribute to community arts and cultural projects and work with asylum seekers, refugees and young people from Western Sydney.
Welcome to the world ...

Jay Chandra's granddaughter
(and Nilesh and Deepna's daughter)
Shanaya Arti Chand
Born 17 August

Gwen Hyslop and Karma Tshering's daughter
Pema Rhoswyn Tshering
Born 1 September
Welcome to the world ...

Bruce Isaacs and Rebecca Goldsworthy’s son
Byron Robert Isaacs
Born 28 September

Ben Miller and Hallie Donkin’s son
Samuel Benjamin Miller
Born 26 October
It's been a busy second semester for the Department and at Power – we co-hosted two collaborative symposia in October and November, the first on Asian Art History in Australia and New Zealand, convened by Stephen Whiteman, and which brought a starry cast of Asian art experts to Sydney for a day of discussion which will lead to a special issue of the AAANZ Journal. The second was an ambitious two-centre workshop on the Digital Future of Art History – which took place at ANU in Canberra and then at Sydney, and which showcased many innovative digital projects and debated the large questions of how Digital approaches will change the discipline of Art History itself. This workshop was funded with contributions from ANU, from Power and from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. For a longer report on the two symposia see the Power newsletter.

We also celebrated the teaching awards given at the recent Faculty Awards Ceremony to Bruce Isaacs and Catherine Blake, for innovative and engaged teaching and tutoring – and we have been busy planning the new Fieldwork unit that will give students the chance to take an on-site intensive course in their senior year, in locations that will alternate between some of the great art cities and sites of the world - and will further enhance the rich and challenging art history curriculum.

We look forward to the fruits of colleagues' research labours in the coming months - Stephen Gilchrist's innovative exhibition of Indigenous Australian art at Harvard opens in February, and we're eagerly awaiting the publication of Donna West Brett's 'Photography and Place', forthcoming in December.

In May, the Department chose the first recipient of its “Frank Macdonald Memorial Scholarship” which gives a crucial opportunity for travel and engagement with art work to an advanced undergraduate student. Our recipient, Stephanie Swanson, will be setting off over the summer and her blog will chart her breathless progress through the sites and archives of Italy. And only this week we announced the winner of our Christies Internship - we congratulate Julian Black and wish him well for the highly selective and highly prized internship position.

I would like to thank all my wonderful colleagues in the Department and at Power who have so cheerfully and successfully steered us through another busy and successful semester, and we look forward to an equally lively and successful 2016.
Each year, the Art Gallery of NSW runs a professional development program – Sydney Students Speak – that offers eight tertiary students the chance to work with their Public Engagement team and to experience what it’s like working within one of Australia’s major art galleries. The successful candidates are invited to an induction day and coached by the Art Gallery of NSW’s Public Programs professionals to present a 20-minute public talk at the Gallery as part of the Wednesday evening Art After Hours program.

The topic of this year’s series of talks was chosen to coincide with the Archibald Prize, but focused on works of art in which there are no faces at all. The talks introduced gallery audiences to ways of thinking about abstract or conceptual art – demonstrating that narrative meaning can also be found in faceless works of art.

The Department of Art History encouraged students to participate in this very valuable opportunity. Many thanks to Dr Mark De Vitis, who offered workshops to eligible students to help them prepare for the audition process.

As a result, this year saw six of the eight students accepted to the program come from the University of Sydney.

Congratulations to Sebastian Henry-Jones, Kate Fanning, and Sarah Grieve – enrolled in the Masters of Art Curating program - and Art History undergraduates Eugene Yiu Nam Cheung, Jennifer Min and Alana Irwin.
Preparations are underway for the Ninth Australian conference of Celtic Studies, which will be held at the University on 27-30 September 2016. It is sponsored by the Humanities Research Centre of the ANU and the Sydney University Celtic Studies Foundation. The theme is 'Memory and Foresight in the Celtic World'. Enquiries to Jonathan Wooding.

In August the programme was the beneficiary of a generous gift from Mrs Rosemary Samios, which will make possible a series of grants to support students undertaking further studies of Scottish Gaelic in Scotland. We are immensely grateful for this opportunity to offer our students career-enhancing opportunities for study abroad, developing interests arising from our undergraduate language units.

