Language and Culture is the quarterly electronic magazine of the School of Languages and Cultures in the Faculty of Arts at Sydney University. It explores current issues in the field of languages and cultures and provides updates on the activities of the School.

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A Tribute to Nerida Newbigin
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From this end-of-year point of view, we in the School of Languages and Cultures can look back on the 2008 academic year as one of notable accomplishments and productivity. In both small and large departments, our academics continue to make a positive mark on research and teaching within Australia as well as internationally. This issue of Language and Culture reports on some of our most recent efforts. Moreover, national groups concerned with the quality of tertiary language teaching in Australia have lauded our School as one of the most successful in sustaining a core curriculum while developing new pathways for students to gain language skills and cultural literacy.

I am happy to note that from my vantage point the view forward is also highly promising. My colleagues and I have been working hard to foster significant teaching and research collaborations with academics in other Schools and Faculties across the University. It is my expectation that in 2009 we will begin to see the fruits of this work. So watch this space . . . I wish my colleagues in our School and Faculty an enjoyable holiday break and all of us in the School of Languages and Cultures wish our friends in the University and larger Sydney community a happy and prosperous New Year.

Professor Jeffrey Riegel

December 2008
In recent years, the department has expanded and improved its program with the introduction of many new units of study including 1st and 2nd year Pali (a major Buddhist language) and many non-language units in the fields of Buddhist, Indian, and Asian Studies. This has been greatly aided by the generous financial assistance of the University Buddhist Educational Foundation (UBEF), an external body established to promote the study of Buddhism within universities. To date they have provided funding for a three-year lectureship in Buddhist Studies (established 2005), which was first occupied by Dr Mark Allon and more recently by Dr Andrew McGarrity when Mark became Senior Lecturer and Chair of the Department. UBEF will also be funding a four-year Visiting Professorship in Buddhist Studies within the SLC (a fifth year provided by Sydney University). As a result, Professor Peter Skilling from the École Française d’Extrême-Orient will be in residence during first semester 2009. The UBEF will also be donating $30,000 to fund the teaching of second year Pali ($10,000 per year for three years starting 2009). In 2008, they donated $3000 for a Pali language prize and $2000 to purchase books for the library in the field of Buddhist Studies.
The department is a major contributor to the Buddhist Studies Program at the University of Sydney, run in conjunction with the Department of Studies in Religion. Sydney offers the most comprehensive program in Australia and is one of only three universities to offer a full program in Sanskrit, and the only one to offer Pali. The department also contributes lectures to Asian Studies and Peace and Conflict Studies and has close links with the Australian Centre for Asian Art and Archaeology within the Department of Art History and Film Studies. It has established strong connections with other programs in Australia, including the co-teaching of Sanskrit units with the Australian National University via video-conferencing. The lecturers and students of the department have been key players in the foundation and running of the Australasian Association of Buddhist Studies (established 2005) which has greatly improved the profile of Buddhist Studies in the region, particularly through its conferences, bi-weekly seminars, and a regular news bulletin. Dr Jenni Cover, a former student of the department, who received her PhD in 2008, recently organised the first Australian Sanskrit Conference.

Although small in size, the department has a dynamic research culture with several ongoing projects of international significance. Mark Allon is a member of two major international projects: the Early Buddhist Manuscript Project based at the University of Washington, Seattle, and the Buddhist Manuscript in the Schøyen Collection Project based in Oslo, Norway. Both consist of international teams of scholars engaged in the publication and study of newly discovered Buddhist manuscript materials, primarily from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mark’s research involves a major study of the Senior manuscript collection which will appear as the monograph Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhara II: The Senior Kharosthi Fragments. This volume will be followed by the publication of the texts in the collection, resulting in several more monographs. When published, this research will prove important to many areas of Buddhist studies, but in particular to the study of Gandharan Buddhist literature, the Gandhari language, manuscript and scribal traditions in ancient Gandhara, and religious practices associated with the production and burial of manuscripts containing religious texts. The results of this work has stirred much
interest in the international scholarly community, particularly the implications that carbon dating of some manuscripts has had on the controversial dating of the important Kushan dynasty. Mark’s findings have been widely reported in the Australian and international press, for which he was interviewed on several ABC Radio programs.

Throughout his career Mark has been successful in winning numerous major research grants, including a Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (postdoctoral) Fellowship at Kyoto University, Japan (1996), a Pali Text Society Research Grant, England (1996-1997), and a five year Australian Research Council (ARC) Research Fellow at the University of Sydney (2002-2007).

Peter Oldmeadow has been working on a study of the Sanskrit text of the Mahayanasutralankara (Ornament of the Mahayana Scriptures) and its Indian commentaries preserved in Tibetan translation. This is a foundational text of the Yogacara school of Buddhist philosophy and one of the most important texts for explaining the Bodhisattva Path of Mahayana Buddhism. To date, no systematic study or adequate translation into a European language of the text has been made. Together with Drasko Mitrikeski, his former PhD student, Peter is also currently preparing a critical edition, translation and linguistic analysis of the only existing Sanskrit manuscript of the Dharmadhatustotra, a hymn attributed to the 2nd century Indian master Nagarjuna. One of the purposes of this study is to determine the authenticity through analysis of the style, metre and other linguistic peculiarities, comparing them with other works by Nagarjuna. If proven authentic, the work will have major influence not only in our understanding of Nagarjuna’s teaching and his relation to other schools of the time, but will contribute greatly to the understanding of the formative phase of the Mahayana movement. Several international scholars have already expressed keen interest in the results of this study.

Peter is also exploring various possibilities for research cooperation with the Vice Chancellor of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS), Sarnath, India, including exchange of visiting scholars and postgraduate students.

Andrew McGarrity, who completed his undergraduate and doctoral studies in the department, is currently working on a Sanskrit edition of Jayananda’s Madhyamakavatārabhāṣyatikā (Commentary on the Introduction to the Middle Way and Commentary) based on rare manuscripts discovered in Tibet, China, and Nepal, in conjunction with scholars from the ISTB, University of Vienna. Jayananda was an 11th century Kashmiri Buddhist monk whose commentary profoundly influenced the Tibetan understanding of Madhyamaka philosophy. Andrew’s training at the University of Sydney in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Indian and Buddhist Philosophy and Western Philosophy equipped him with the skills necessary to work with such difficult philosophical treatises.
and to be accepted as a member of this prestigious international project. Andrew has built strong links with Japanese scholars having been a Numata Research Fellow at Ryokoku University in Kyoto, and he is currently establishing links with scholars in the field of Buddhist philosophy at Dongguk University in Korea.

