The study of the law affects, and is affected by, all areas of life. In this series, Sydney Law School academics discuss parental rights after separation, human rights, tax avoidance, patenting of human genetics, financial self-help remedies, irresponsible bank lending behaviours and the uncertainty of our climate and environment – all within the framework of the law. This program of lectures and seminars will engage and inspire, reinforcing the all-pervading role of legal research and practice in the community.

**FAMILY LAW & THE INDISSOLUBILITY OF PARENTHOOD**
*Professor Patrick Parkinson AM*
*Tue 18 May (6-7.30pm)*

Few areas of public policy involve as much conflict as the law of parenting after separation. Family law specialist, Professor Patrick Parkinson AM, argues that many of these conflicts derive from the breakdown of the late 1960s - early 1970s model on which divorce reform was predicated, which presupposed that divorce could end the relationship between parents in such a way that people could get on with their lives with only residual ties to their former partners. International trends suggest, however, that there has been an irreversible shift towards a model of post-separation parenting in which the family endures despite the separation of the parents.

**THE DEMISE OF INTERNATIONAL TAX AVOIDANCE? THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF TAX LAW POLICY & ADMINISTRATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY**
*Professor Michael Dirkis*
*Tue 27 July (6-7.30pm)*

Traditionally the powers of all revenue authorities to obtain offshore information has been limited as has the ability of revenue authorities to enforce foreign tax debts. Australia’s recent signing of tax information exchange agreements with a number of tax havens and the renegotiated tax treaties are seen as a major step in overcoming these limitations. In this lecture, noted researcher and taxation specialist Professor Michael Dirkis will explore the processes of co-operation between revenue authorities that have led to the effective internationalisation of the Australian Taxation Office’s information gathering and debit powers, and whether this process will lead to the demise of international tax avoidance.

**WHO OWNS YOUR GENES? IS THE PATENTING OF GENETIC DISCOVERIES IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST?**
*Professor Peter Cashman*
*Tue 10 August (6-7.30pm)*

To date, a substantial number of genetic ‘discoveries’ have been the subject of successful patent applications in Australia and in numerous other countries, which have given rise to a number of complex and controversial legal and policy questions. These issues are presently under consideration by a Senate Inquiry in Australia and the subject of a test case in the United States brought by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Public Patent Foundation affiliated with the Benjamin N Cardozo School of Law [Association for Molecular Pathology, et al. v United States Patent and Trademark Office, et al., SDNY]. In this lecture Dr Peter Cashman, barrister and Professor of Law (Social Justice) at Sydney Law School, will review the legal, policy and public interest questions arising out of the patenting of human genetic discoveries.

**TOO BIG TO FAIL: MAKING GLOBAL FINANCE PAY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**
*Professor David Kinley*
*Tue 7 September (6-7.30pm)*

In this lecture, Professor David Kinley, Chair in Human Rights Law at Sydney Law School, argues as to how global finance can be made part of the solution to greater human rights protection, not just part of the problem. He investigates the relationship between human rights and such matters as remittances, foreign direct investment, debt forgiveness, innovative development financing, philanthrocapitalism, and the critical differences and connections between the real and paper economies. The relative capacities of global finance to do great harm to human rights as well as its potential to do great good will be canvassed, and the role that human rights law and policy does and might play analysed and assessed.
BANKS ACTING AS PRUDENT AND RESPONSIBLE LENDERS  
Professor John Stumbles  
Tue 21 September (6-7.30pm)

The GFC has revealed that banks and other financiers in Australian and elsewhere have provided financial accommodation to customers in amounts in excess of their capacity to repay and in circumstances where the customers failed to understand the documents signed by them and the risks which they were being asked to assume. Earlier financial crises have revealed similar circumstances in which borrowers have been unfairly disadvantaged, and often resulted in new legislation and case law which exposed new risks for banks if they did act imprudently or irresponsibly. Finance law and insolvency specialist Professor John Stumbles will explore legislative and judicial responses to this type of conduct, and consider their effectiveness in ensuring banks act properly in dealings with their customers.

EXERCISING A SELF-HELP REMEDY IN FINANCE: IS IT NECESSARILY HELPING YOURSELF?  
Professor Sheelagh McCracken  
Tue 26 October (6-7.30pm)

The legal concept of ‘set-off’ expresses a simple idea: where two persons are indebted to each other, only the balance should be payable. Available to individuals, businesses and financial institutions alike, set-off potentially offers a powerful self-help remedy. The scope of such a remedy may however become controversial when a bank claims to set off a customer’s credit balance against that customer’s debt to it. So, for example, during the global financial crisis, several banks in the UK reportedly found themselves accused of having used an ‘obscure’ legal device to ‘raid’ their customers’ accounts. Examining interpretations and applications of the concept, finance law specialist Professor Sheelagh McCracken reflects on the extent to which the law can – and should – accommodate such a remedy.