

# SOPHI Magazine



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

The School of Philosophical and Historical  
Inquiry Magazine

Building a philosophy  
of nature

Career placement  
experience

Archaeology in the  
Pacific

Philosophy behind  
bars



# Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry Magazine.



Julie-Ann Robson, our editor, has managed to put together a publication that not only gives a wonderful snapshot of some of the exciting and innovative work that our academics are engaged in, but also explores the range of our teaching and research. SOPHI is made up of different disciplines: Archaeology, Classics and Ancient History, Gender and Cultural Studies, History and Philosophy, and that diversity has created a lively and innovative intellectual community. It is a reputation, of which we are proud, and its success have been recently borne out by the fact that in 2015 members of SOPHI were the recipients of over 60% of the Australian Research Council awards across the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and over 10% of those awarded across the whole of the University of Sydney.

The articles in this magazine reflect that diversity whether it is rediscovering long ignored aspects of the Aboriginal past, connecting the experiences of marginalised communities to the western philosophical tradition or revealing how the humanities help us to better understand the ecological environment around us.

Associate Professor Richard Miles  
Head of the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry

However what these essays also highlight is how, despite this plethora of subject areas and approaches, as a School we coalesce around a passionate interest in humanity.

Our hope is that this magazine also underlines the importance of inclusiveness in our community both in our research and teaching activities. For instance, the project to examine the scientific and medical investigation of Aboriginal communities in the twentieth century brought together an ARC Laureate, an early career lecturer and a student currently finishing his BA, with each bringing distinct insights and value to the collaboration.

Lastly, new initiatives such as ArtSS Career-Ready and the Department of History's Social Inclusion project reflect our commitment to reaching out beyond the walls of this University into the communities that we serve and that sustain us. It seems to me that if this magazine proves one thing, it is that the humanities have never been as relevant as they are today.

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**Cover image:**  
Mask, Vanuatu, Musée du quai Branly  
(Image wiki commons)  
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# Building a philosophy of nature

Paul Griffiths

Paul Griffiths is Professorial Research Fellow and Associate Academic Director (Arts and Social Sciences) at the Charles Perkins Centre.

sydney.edu.au/arts/sophi

School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry



Research in philosophy can add to biological and biomedical knowledge. I'm a philosophy professor currently housed in the Charles Perkins Centre, the largest research centre at the University of Sydney, which takes a massively interdisciplinary approach to obesity and related lifestyle diseases. I lead a team of four philosophy research fellows, some PhDs and some undergraduate research projects, all funded by external granting agencies. The natural assumption is that because we are philosophers we cannot actually be contributing to the work of the centre, only observing and commenting upon that work.

But the philosophical questions that fascinate us are questions about the living world itself. Amongst the issues we currently work on are how to measure the relative importance of genetic, epigenetic and environmental

causes, to what extent the traditional idea of an organism needs to be revised, how evolutionary theory can be made to do practical work as a guide to more effective medical research, and how laypersons' ideas about genetic causation affect the reception of genetic research. Only the last of these is primarily a question about biological knowledge rather than about biology itself.

That last question reflects my career-long concern with why the nature/nurture dichotomy has proved so resilient despite its manifest shortcomings (one famous psychologist compared it to asking whether length or width is more important in determining the area of a rectangle!). This question attracts interest across many disciplines and our latest project is a collaboration with Dr Ilan Dar Nimrod in the Department



The Portuguese man o'war (commonly called 'bluebottle') is not a single multicellular organism, but a colony of individual organisms.