Despite the demands of a high national and international presence and research output, academic staff in Indian Sub-Continental Studies have always paid particular attention to the development of their research students, some of whom have gone on to play important roles here in Australia while others have taken up prestigious opportunities overseas. Jason Birch is one example of the excellence that is fostered in the department. Jason recently won a scholarship to undertake a PhD in Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Oxford University. The department’s international connections have also provided students with opportunities to become involved in high profile projects. For example, Honours student Blair Silverlock is editing a newly discovered Buddhist Sanskrit manuscript from Pakistan as part of a project based at the University of Munich, Germany.

The department has already become a beacon for Indian and Buddhist Studies in Australia and the future looks even brighter. Given the importance of India both historically and currently as an emerging giant, the department would like to develop its Hindi/Urdu and Indian Studies offerings as part of the Asian Studies program. It also hopes to continue to build its international reputation as a centre of excellence in Buddhist Studies.
Theodore Ell is currently completing his PhD with the Department of Italian Studies. In this article he introduces us to the Italian poet Piero Bigongiari, whose works evoke the devastated landscape of the Second World War and speak out against Fascist conformity in Italy.

The phrases written beside my words express only a few of the images I have come to know in reading the works of Piero Bigongiari (1914-1997), a native of Tuscany and one of the major literary figures of Florence in the last century. They are drawn from poems of his collection Rogo (1944-1952) and from other writings surrounding it, and as bleak as some of them may seem they illustrate Bigongiari’s remarkable ability to capture the power of inspired moments. The illuminations of his poetry do not, however, occur in isolation as here. It is an art of elaboration, with images, phrases and sometimes whole situations evolving across several poems, acquiring new colour and gradually taking on new meanings, much in the same way as the treatment of musical themes and harmonies. It is this idea of “theme and variations” that struck me on first reading Bigongiari: impressive moments are part of something much larger, there is continuity in their ideas and meaning, the poems become a rich tapestry of familiar things. I am fortunate to have found poetry such as this to occupy my mind in recent years (and it was fortunate indeed that my supervisor recommended that I search for writers beyond the regular list of famous names).

Behind the darkness of closed shutters a man listens to a roaring thunder of bombs. Then voices echo along colonnades, calling for water. Nights go out like candles. The air is a spent fire. Months of life are bracketed by years of death. Long months return and the spring is revived to die again. Scorpions click their claws on walls in the sunlight. Rain is the light and variable voice of love. A loved one returns like the dawn of a world waiting to be invented. The circle of an embrace is a tropic on the breath. Spiders hang in webs over the abyss.
With Bigongiari there is always something new to read, which means, happily, that there is always something more to write. Even a quick glance at his poetry can open a dimension of intriguing possibilities, and that is only in their published form. To study the draft versions and unpublished pieces, as I had the chance to do in Italy this year, reveals an imaginative richness of astonishing breadth and inventiveness. The decisive element in my choice of Bigongiari, however, was the fact that his poetry is rooted in reality and experience, rather than simply “existing.” The poems are presented in chronological order and each bears its date of composition, so that it is possible to argue that the “thrust” of their development goes hand in hand with the preoccupations which filled Bigongiari’s mind. The poems were more than an emotional escape for him, although they certainly provided confirmation of deeply felt doubts or frustrations, but they also suggested new directions within themselves. The word Rogo denotes a consuming fire, as at the stake or on a funeral pyre, and the gradual combination of this with the seemingly unrelated idea of spring as a season in which death is reactivated creates the synthesis which leads the whole collection towards a resolution. His art of elaboration could lead as well as it could follow, which in fact is the collection’s true significance: Rogo is the legacy of the struggle of a rich creative imagination to regain control of itself.

Rogo grows out of Bigongiari’s experience of the Second World War. He was present when Florence was bombed and large areas of the old city were destroyed. The literary scene he had known as a young man was blown out of existence and he was forced to reinvent a poetic language among the ruins. Bigongiari’s troubles continued even after the war had ended, as he endured illness, dreary teaching jobs and the deeply upsetting end of his first marriage, so that although his renewed efforts in poetry were extremely rich in potential he could not find the stability he needed if they were to take a controlled shape. In 1947 he seemed ready to publish a collection called Quaderno Nero (Black Notebook), but he had a furious disagreement with his publisher and the project was lost. It took a wider experience of European culture, with trips to France and Britain and encounters with their sometimes eccentric literary personalities, and an engagement

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with the new journals and institutions springing up in Florence, to find something of the energy with which Bigongiari had started life as a writer so many years before.

He did not so much return to his roots as relive the successes of his youth in revised forms, adapting work already published for the changed situation. The most symbolic of these revisions was the expansion and updating of his university thesis on the Romantic Giacomo Leopardi. Leopardi had always been renowned for his tragic pessimism but Bigongiari had broken with traditional opinion by arguing that as bleak as Leopardi’s writing might be, it was a positive force because it spoke truthfully about the poet’s existence and expressed durability in a frail world. So it was also for Bigongiari: the later poems of Rogo are practically paraphrases of Leopardi in their references to signs of life in empty landscapes, and they finally achieve the calm beauty Bigongiari had been striving to recover when his world seemed in danger of total destruction. I spent six months in Italy visiting the Archivio Bigongiari in Pistoia and other archives in Florence, looking closely at surviving manuscripts and drafts and other unpublished materials such as letters, all written by Bigongiari’s own hand and so revealing the most intimate details of the long process that brought Rogo into being. Often, whether in the margins of a manuscript or in the personal confessions of letters, Bigongiari seemed to find himself close to total despair, but always the intense web of corrections and additions gradually led towards a more stable and confident mood, so much so that by the time that Rogo was in the typesetting room Bigongiari was writing hurriedly to his publisher hoping that it was not too late to add another few poems. Rogo represents Bigongiari’s return to the literary community and in the decades that followed the steady flow of poetry collections, prose pieces and criticism that he maintained until the end of his life rested entirely on the success of his efforts after the war.