November saw the appearance of the first volume in a new series edited by Professor Jonathan Wooding, ‘New Approaches to Celtic Religion and Mythology’, published by University of Wales Press. Much recent work in Celtic Studies has used approaches to religious questions to initiate new critical approaches and open up new areas for research. This series presents some of the best of that research, in a field of wide interest to both academic and popular audiences.
The Department has been extremely fortunate over the past few years to receive two large donations from former students who wished to recognise the benefits they received from studying English Literature at the University of Sydney. In 2013, Kenneth Reed donated $500,000 for a postgraduate research scholarship, as well as a $4 million bequest for further postdoctoral scholarships in English. The first Kenneth Reed Postgraduate Research Scholarship in English has been awarded to Jonathan Dunk (see separate article following this piece).

In 2015, a bequest of over $900,000 was given to the Department from the estate of Janet O’Connor, who both studied and tutored in the Department of English in the 1970s. Janet was invigorated by the rise of feminism and feminist literature scholarship during her time at the University of Sydney, and her bequest specifically establishes postgraduate scholarships for female students. The first of these will likely be awarded in 2017, and there is the possibility that in time more than one scholarship will run simultaneously.

On 5 November Dr Matthew Sussman, one of the Department’s recent appointments, hosted a Special Event in Nineteenth Century Studies in the Department. This half-day gathering brought together scholars and students from a number of Sydney universities, to discuss in a relatively informal setting the state of scholarship on the 19th century. Matthew had recently returned from a conference in Chicago on the V21 manifesto, a document put forward by a new group of young scholars attempting to reshape the study of 19th-century literature, which in part prompted this initiative. The event in Sydney brought together people from a number of disciplines - including philosophy, science, history, and music, as well as literature - who, though often in close proximity to each other, often don’t know of each other’s interests or work, and rarely get a chance to make what might be valuable intellectual connections. The Department aims to use this day as a model for similar events on other subjects of interest.

On the same day, the Department hosted its first Graduate Symposium. This day-long event was a chance to celebrate the achievements of our recently graduated doctoral students. The symposium provided an opportunity for staff, current postgraduates, and recent graduates to hear about successfully completed postgraduate projects. It aimed to recognise important individual milestones in the intellectual life of the Department, and provided an opportunity for our recent graduates to share their research experiences with current and prospective postgraduate students. It proved a huge success, both as a celebration of those who have graduated, and as a means by which they could reflect—often through precarious and/or hilarious accounts—on the pitfalls and peaks of postgraduate life.
Congratulations to Judith Beveridge, whose new book ‘Devadatta’s Poems’ has been shortlisted for the Prime Minister’s 2015 Literary Awards.

Congratulations also to Rebecca Johinke and Jan Shaw on their recent promotions to Level C.

Recent publications


Jan Shaw and Rebecca Johinke celebrate their recent promotions with another successful applicant, Bronwen Dyson. Photo courtesy Vanessa Smith
Early in November the Department of English thanked Kenneth Reed for his generosity in setting up the Kenneth Reed Postgraduate Research Scholarship in English. Kenneth has been a noted philanthropist outside of academia over many years, especially to the arts, and he has also donated substantial amounts to the University of Sydney, where he took out a Bachelor of Arts in 1957 and Bachelor of Laws in 1960. Law provided him with a successful career, but in 2013, when his gift of $5.5 million to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities was announced, he remarked that “my fondest memories were when I was doing English. A degree in English or the arts equips you for any other field. People need a good basis and understanding of their own language and the history and literature of their own language”. Kenneth’s substantial gift to the Department takes those positive sentiments far further in very practical and beneficial terms. Kenneth donated $500,000 towards a postgraduate scholarship in perpetuity, with a further $4 million bequest for postdoctoral scholarships. He also gave a gift-in-kind of 17th century Dutch Masters to the University’s art collection, with an extra $1 million set aside for their upkeep.

We are pleased to announce that Jonathan Dunk is the inaugural recipient of the Kenneth Reed Postgraduate Research Scholarship in English. The scholarship has had an immediate benefit, allowing Jonathan to transfer from a part-time PhD to full-time research. At the intellectual level, the firm financial base the scholarship provides greatly improves his ability to study intensely, and thereby finish his thesis in a timely manner. Jonathan’s work traces literary representations of the explorer, from Odysseus through Crusoe to Conrad, Melville, White, and Coetzee. For a young scholar launching into a full-time PhD, who is also the first Kenneth Reed Postgraduate Research Scholar, the topic could hardly be more apt.