It is surprising that the story of Rogo has not yet been told. Partly this is due to a general misunderstanding of Bigongiari’s nature in the larger world of Italian culture. Bigongiari belongs to a generation of poets who are widely regarded as aloof and obscure in their attitudes. He and his contemporaries Mario Luzi, Alessandro Parronchi, Alfonso Gatto and Carlo Betocchi and the critics Oreste Macrì and Carlo Bo...
spoke a language of mystery, evocation, dreams and emotions, which brings their works into contact with reality in a way that is different from what the mainstream might expect. Their writing, and above all their poetry, is drawn to the essential meaning of events or feelings rather than their consequences or social implications. They seek out what is hidden and tap the undercurrents of living and being, believing in writing as a force as meaningful, intrinsic and enduring as life itself. This group is also sometimes criticised for its apparent failure to oppose Fascism as students in the 1930s, but if they remained silent on political matters it is because they were too young to have had any real experience of democracy before the rise of Fascism in the 1930s and so were unprepared to speak for an unfamiliar cause. What is more, the open, organic and mysterious qualities of their language were the exact opposite of the rhetorical slogans of regimes and factions. Their silence on political questions can be seen as a meaningful act of resistance: as writers, they refused to write as directed. The criticism of the group as a whole comes despite the recognition these poets did receive. Mario Luzi was made a senator for life, Alessandro Parronchi was publicly admired by the arch-radical Pier Paolo Pasolini and Alfonso Gatto gained a strong popular following. In spite of all this, a wall of assumptions and preferences still seems to deny them a greater role in the history of modern Italian poetry.

The general misunderstanding has meant that Bigongiari’s poetry has never been widely studied and it does not have a large following outside Italy. The late Professor Tom O’Neill of the University of Melbourne, who was a personal friend of Bigongiari’s, seemed poised to do something about this unfortunate situation by preparing a monograph, but sadly he passed away before the book reached an advanced stage. Even within Italy, appreciation of Bigongiari’s work is mainly confined to Florence, where over the last decades a number of critics and editors, many of them taught by Bigongiari at university, have produced a body of interpretation which no study should do without. They were also instrumental in helping me with my own research, for which I am very grateful. Yet through no fault of theirs or of Bigongiari’s, this intriguing, even bewitching poet is still not known to a wider scholarly community.

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Theodore Ell began his PhD in 2007 after gaining his BA (Languages) with First Class Honours. He has received an Australian Postgraduate Award and a Cassamarca Scholarship for research in Italy. He has spent a semester in Florence studying original and unpublished materials in the personal archive of the poet Piero Bigongiari and presented papers exploring Bigongiari’s attitude to the rise of the democratic Italian Republic and his fascination with the Romantic poet Giacomo Leopardi, at conferences in London and Taormina.

Theodore’s article on Bigongiari’s personal attachment to the Arno valley for the online postgraduate journal Philament can be found at: www.arts.usyd.edu.au/publications/philament/issue12_contents.htm
His thesis, A Voice in the Fire: Piero Bigongiari’s Rogo (1944-1952) and the quest for survival, is due for completion at the end of 2009.

On my first reading of Bigongiari’s poetry I was transfixed but also doubtful that I could contribute even slightly to a wider understanding of it, yet neglect of Bigongiari meant that everything was still to be said. In the scholarly community of Florence Bigongiari is recognised as one of the inventors of his generation’s idiom and indeed of its very way of thinking about literature. If Carlo Bo had established that literature was a living force because of its capacity to understand and its unending push towards a future, then Bigongiari made the case for the independence of that life and its need to exist on its own terms. In short it was Bigongiari who expressed his generation’s disapproval of Fascist conformity. Furthermore, when the Fascist state fell, Bigongiari not only kept his poetic instinct alive but also opened it to the shared experience of living in a war zone: he wrote as much for the communal conscience as for himself. Rogo, then, can present the most complete argument against any accusation that Bigongiari was detached from real life and its problems. It is a surprising meaning to find in such dreamlike poetry, as surprising indeed as finding myself in a position to show it.
On 20 November, the Faculty of Arts threw a party in celebration of a distinguished academic career that has spanned 43 years here at Sydney. The party was in honour of Professor Nerida Newbigin and included farewell speeches on behalf of Italian Studies, the School of Languages and Cultures and the Faculty of Arts. Among notable guests was former student and current Vice-Chancellor, Dr Michael Spence. The atmosphere in the Nicholson Museum was one of great warmth and well wishing mixed with sadness, but it was also an occasion for laughter when Dr Nerida Jarkey treated guests to a very short operetta on ‘how you know when it’s time to retire’: Dean Martin’s That’s Amore will now be remembered by many as a humorous tribute to a loved and respected colleague who has served the interests of Italian Studies and the Faculty for so many years.

During her time here at Sydney, Nerida Newbigin has been a quiet achiever. She was the first student of Italian Studies to complete a PhD thesis. She went on to be appointed as a Personal Chair in Italian Studies in 2001 and headed the department for a dozen years and more between 1992 and her retirement years. She was active in the Frederick May Foundation, which played an important role in supporting Italian Studies between 1976 and 1999. She played an important role in the establishment of Mandlebaum House of which she is a trustee council member. After various Faculty roles over a 25 year period, she was appointed Pro-Dean of the Arts Faculty in July 2006. She has been Chair of the University’s Library Committee, and is now President of the Friends of the University Library. As a researcher she is internationally renowned in the field of Italian theatre and performance in the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods. Less widely known, perhaps, is the breadth of her interests — their scope has recently been brought to our attention by Professor Adrian Vickers who revealed to guests on the 20th that they range ‘from the politics of scandal, to martyred virgins to “Lorenzo’s Fat and Other Relics”’. 
Nerida’s list of publications is long. With United States art historian Barbara Wisch she has just finished *Acting on Faith: The Confraternity of the Gonfalone in Renaissance Rome*, supported by an ARC grant 1998-2000. She is now bringing together into another book research on “Festival, Spectacle and Plays in Renaissance Florence” carried out with her last ARC grant 2004-2006. She is also the author of numerous book chapters, conference presentations, articles and reviews, and there are many more to come. In fact there are so many projects still needing attention that she’s cheerfully giving them away as potential thesis topics! As a teacher Nerida has won the admiration of her students. Undergraduates will tell you that it is a treat to go to her classes, while the PhD students in Italian Studies are already anticipating the loss of her unerring support and kindness (they are yet to realise that Nerida does not intend to disappear completely from their lives and will be taking a keen interest in their futures).