At a lunch on 10 November in the Darlington Centre, Jonathan was able to thank Kenneth Reed in person for supporting his studies.

The Department of English applauds Kenneth Reed for his generosity in making possible not only Jonathan Dunk’s intellectual journey, but also that of the best young researchers of the future. They and the Department will continue to benefit from Kenneth’s marvellous gesture.
ANDREW FRIEDHOF AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS NICHOLL FELLOWSHIP IN L.A.

Words by Ian David

Andrew Friedhof, a graduate of the University of Sydney, has recently been awarded one of five Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles. His winning screenplay, ‘Great Falls’, competed against 7,442 submitted screenplays from around the world. Andy received his Master of Creative Writing in 2013 as part of SLAM’s Creative Writing Program.

The prestigious Don and Gee Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting is a fellowship program founded in 1986 to aid screenwriters. Since its establishment, a total of 142 Nicholl Fellowships have been awarded. This year’s competition saw a total of five winning screenwriters, read and judged by the Academy Nicholl Fellowships Committee. Each will receive $35,000, with the first instalment given to the winners at a ceremony held on 4 November at the Academy’s Samuel Goldwyn Theater in Beverly Hills, California. Each of the winning screenplays will be performed at a live reading before a packed audience of Hollywood producers, directors and writers.

The competition, which aims to identify and encourage talented new screenwriters, awards fellowships with the understanding that recipients will complete a feature-length screenplay during their fellowship year. They will also be attached to a leading studio to be mentored by some of the most distinguished filmmakers in Hollywood.

Andrew always aimed high with his work and ultimately his desire is to pit his talent against the best screenwriters in Hollywood. His achievements as a creative writing scholar were considerable and we believe he will continue to attract acclaim for his work and this university’s Creative Writing Program. We wish him well with his future career.

Congratulations, Andy!

SHARON WILLDIN HAS WON THE OLGA MASTERS SHORT STORY COMPETITION

Creative Writing student Sharon Willdin has won the Olga Masters Short Story competition for her story ‘12 Hollis Avenue’. Sharon writes:

“It is with great happiness and humility that I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the SLAM Creative Writing Team at the University of Sydney. I feel honoured and privileged to have won this year’s Olga Masters Short Story Competition. The story that won this competition, 12 Hollis Avenue, originated during Beth Yahp’s Creative Writing: Fiction Workshop. In Beth’s course I gained the understanding of how important it is for a writer to visualise and establish a sense of place in their work. The idea was conceived during a writing exercise in class, it grew into a story, and was workshopped with fellow students. Finally, the fictional piece was fleshed out, re-drafted and edited. The result was a short story suitable for publication.”

Beth Yahp writes: “It’s a particular pleasure for a teacher to see a piece of creative work progress from the spark of an idea to a more fully-formed draft, then a re-worked piece of fiction that is re-worked again and bravely sent out into the world - to become a prize-winning story! Huge congratulations to Sharon and the class as a whole!”
Ursula Potter recently attended this two day conference as a guest of The Folger Institute in Washington D.C. The audience of around 120 comprised mainly US university lecturers plus PhD candidates. The conference opened with an evening reception and plenary by Sir Keith Thomas (Oxford), on Thursday 15 October, followed on Friday and Saturday with just 11 invited papers and one other plenary, Peter Mack (Warwick), allowing plenty of time for moderated discussion. Papers covered grammar school and university education, the London guilds, tutors and travel, rhetorical studies, disputations, and women's epistolary networks, among others. Sadly, Lisa Jardine (University College, London), whose work was implicitly behind many of the presentations, especially those involving dialectic and rhetoric, was unable to attend and, as we now know, died on 25 October.

The conference was held in the magnificent Elizabethan theatre built within the Folger building. Ursula's paper, on the development of Tudor school drama, focussed on the role of Erasmus and Terence in the Tudor curriculum, using two mid sixteenth-century school plays, The Bugbears and July and Julian (from a commonplace book in the Folger archives) to demonstrate the type of dramatic material written specifically for schoolboy performances.

The Folger Institute is a dedicated centre for collections-focussed research and advanced study in the humanities at the Folger Shakespeare Library. The Library is in the process of developing a digitisation program for their manuscripts - Early Modern Manuscripts Online. The Folger Institute offers generously-funded multi-disciplinary, long- and short-term Research Fellowships. Further information is available here.
Showgirls Symposium

On 30 September, colleagues from SLAM and SOPHI came together to think about the ongoing legacy of Paul Verhoeven's 1995 cult classic Showgirls. Hot on the heels of his less controversial erotic thriller Basic Instinct, Showgirls was released to near unanimous critical derision shading into at best mere disdain. But this critical consensus was fractured from the get-go by another, dissenting audience who found the film's rephrasing of classic Hollywood tropes (All About Eve's feminine rivalry) and bold, non-naturalistic style a promising object with which to think about cinema's fate in the late twentieth century. And so twenty years later the Film Studies program hosted a series of anniversary papers chaired by Melissa Hardie (English) and given by Melissa, Kieryn McKay, Anna Breckon, and Billy Stevenson (English), and Meaghan Morris and Kane Race (Gender and Cultural Studies). We began with a screening of Showgirls, the first viewing for some of the audience and a predictable pleasure for others. For the rest of the day the film was discussed in relation to theories of sexual subjectivity, auteurism, the figure of the actress, the commodification of cult, screwball and the erotic, the post-cinematic, and the 'big hair' film of the 1980s. The discussions were passionately partisan and pushed forward work we are all doing in thinking about theory, politics, taste and popular culture.
Maïa Ponsonnet will join the Department of Linguistics in February 2016, to take up her recently awarded ARC DECRA: “This project aims to increase our understanding of emotional language and cultural practices about emotions among Indigenous Australian groups. Emotion is a fundamental human experience, yet different languages provide very different ways of talking about it. What are the consequences of this? Are these differences culturally constrained? Might differences in the grammar of a language influence the way its speakers express emotions, or even the way they experience emotions? This project seeks to describe and compare the way emotions are expressed in five Aboriginal languages of Arnhem Land. Four of these languages are endangered and the project will also provide the urgent documentation needed to preserve them.”

Maïa has also just been awarded the 2015 Stephen Wurm Graduate Prize for Pacific Linguistic Studies, offered by the ANU College of Asia and The Pacific.

Nick Enfield has been elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. Here is the citation: “An international authority in the area of Southeast Asian languages, Enfield has developed an important and unique perspective on language and languages, from the study of micro-ethno-linguistic phenomena based on fieldwork in Laos, to the evolution of language in the species and the history of languages across society. He is renowned for the originality of his interdisciplinary work that spans linguistics, anthropology, cognition and sociology, psychology, and history. His publications on syntax and semantics span over a dozen mainland Southeast Asian languages.”

In September, Nick was awarded an Ig Nobel Prize (literature) for his 2013 article in PLoS ONE, co-authored with Mark Dingemanse and Francisco Torreira, showing that ‘Huh?’ appears to be a universal word (Dingemanse M, Torreira F, Enfield NJ (2013) Is “Huh?” a Universal Word? Conversational Infrastructure and the Convergent Evolution of Linguistic Items. PLoS ONE 8(11): e78273. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0078273). See here for info.

The issues were discussed in this article in The Conversation in October.

Nick convened a symposium on Power and Accountability at the University of Sydney on 5 November.
Ahmar Mahboob recently gave several major talks in Pakistan, including the Ruqaiya Hasan Plenary at the SPELT conference in Karachi, a workshop at Iqra University on writing for publication, and a talk at NED University of Engineering and Technology on Language Variation and Education.

He has also recently published an opinion piece in the Pakistani newspaper The Express Tribune which is being hotly debated.

Ahmar presented at the first Pakistan Summit, held at the University of Sydney on 23 November.

Jim Martin attended the International Conference on Functional Language Typology from 12-16 December at the new centre named in his honour: the ‘Martin Centre for Appliable Linguistics’ at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China.