When the time came on the evening of the 20th for the Dean, Professor Stephen Garton, to farewell Nerida, he paid tribute to all of the above and more, revealing that a dry observation in Nerida’s Australian Dictionary of Biography entry on Frederick May, about the legendary stratification of past correspondence in his room, has led to many an anxious moment of desk tidying prior to his handing over the reins in his absence. But above all he spoke of her collegiality and tireless support of the Faculty, qualities that will be truly missed.

Given such tributes, what is most striking about Nerida, is her modesty when it comes to speaking about her achievements. It seems much easier for her to turn her focus towards her students of whom she is very proud, and to the subject matter of her research rather than her own reputation. But on further probing I found that it is possible to gain insight into what has influenced Nerida’s career. When Nerida recounts her early experiences she makes many references to Professor Frederick May who inspired her with his teaching and guidance until his death in 1976. He once told her, as he agreed to write yet another reference for her, that “you can never repay a kindness, but you can pass them on”.

“Nerida ... makes many references to Professor Frederick May who inspired her with his teaching and guidance until his death in 1976. He once told her, as he agreed to write yet another reference for her, that ‘you can never repay a kindness, but you can pass them on’.”
When Nerida talks about her research it soon becomes obvious that she is a storyteller who can quickly draw in an audience taking them on a journey of discovery into the world of medieval spectacle. She became passionate about such historical occasions from the moment that she discovered numerous collections of 15th century religious plays in various libraries in Florence in the 1970s and it seems that she has been compelled at some core level of her being to share what she has found with others ever since. One of the most enduring pieces of feedback that Nerida received was from the tea lady at a Conference Centre at La Trobe in 1998 who made a point of telling her that ‘Lorenzo’s Fat and Other Relics’ was the ‘best paper bar none’ that she had ever heard in her time as a conference eavesdropper. What is particularly satisfying to Nerida as she recalls the occasion is the confirmation of her belief that research should be first and foremost accessible.

Another important theme that soon surfaces in conversation with Nerida is her sense of place and the connections that she makes with the people around her. Her relationships are enduring. In her farewell speech, Nerida recalled how she still keeps in contact with the ‘young’ librarians that she met in 1971 in Siena and Florence. Libraries are one of Nerida’s important spaces where she feels very much at home. After all her first job was in Fisher Stack where she fondly recollects working on the Delbridge Dictionary (now the Macquarie Dictionary) and being paid to ‘plagiarise pages from other peoples’ dictionaries’. She has over the years watched with pleasure the transformation of libraries, which brings me to another observation — even though it requires a short detour— Nerida, while an advocate for tradition and the importance of historic occasions, is also very much at home with what is new and cutting edge. She is very grateful for the technologies that have led to the restoration of the manuscripts in the library in Florence, so badly damaged in the floods of 1966, and has expressed a serious interest in continuing to be involved in the selection of the University’s new Student Management System that will replace FlexSYS.

The choice to study Arts was, Nerida says, in direct contradiction to her sister’s choice of Science. Once enrolled, she also changed her mind about studying
French; instead she was quickly enthralled by the study of Italian literature and language and the excitement of an inspirational era. Those who know her may recognise in Nerida a tendency to act in surprising ways. Perhaps this tendency has influenced her decision to stay at Sydney when others would have left for a prestigious position in Europe. But now we are back to the importance of place, because it is also Nerida’s feeling of total commitment to being Australian and to being part of the fabric of Sydney that has led her to turn down such offers. Her family’s relationship with Australia started with the arrival of her mother’s ancestors on the first fleet. They came as convicts and settlers building a community in Eastwood and beyond. And the family history is entwined with that of the University. In her farewell speech Nerida told how she came here as a child in the 1950’s when her father brought her with him to University Open Days to see old friends and mentors from his own student days in the early ‘30s. She told us how they met ‘old Doc Heydon (now remembered by a painting in the Burkitt-Ford Library, and by a building in Science Road); Alan Colefax, better known as Tom the Naturalist from the ABC Argonauts, and his hatching eggs and corroboree frogs; but most excitingly someone in old Geology who gave us samples of uranium ore, that squawked on the geiger-counter, so we knew it was real’. It was most likely then that the seeds of Nerida’s academic career were sown because she added ‘when the time came for me to choose a university course, I wrote “Arts–Sydney” on the form, and nothing else, blissfully unaware that this was where I was meant to list preferences. And so I came, I saw, and I was captivated.’

Nerida Newbigin has taught Italian Language and Literature at the University of Sydney from 1970 to 2008. Her fields of interest range from philology and textual editing to theatre history and the social history of Florence and Rome. Her publications include editions of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century texts, and studies of religious and secular theatre in its social and political context.
Second semester winds up in early November, making it one of the busiest times of the teaching year at the University of Sydney. But this did not stop academics in the School of Languages and Cultures from taking time out from their marking to share their research passions with their colleagues. In fact, thirty-seven researchers from across the School’s eleven departments presented papers showcasing their latest research findings at the inaugural annual Research Day. Associate Dean for Research Professor Richard Waterhouse opened the proceedings, commending the School on the impressive range of topics covered. He has since proposed that the SLC Research Day model be adopted across the Faculty of Arts.

The packed, day-long program was organised by our tireless Research Support Officer, Drasko Mitrikeski, in conjunction with the School’s Research Advisory Committee. The 37 research presentations were organised into twelve panels covering topics from pure and applied linguistics, to textual, literary and translation studies, to anthropology, gender studies and sociology. Other papers were multidisciplinary. The rich range of topics covered in the presentations gave members of the School an opportunity both to make and renew connections with researchers working on similar areas in different departments and to broaden their horizons. All sessions drew strong audiences and the buzz of conversation over lunch and at the end of the day confirmed its success.

When Head of School Jeffrey Riegel addressed the assembled researchers on their return from lunch, he expressed his deep pride in the depth of research represented in the program. Professor Riegel urged those present to continue their good work, as well as to seek out opportunities to engage in larger research initiatives and research clusters. He also reiterated his commitment to supporting the activities of researchers in the School.