Sebastian Fedden recently published this web resource:

Sebastian has recently given several invited talks, including the following:

- “Aspect in Mian and other Papuan languages” in the Newcastle Linguistics Seminar Series, University of Newcastle, 19 October 2015.


- “Gender: canonical and non-canonical systems” (with Greville G. Corbett). Morphological variation and contact, University of Patras, 20 June 2015.

Bill Foley gave a plenary lecture at the First International Conference on ASEAN Studies (Bangkok, 3-4 October) on ‘Minority Languages, National Languages and Development in ASEAN’.
The Medieval and Early Modern Centre continues to act as a gathering-point for activities in these fields across the University.

Preparations are underway for a number of MEMC-sponsored events early in 2016.

On 11–12 February 2016 the Centre will host the national conference of the Australian Early Medieval Association, with a range of presentations on theme of ‘Space and Time in the early Middle Ages (c. 400–1150)’. We are delighted to be able to support this exciting event. See details here.

On 9-10 February a national Postgraduate Research and Training Seminar (PATS) on ‘The Manuscript Book’ will also be held at Sydney. The seminar is hosted by the University Library and sponsored by the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (ANZAMEMS) and MEMC. This seminar was created by MEMC Honorary researcher Dr Nicholas Sparks and brings international experts in palaeography to Sydney. See details here.

Also showcased at the PATS event is the ground-breaking work of MEMC Honorary researcher Dr Jane Hardie on Spanish liturgical manuscripts in the Sydney and other collections. In January MEMC will host Dr David Andrés-Fernández of the Conservatorium of Music at Universidad Austral de Chile, who will work with Dr Hardie on recent acquisitions in this field.
In September 2015 Studies in Religion was delighted to host Professor Patricia Plummer, Professor of Postcolonial Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany, as a SLAM Visiting Research Scholar. Patricia Plummer is a member of the international Research Network on Gender in Antisemitism, Orientalism and Occidentalism, and has co-edited interdisciplinary volumes on gender studies, feminist crime fiction, and “subversive Romanticism”. Her current research project, which was enabled by her time in Australia, concerns the Anglo-Australian Theosophist and artist, Louisa Haynes Le Freimann (1863-1956). She intends to write a book on this almost-forgotten artist, who joined the Theosophical Society in 1897, five years after she emigrated to Australia. In Sydney Louisa Haynes Le Freimann became a member of the Order of the Star, and remained a life-long devotee of the teachings of Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986). In addition to making a contribution to art historical research, Professor Plummer is interested to trace links among Australian women artists whose Theosophical links are evidence of a particular type of late nineteenth and early twentieth century transcultural spirituality. For more information, see: Patricia Plummer, “The Hidden History of an Australian Painter: Louisa Haynes Le Freimann (1863-1956)”, Gender Forum: San Internet Journal For Gender Studies, Issue 53 (2015), here.

The Department runs a regular research seminar for staff (everyone invited!) and graduate students. The following papers have been read since the Winter issue of SLAMmag was published:


22 September, Breann Fallon (Studies in Religion) - “The Enchanted Aesthetic Effect: Peering Inside the Mind of the Genocide Perpetrator”.

13 October, Professor Majella Franzmann (Studies in Religion) - “Identifying the Best: Theory, Methods, Practice”.

20 October, Keagan Brewer (Medieval Studies) - “The Evidence for Medieval Atheism”.

...
In tutorial plans, which often aimed at developing academic skills as well as reinforcing key concepts, I developed pedagogical techniques to appeal to a variety of learning styles/experiences. Given the controversial nature of the subject - *The History of God* - an “unbiased standpoint” was developed from which to teach and learn, which resulted in appreciative student responses, including one from a conservative Christian. This same student was initially apprehensive, but as the class worked together, she became empowered to see her faith in a new light, with greater awareness of other (and similar) religions. Utilising recent T&L scholarship (for example, on constructive alignment, feedback, and reflection), the tutorials stimulated students in a variety of ways, often including very recent research.

Students were encouraged to speak openly, and it was noticeable over the course of the semester that they increasingly did. On rare occasions when the tutorials became too vocal, the discussion was refocused via various tactics, such as remaining silent, and utilising spatio-temporal proxemics. The needs of students were carefully met, such as those who appreciated visual learning (with YouTube clips, etc.). Students were persuaded to foster a research community, and to take advantage of the many academic and social activities offered at the University. Seeking and continuously implementing feedback from students and peers was constant, to improve educational outcomes by better aligning the material to the students’ needs. Specific and detailed feedback was provided, with constructive feedback typically ‘sandwiched’ with praise. This required a greater investment of time than anticipated, which was cheerfully given.
As someone who is passionate about pedagogy and keen to pursue an academic career, the past three years of teaching have offered great scope for me to develop my interest in educational strategies and hone my skills in communication, public speaking, mentorship, and providing accessible information to a group with diverse prior knowledge, experiences and backgrounds. My teaching has mostly been with First Year students, and how to smooth their transition into academia, while still delivering inspirational and challenging content in classes, is of great interest to me.

I regard feedback from my students as essential and in 2015 designed my own evaluation forms for WREL2001 to ask specifically about the areas I sought to improve. I was encouraged by comments that showed students had responded very well to techniques such as brainstorming, clarifying grading criteria, critiquing cultural and scholarly paradigms, and providing contemporary examples such as analogies from popular culture to make complex content “more relatable”.

However, my teaching style draws most from those who have taught me at the University of Sydney. Religion can be a tricky subject, and I have benefitted from witnessing how colleagues like Professor Carole Cusack and Dr Alex Norman have facilitated understanding in a sensitive and professional manner. I aim to replicate this in my own tutorials, constantly reconsidering my approach to adapt to the needs of the class and the topic. This allows me to incorporate my experiences as a student, tutor, and as an academic into a teaching program focused on creating a dynamic, supportive, and engaging classroom environment where students can confidently develop independent and critical thinking.
In November Associate Professor Ian Maxwell and Dr Laura Ginters were invited to present papers at “Reappraising Aesthetic Modernisms in Australian Theatre: Patrick White and Beyond” hosted by Australian Studies at the University of Melbourne. This one-day symposium brought together academics and artists to present on the wider theme of Australian modernism in theatre, drama and performance. Ian Maxwell’s paper “10,000 Miles Away” explored “the question of distance and time” focussing on the two visits of the Polish theatre maker Jerzy Grotowski to Australia, “first as a text in 1969, and then in person five years later”. Ian’s paper will form part of his new book project: 10,000 Miles Away: Grotowski in Australia, to be published by Brill in 2017. Laura Ginters’ paper “Before The Ham Funeral: “the YOUNG MAN appears”, John Tasker returns home”, looked at Tasker’s early work as a director, his role in “reigniting [Patrick] White’s passion for the theatre, and subsequently bringing his plays to the Australian stage”. Also attending this symposium was Dr May-Brit Akerholt, respected translator and dramaturg with a long association to Patrick White’s plays and our Department. May-Brit recently received her doctorate within Theatre & Performance Studies at the University of Sydney.
The Department hosted the Apocalypse Theatre Company for their rehearsal of “The Dapto Chaser” by Mary Rachel Brown. This play was part of the Griffin Theatre’s Independent Season this year.

The Artistic Director of Apocalypse, Dino Dimitriadis, is a graduate of the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies (Honours Year of 2010).

Victoria Hunt’s new work, TANGIwai, which, as I reported in the last edition of SLAMmag contributed to the Department’s Rehearsal Studies undergraduate programme this year, was presented by Performance Space at Carriageworks to rave reviews in late October. Theatre & Performance Studies students had the great satisfaction of seeing a work they had observed being created in the Rex Cramphorn Studio come to its spectacular and inventive realisation on stage. The work has also been nominated for an FBi SMAC award.

Also presented at Live Works, the Performance Space Festival across October and November this year, was Vicki Van Hout’s hilarious new work “Les Festivites Lubreifier”.

Vicki, with young performers Thomas Kelly and Caleena Sansbury, explored the events of her (recent) 45th birthday in Paris. Vicki’s work is unique. Trained at NAISDA (the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association), she has become one of Sydney’s most respected Indigenous dance/theatre artists. Vicki and her team rehearsed in the Rex during October, refining the themes of this bilingual work. Vicki is always a pleasure to have around; her extraordinary energy, her mentorship of young Indigenous performers, and her ability to share her process with research staff and students is exemplary.
Performing Medicine - Enacting Professionalism

Words by Dr Paul Dwyer

There has been a lot of press coverage this year about systemic problems of bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination within medical training and the broader workplace culture of our health institutions (the Four Corners episode, “At Their Mercy”, which screened last May offers a very useful overview of the issues for those who are interested).