The annual Research Day is now set to become a permanent fixture on the SLC calendar. And if the quality of the presentations this year is anything to go by, we can all look forward to great things to come!
Session 1a: Linguistics
Nerida Jarkey; ‘Semantic Transitivity and Subjectivity in Japanese Language’
Derek Herforth; ‘Linguistic Relativity and the Golden Rule in Chinese’
Elizabeth Rechniewski; ‘Approaches to the Analysis of Ideology in the Press’

Session 2a: Linguistics
Caroline Lipovski; ‘Successful Résumés in French’
Duk-Soo Park; ‘Epenthesis in Optimality Theory’
Mark Allen; ‘Current Research on the Senior Collection of Gandharan Buddhist Manuscripts’

Session 3a: Language and Culture
Alice Caffarel; ‘The Mentoring Influence of Simone de Beauvoir on Claire Cayron (1964-1983)’
Antonia Rubino; ‘Comparing Language Maintenance and Linguistic Attitudes Amongst Different Migration Vintages’
Sabine Jasny; ‘German as a Sandwich Language?: Bracket Constructions in Academic German’
Ken Tann; ‘Aestheticizing Identity: a Genealogy of WWII Discourses’

Session 4a: Media and Culture
Ki-Sung Kwak; ‘Transition of Television in East Asia’
Rebecca Suter; ‘It’s a Kind of Magic: Creative Misreadings of Christianity in Modern Japanese Literature and Popular Culture’
Seiko Yasumoto; ‘Impact of Cultural Mobility on Soft Power: “Cool Japan” to East Asia’

Session 5a: Contesting Modernity in China
Mayfair Yang; ‘Renewal of Tradition in Southeast China’
Hongwei Bao; ‘“Comrade” Chinese Modern: Constructing Gay Identities in Post-Mao China’
Zhe Li; ‘Sovereign Body, Power, and Traumatized Modernity in Post-Mao Chinese Art’

Session 6a: Art and the Feminine in Modern China
Jacqui Godwin; ‘After Mao: Intertwined Reconstruction of History, Gender and Freedom’
Meng Li; ‘Destructive Bhikkuni and Her Tragic Sisters: Female Intellectual Representations in Post-Mao Chinese Popular Discourse and Context’

Session 1b: Transnational Studies
Kathryn Crameri; ‘Referendum Fever? Democratic Routes to Independence for Stateless Nations in Western Europe’
Bronwyn Winter; ‘What does Hurricane Katrina have to do with the 2006 Subic Bay Rape Case?’
Michelle Royer; ‘Marguerite Duras: Cinema and the Orient’

Session 2b: Holocaust and its Aftermath
Konrad Kwiet; ‘On the Significance of the Archival Holdings at the ITS in Arolsen’
Suzanne Rufland; ‘Nationality Stateless: Destination Australia: Australian Jewry and the American Joint Distribution Committee’
Anna Rosenbaum; ‘On the Munich Crisis in 1938 and the Australian Response’

Session 3b: Biblical Studies
Ian Young; ‘Working with Fluid Biblical Texts’
Yael Avrahami; ‘Semantics as a Tool for Understanding the Biblical Worldview’
Robyn Vern; ‘Can Language be used for Dating Texts?’

Session 4b: Quest, Travels & Transmissions
Margaret Sankey; Baudin Expedition
Andrea Williams; ‘Is Lancelot the True Hero of the Quest for the Holy Grail? Some Illuminated Manuscripts of “La Queste del Saint Graal”’
Andrew McGrailly; ‘Translation, Dissemination and Interpretation: Understanding the Stages and Contours of the Transmission of Buddhist Ideas from India to Tibet’

Session 5b: Identity & Representations
Michele Ford; ‘Fluid Boundaries: Modernity, Nation and Identity in the Riau Islands’
Yasuko Claremont; ‘Cosmopolitan Novelist: Inoue Yasushi on the Silk Road’
Vek Lewis; ‘The implications of the Anglophone Concept ‘Transgender’ for Latin American Sexual Diversity: Some Considerations’

Session 6b: Modern and Contemporary Literature
Paolo Bartoloni; ‘The Consumption of Love at the Threshold of the Organic and Inorganic’
Giorgia Alù; ‘Migration and Photography in Contemporary Italian Fiction’
Hiroko Cockerill; ‘Early Japanese Translations of Dostoevsky’s Works: Translation Norms in Transition’
new publications


Dr John Yu is one of the great and the good of our society, and one of the great graduates of the University of Sydney. He is a highly distinguished paediatrician, he spent 25 years at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children and it’s subsequent institution, the Westmead Children’s Hospital, including 20 years as its Chief Executive. In 1996 he was honoured as Australian of the Year, and in 1997, the University of Sydney conferred upon him an Honorary Doctor of Medicine. In 2000, Dr Yu was made Chancellor of The University of New South Wales, a position he held for five years. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to children and education, Dr Yu was made a companion, and an AC Order of Australia in 2001, and he also received the Centenary Medal. He was a member of the Australia China Council of the Department of Foreign Affairs for ten years, including seven as Chair. He has recently returned to us as the Chair of Centre of Asian Art and Archaeology here at the University of Sydney.

The Pro-Chancellor, Mr John McCarthy QC
I want to talk to you about today which, for many of you receiving your first degree, might be seen as the end of a journey. Those of you sitting in the front row will know that it is not the end of a journey, but very often, the beginning of something even more exciting. I hope that when you make those decisions — whether it is to continue your formal education, because I hope all of you will be committed to continuing education or whether you think about going into the work force, if there is a work force — you will recognise several things. One is your commitment to yourself, the importance of being honest with yourself, about what you want to do, and how you want to do it. I hope you will also continue to recognise the importance of your family and friends, and then the importance of your obligations to the community in which you live, and to our Australia. I ask you to do this because if you are going to pursue some of those lofty ideals that Barack Obama and Nelson Mandela referred to, you will need to be brave, you will need to say what you believe, and, dare I say it, you will need to act.

One of the things that I find astonishing about today’s young students is they don’t seem to protest. They don’t seem to feel strongly enough about issues to actually go out and wave banners, to march down Macquarie Street, to say that you don’t believe what is happening is right. A long time ago an 18th century statesman Edmund Burke wrote: “the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” Let’s think about that for a moment. A lot of those words would be familiar to you when we think about the Second World War, the Holocaust, and what Nazi Germany did. Some of them will also be familiar to those of you who think about the Rape of Nanking in 1937. How many of you felt strongly enough to do anything when we had Tampa, when there was a denial of any sort of social and moral responsibility to people displaced, usually not of their own doing.

And I say that with some feeling because my immediate family were involved in the invasion of Nanking. I came to Australia as a war refugee, to my mother’s family who were already living in Australia. I came by boat. Actually it was a passenger liner, but I like to think it was a boat. And a story I tell which is in fact true, even though anecdotes often are I guess slightly suspect, is that I was carried ashore by a very senior federal politician, Sir Earl Page, who graduated in this very great hall with my uncle in medicine, a long time ago. When he carried me ashore as a two and a half year old, he just walked through customs and immigration. And when it came for me to get my food and clothing

“I said to him, ‘Philip, I’m a refugee, I’m a boat person, and I’m illegal. Do you honestly think, no matter what you think of me, that my 30 to 40 years in the public sector has meant nothing? Has done nothing to advance Australia, and especially Australian children?’”
coupons as a child, there was no record of my being in Australia. So, when I had the opportunity of speaking to a former minister of immigration, whose name is unspeakable, I said to him, “Philip, I’m a refugee, I’m a boat person, and I’m illegal. Do you honestly think, no matter what you think of me, that my 30 to 40 years in the public sector has meant nothing? Has done nothing to advance Australia, and especially Australian children?” So when we think about people who do things because of an obligation to their family, who do things because they want to make things better for their family. It might be uncomfortable for us, but we need to be very careful in our judgement of them.

There are things that are happening in the world today which are pretty awful. Each year UNESCO, the United Nations Children’s Fund, publish a statement called ‘The World’s Children.’ In 2008, in Sub-Saharan Africa, of every 1000 babies born alive, 200 were dead before they were five years old. Of our near neighbours, Cambodia probably has the worst figure, followed not very far behind by Papua New Guinea where there are similar sorts of figures, albeit more like 100 dead in the first five years. Yet those statistics don’t seem to worry us, we just take them in our stride. We think oh yes its improved five per cent since last year. But doesn’t that say something to us about our acceptance of great injustice and great inhumanity?

You are arguably, the cream of Australia’s future intellectual thought. Do not betray the trust that has been put in you. Stand up for what you think is right. That might be very different from what I am saying today, but you are allowed to differ from me just as I am allowed to differ from you. That is part of our strength as a country that we can differ from each other. Some of you are looking a bit restless, particularly those of you who are standing up, so it might be an opportune time to make another quote this time from, a great scientist, Isaac Newton. You probably remember him with the apple and gravity. Isaac Newton wrote in a letter to a friend, “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” Behind me today are giants on whose shoulders you have stood for the last 3, 4, 5 years. Let’s acknowledge them for what they have done for you. But remember that you also have the ability of providing shoulders for other people to stand upon, and to see further and to do better things. The giants in this life don’t have to be old guys like me or even your teachers. They can be your colleagues and friends. And if you help each other, especially younger people, then I think this University will feel proud of you as her graduates. Ladies and gentlemen, I salute you, and I congratulate you on your achievements, and I wish you well in your future.
The renowned French filmmaker Bertrand Tavernier visited Australia as part of “On Set with French Cinema”, a program run by UniFrance to promote French cinema around the world. At his lecture at the University of Sydney on 2 December, chaired by Dr Michelle Royer of the Department of French Studies, excerpts from the award-winning film “La vie et rien d’autre” (Life and Nothing But) and the documentary “La guerre sans nom” (The nameless war) were shown. Tavernier entertained an enthusiastic audience as he thoughtfully answered their questions.

Bertrand Tavernier has known exactly what he’s wanted to do since the age of thirteen. He is passionate about film: an avid film-goer as well as a filmmaker. He seeks always to be surprised, and aims to give confidence to those he works with to surprise him. The actor Phillip Noiret expressed concerns when he started working with Tavernier, fearing this film buff could be too heavily influenced by the films he admired. But Tavernier never mentioned other films, never sought to emulate scenes or styles. Asked if the post-war influence of US cinema was resented in France, this man who admits of no major influences but admires much, says “there was good and bad — the problem is when it’s the only influence, when the influence is not reciprocal.” He decries the ignorance of some filmmakers observing that they can become “lost in their technology” — they don’t seem to have ever read a book.

A desire for knowledge is one of the triggers for Bertrand Tavernier to make a film. “La vie et rien d’autre” came about after reading that in 1920, two years after the end of the Great War, there were 354,000 missing persons. This figure shocked him. “What is a missing person?” he asks. The film seeks emotional truth: “There are only two things in this film that are historically accurate: the piece of paper at the beginning (outlining the official search for the missing soldier) and the dates, 3 to 9 November.” He points out that no building in the film is used for its original purpose: a factory is a restaurant; a theatre is Major Delaplane’s office. The film hopes to portray the truth of an unsettled time.

In “La guerre sans nom”, Tavernier was so committed to telling the story of 28 men from Grenoble, drafted to fight in the “police action” carried out by France in Algeria in the 1950s, that the 90 minute film he was contracted to make has a running time of 4 hours 15 minutes. He relates how a French government minister, after viewing the film, was moved to state, “this was a war” — the first official recognition of this fact. Asked why he didn’t show both sides, Tavernier points out that a fiction has two sides; in a documentary, this is not necessary. The story is so complex, to stick with the original idea — the experience of draftees from one place in France — provides cohesion and anything else would be counterproductive. It is up to the Algerians to tell their side of the story.

Two hours passed quickly and everyone was ready to continue, in particular the effortless storyteller Bertrand Tavernier! Truth, passion, surprise: it was a privilege and a pleasure to meet this important artist.
In recognition of the importance of language pedagogy, The School of Languages and Cultures was a sponsor of the recent colloquium on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and pedagogy – a part of the multi-conference event, Lingfest 2008. Other sponsors included the School of Letters, Art and Media and the NSW Adult Migrant English Service (AMES). This sponsorship made it possible to invite four leading SLA researchers, whose presentations attracted around one hundred delegates from the annual conferences of the Australian Linguistics Society and the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia. They included representatives from NSW AMES, the NSW Department of Education and Training and NSW ATESOL (Association for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). As part of Lingfest’s celebration of linguistic diversity, the presenters at the colloquium spoke about the acquisition of Chinese, English and French as second languages. They explored a debate about the relevance of SLA to language teaching, arising from criticisms that SLA’s cognitive orientation does not mesh with the social emphasis of communicative language teaching (for more on the debate see the Modern Language Journal 1997, 2007).