Against this backdrop, I have spent the last six months working with Dr Kimberley Ivory from the Faculty of Medicine (and other colleagues from the Centre for Values and Ethics in Medicine, as well as the faculties of Nursing and Pharmacy) to develop a series of drama-based activities that can be used with medical trainees and their supervisors in workshops designed to elicit, to analyse and to contest some of the harmful behaviours encountered by students and interns.

The use of drama techniques is not entirely new for medical and nursing students: at some point in their training, most will experience role-play sessions, often with the involvement of professional actors, designed to help students practise such skills as taking a medical history or “delivering a difficult diagnosis”. However, our pilot workshops this semester have been about more than simply practising problem-solving skills in relation to patients. Rather, in the spirit of the phrase “physician, heal thyself”, our participants have been exploring scenarios based on their own lived experience of practices such as those described in the literature as “teaching by humiliation”.

It is still early days but, over the course of our three pilot workshops, the response of participants (including legal representatives from the Australian Medical Association) has been very encouraging. Pending the result of a funding application to the Office of Teaching and Learning, we may soon be in a position to roll out the training modules we’ve developed to medical schools across NSW and interstate.

Clearly, major cultural change in our health institutions also needs to be driven strongly from those ‘at the top’, such as the Royal College of Surgeons and other professional bodies with key training and accreditation functions. In the meantime, however, it has been a rewarding, and sometimes humbling, experience to work with medical students, interns and some of their teachers as they rehearse ‘from below’ the changes that they want to see.

Looking a little further down the track, this project feeds into a bigger dialogue about the role of the arts within our health institutions. Next year, we will be hosting a visit to the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies from Brian Lobel, an artist who has been heavily involved in the ground-breaking UK program, “Performing Medicine” (check out their beautiful, informative and inspiring website). Expect to hear more from us in 2016 about this exciting interdisciplinary collaboration.
The Writing Hub has had another busy semester, with many notable achievements among its staff. Congratulations to . . .

- Ben Miller and his partner Hallie Donkin on birth of Samuel Benjamin Miller, who arrived on 26 October.

- Bronwen Dyson on her well-deserved promotion to Senior Lecturer, which recognises her outstanding research in writing and linguistics and her many years of providing consistent, high-quality language and writing support to FASS HDR students.

- Janice Hinckfuss on her well-deserved FASS teaching excellence award, presented by the Dean at the FASS ceremony on 12 November. Janice’s teaching has been commended by students and colleagues alike as inclusive, transformative, and inspiring. We are very grateful for Janice’s many superb contributions to the Writing Hub this year.

- Louise Katz on the publication of The Orchid Nursery (2015, Lacuna Publishing), which was launched on 29 October by Jane Sloan, with special guest singer Nadya Golski, who performed a song from the book.

On 27 October, Professor Chris Anson from North Carolina State University and Associate Professor Karen Vered from Flinders University were featured speakers at the Writing Across the Curriculum: Challenging Boundaries symposium. The event was attended by academics and administrators from across campus, as well as colleagues from other NSW universities and schools. The day concluded with a workshop on strengthening the presence of WAC in Australasia and forming interdisciplinary, cross-national research teams.

On 3 September, Susan Thomas was a keynote speaker for the annual NorthGATE conference in Narrabeen, an annual professional development event for primary and secondary educators and administrators in the Northern Beaches region. Her talk “Preserving the Art of Wondering in the Age of the Tiger Mother” emphasised the need to revisit classical literature and methods of argumentation and reasoning in the contemporary test-driven classroom.

After seven years as Director of the Writing Hub, Susan Thomas is stepping back into civilian life and looking forward to her combined SSP/LSL in 2016. Frances Di Lauro will be Director from January. Susan is very grateful to SLAM for welcoming the Writing Hub as a new program in 2013, and for the enthusiastic support of so many fantastic colleagues over the years.
SLAMmag is an online magazine published four times a year

Editor
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Layout and design
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Cover page photography
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spring 2015

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