Professor Rod Ellis (University of Auckland) opened the colloquium by exploring the problematic nature of research into Second Language classroom corrective feedback, Professor Gillian Wigglesworth (University of Melbourne, co-authors Liana Tan and Neomy Storch) - presented the findings of research on whether the medium of communication affects pair interaction and Chinese L2 use. Dr Jenefer Philp (University of Auckland) looked ‘behind the scenes’ of focus on form sessions in a French foreign language classroom to examine “how researchers investigating the interaction-learning relationship from a cognitive perspective might begin to explore the many and varied social factors at play during interaction”. The final presentation by Honorary Associate Professor Geoff Brindley (Macquarie University) revisited the issue of Language Testing and SLA, a decade after a range of interfaces between these areas was identified in Bachman and Cohen (1998).

In sum, the colloquium explored SLA’s value to pedagogy as well as ways in which the field is being reconceptualised. The colloquium did so by bringing together researchers and teachers interested in the relationship between SLA and pedagogy. I would like to thank all those who supported this initiative and fostered this exchange between language teaching and research.

Dr Bronwen Dyson
Postgraduate Academic Writing Advisor
Faculty of Arts
The 35th Congress of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association (AULLA) will be a landmark event. As the first decade of the twenty-first century draws to a close, it is time for a major reassessment of the human and humanities in literature, language and culture. Scholars in these fields are invited to submit proposals for papers and panels relating to this theme throughout history and into the future. The conference has a dual aim of promoting: (1) detailed research into the human (and inhuman) in literature, languages and culture; and (2) broad-scale exploration of the past, present and future definitions of and directions for the humanities. There will be opportunities for delegates to have their papers considered for refereed publication including proceedings of the conference published within 2009 as a special electronic edition of the association’s journal, AUMLA.

**Plenary Speakers**

**Professor Deirdre Coleman,**
Robert Wallace Chair of English,  
University of Melbourne

**Dr Debjani Ganguly,** Head of the  
Humanities Research Centre, ANU

**Professor Elizabeth Grosz,**  
Dept of Women’s and Gender Studies,  
Rutgers University

**Professor Jeffrey Riegel,** Head of School of Languages and Cultures, University of Sydney

**Professor Bob White,**  
English and Cultural Studies,  
The University of Western Australia

- How are the human and inhuman represented, constituted and reconfigured in literature, languages, film and culture?
- What do the human and inhuman signify to authors, directors, translators, compilers, readers, spectators and thinkers?
- What are the filmic, literary and cultural theories of the human and inhuman that resonate with and illuminate our texts?
- What are the ethics, politics and aesthetics of the human and humanities?
- What are the human and humanities in 21st century and what have they been in the past?
- What are limits of and possibilities for our current disciplines within the humanities?
- What are the specifically Australasian contexts for the human and humanities?
French Studies

Book Launch
Bronwyn Winter’s new book Hijab and the Republic will be launched by Professor Robert Aldrich 6-7pm, 10 December, Eastern Avenue Foyer at the 2008 Law and Society Association conference “W(h)ither Human Rights?”, co-organised by Dr Winter (http://conferences.arts.usyd.edu.au/index.php?cf=23)

From the publisher’s catalogue:
The hijab is arguably the most discussed and controversial item of women’s clothing today. It has become the primary global symbol of female Muslim identity for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and is the focus of much debate in the confrontation between Islam and the West. Nowhere has this debate been more acute or complex than in France. In Hijab and the Republic, Bronwyn Winter provides a riveting account of the controversial 2004 French law to ban Islamic headscarves and other religious signs from public schools. While much has been written on the subject, Winter offers a unique feminist perspective, carefully delineating its political and cultural aspects. Drawing on both scholarly literature and popular commentary, she examines the headscarf debate from its inception in 1989 through fluctuations in its intensity in public consciousness over the 1990s to its surging significance in the wake of 9/11 and the consequent shift in global politics.

Congratulations also to Dr Bronwyn Winter, recipient of a 2008 Faculty of Arts Excellence in Teaching (Design and Practice) award.

Le mystère Lapérouse
Professor Margaret Sankey gave a paper entitled “La construction du savoir scientifique de l’expédition Baudin: les journaux des savants et des officiers” at a conference at the Musée de la Marine in Paris, “Lapérouse et les explorateurs français du Pacifique, espaces de découvertes et savoirs scientifiques (1760 – 1840)” which was held on 17-18 October in conjunction with the exhibition, “Le mystère Lapérouse” (The Lapérouse Mystery). Lapérouse was last seen in Sydney in 1788 and then disappeared. His wrecked ships were found in the Solomon Islands in 1828 and since the 1960s marine archaeologists have been salvaging items from Lapérouse’s ships, the Boussole and the Astrolabe, many of which were on display in this comprehensive exhibition. The conference was aimed at placing Lapérouse’s expedition in context of earlier and later French voyages to the Southern Hemisphere.

Professor Sankey researches in the area of early French voyages to Australia and is the leader of an ARC Funded Discovery Project ‘The Baudin Legacy: A New History of the French Scientific Voyage to Australia (1800-1804)’.

Conference Papers
Caroline Lipovsky presented the paper ‘Making a good impression in résumés in French’ at the 2nd International Free Linguistics Conference, University of Sydney, 11-12 October 2008
Indonesian Studies

Indonesian Education Minister’s Visit
Bambang Sudibyo, the Indonesian Minister for Education, visited the University of Sydney on 11 November.

Aceh Training Research Institute
In November, Michele Ford travelled to Aceh as part of the University of Sydney’s commitment to the Aceh Training Research Institute (ARTI). Sydney is part of a consortium of Australian universities that has been funded by AusAID to help re-establish a community of researchers in Aceh post-conflict and post-tsunami.

Australia-Indonesia Governance Research Partnership Young Scholars’ Workshop
Three students from Indonesian Studies have been selected to participate in the Australia-Indonesia Governance Research Partnership Young Scholars’ Workshop, to be held in November this year. This very prestigious program brings 14 outstanding young researchers from Australia and Indonesia together for a week-long workshop that culminates in a presentation on their research to an audience of high-level policy-makers and senior academics from both countries. The fact that University of Sydney students comprise almost half the Australian contingent is quite remarkable.

Indonesia Briefing
The University of Sydney, in conjunction with the Indonesian Consulate, hosted an Indonesia Briefing during the last week of October, addressed by the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs and two Jakarta-based experts on recent political and economic developments. The Department of Indonesian Studies also hosted Stanley Prasetiyo, a member of Indonesia’s National Human Rights Commission, who presented a paper on human rights developments in the last decade.

Book Launch
Jan Lingard, an Honorary Associate of the department, celebrated the launch of her new book Refugees and Rebels at Gleebooks on 29 October. Jan has taught both at The University of Sydney and at The Australian National University.

On 29 November, the Department of Italian Studies held an in-service course for Italian teachers working at all school levels. The in-service was held under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Italian Consulate and the Italian Institute of Culture. As in previous years, the course was organised in conjunction with the Department of Education of New South Wales, and in close collaboration with the Italian Consultant, Ms Enrichetta Parolin.

This year’s topic was “Representations of Southern Italy: Language, Texts and Images between the Old and the New”. The day opened with a warm welcome on behalf of the Italian Consul by Dr Sergio Rapisardi, Director of the Education Office at the Consulate General of Italy in Sydney and by Dr Annamaria Lelli, Director of the Italian Institute of Culture. In the three sessions that followed Dr Giorgia Alù spoke on “The Mezzogiorno of the Travellers”, Dr Antonia Rubino on the “Rebirth of the Dialect”, and Dott.ssa Luana Ciavola on “The South in the Italian Cinema: Bitter Images and the Other”.

The event was a great success with good attendance by primary and secondary school teachers from various institutions in Sydney and more broadly across New South Wales.

New Book from Paolo Bartoloni
“On the Cultures of Exile, Writing, and Translation”
Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008.

Kevin Hart, University of Virginia writes:
“Exile, memory, and translation: these three concepts form the points of a triangle applied and manipulated brilliantly in Paolo Bartoloni’s newest book, *On the Cultures of Exile, Translation, and Writing*. Bartoloni’s work is an original exploration of texts by some of the major French, German, and Italian writers of the twentieth century. The author’s application of thought by Caproni, Blanchot, and Agamben to literary texts indicates clearly and poignantly what it means and how it feels to live here but not here, now but not yet, in the eerie state of being open to what is to come.”
Chinese Studies

Chinese Society and China Studies
This international conference hosted by the Department of Sociology at Nanjing University, 24-26 October 2008 was attended by the Chair of the Department of Chinese Studies Dr David Bray, who presented a paper entitled ‘Space and Place in Contemporary Urban China: Understanding the Social Impact of Spatial Transformation’. Also attending from Chinese Studies was Hongguang He, PhD candidate. Professor Elspeth Probyn, Department of Gender and Cultural Studies, also attended and presented a paper.

Japanese Studies

Murakami Haruki Symposium
Rebecca Suter was an invited speaker at the Murakami Haruki Symposium at Berkeley’s Centre for Japanese Studies on October 12, 2008, and gave a paper entitled “Lost in Translation? Murakami Haruki and the Japanization of the English language”. She is also an invited participant in the AASRN International workshop with Professor David Eng in Melbourne in December.

Shinseinen: from Entertainment to Enlightenment
3-4 December, University of Sydney
This international workshop on Japanese popular culture in the 1920s and 1930s focusses on the works published in the literary journal Shinseinen. Fifteen papers were presented, an edited collection of which is forthcoming. The workshop was funded by the Japan Foundation.
The Queer Space in China

4pm, 8 December,
School of IT Lecture Theatre

Professor David Eng explores the emergence of gay and lesbian identity in contemporary China in relation to liberal distinctions between public space and private desires. He investigates the ways in which Chinese gays and lesbians are positioned as ideal individuals, uniquely capable of embracing their private desires and so at the vanguard of a new modernity in China.

Professor Eng is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania, and the author of numerous works in the areas of Asian American studies, Asian diaspora, psychoanalysis, critical race theory, queer studies and visual culture. For further information: http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/school/slc/news/index.shtml

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Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies

Australian Prime Ministers Centre Fellowship

Congratulations to Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland, who has been awarded an Australian Prime Ministers Centre Fellowship for her project ‘Bob Hawke and Malcolm Fraser: Australian Prime Ministers and the Campaign for Soviet Jewry’. Dr Rutland was one of eight recipients from a field of 22 applications.

Suzanne writes of the project;

One of the major issues of the twentieth century was the abuse of human rights in the former Soviet Union — an issue that particularly related to Soviet Jewry. Whilst Israel and the larger Jewish communities in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and France were the major players in the struggle for Soviet Jewry, the significance of Australia and its Jewish community was out of proportion with its small numbers. One reason for the effectiveness of Australia’s contribution was the key role played by two Australian Prime Ministers: Robert (Bob) J. Hawke and Malcolm Fraser. This project will focus on the actions of Fraser and Hawke in regard to this issue.

The fellowship extends to June 2009. As part of the project, Dr Rutland will work in the archives of Mr Isi Leibler in Israel, and spend two weeks researching in the National Archives of Australia in Canberra.

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dpt. news
The following departments and programs are located in the School of Languages and Cultures:

- Arabic & Islamic Studies
- Asian Studies Program
- Buddhist Studies (offered in conjunction with the Department of Studies in Religion)
- Chinese Studies
- European Studies Program
- French Studies
- Germanic Studies
- Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies
- Indian Subcontinental Studies
- Indonesian Studies
- International and Comparative Literary Studies Program
- Italian Studies
- Japanese Studies
- Korean Studies
- Modern Greek Studies
- Spanish & Latin American Studies

If you would like more information about the School of Languages and Cultures or would like to make an editorial enquiry please contact us on +61 2 9351 4505.

For further information on any of the articles in this issue, please contact us on:

T: +61 2 9351 2869
E: slc@usyd.edu.au