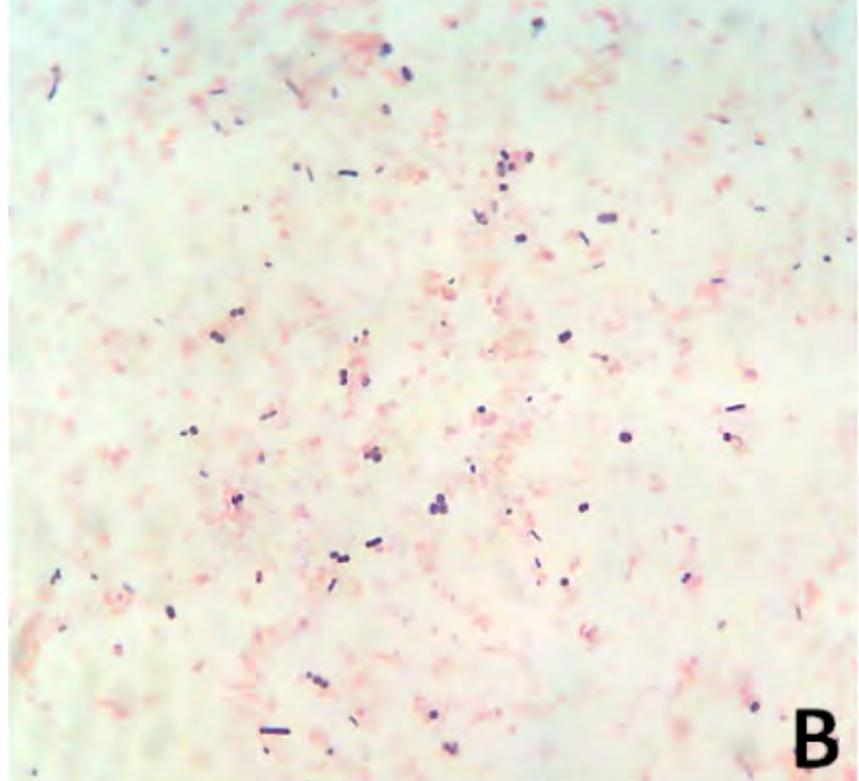
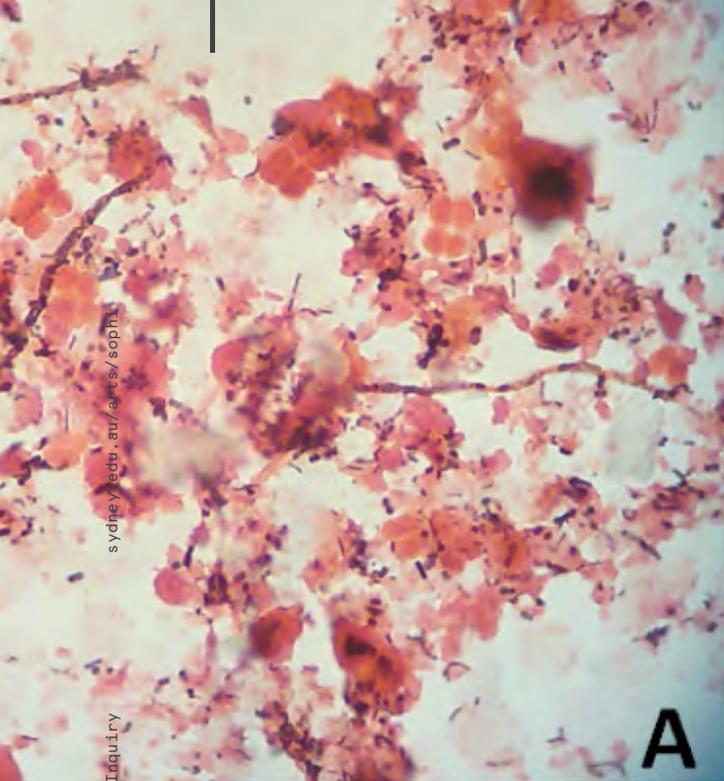
“The natural assumption is that because we are philosophers we cannot actually be contributing to the work of the centre, only observing and commenting upon that work...

But much of our work concerns living systems themselves, not the knowledge people make about them.”

**Paul Griffiths**

of Psychology and behaviour geneticist Kate Lynch at Macquarie University, funded by a new grant from the John Templeton Foundation. We will assess whether and how laypeople’s ideas about genetic causation of phenotypes influences their normative view of those phenotypes. For example, the belief that obesity is caused by genetic difference might decrease the stigma of obesity, or increase it, or do both, depending on other factors. Conversely, laypersons’ moral views affect their willingness to accept that certain human characteristics have genetic causes. We aim to tease out in more detail how these effects work and how we can work around them to better communicate what is actually known about human genetics.

But much of our work concerns living systems themselves, not the knowledge people make about them. For example, the source of order in living systems has been the key question at the boundary of biology and philosophy since the eighteenth century. Today it is widely believed that living systems differ from non-living systems because they are controlled by information, much of which has accumulated during evolution, and much of which is genetically transmitted. But there is at present no measure of biological information that can underpin this picture, a picture I once described as ‘a metaphor in search of a theory’. Research fellows Karola Stotz, Arnaud Pocheville, Brett Calcott and I are trying to fill that gap by grounding



Bacterial content of a fecal pellet demonstrates how an animal, plus its microbial symbionts, is the real unit of biological organisation.

the idea of biological information in contemporary philosophical work on the nature of causation. For example, the RNA transcribed from a gene can be cut and spliced to make a number of different gene products, sometimes thousands from a single gene. Which product is actually made can depend on environmental factors. We are combining ideas from the philosophy of causation with information theory to devise a meaningful way to compare the information that comes from the original DNA with the information that comes from the environment. In the process of answering this apparently purely biological question we have made substantial advances in the philosophy of causation. Translating definitions of causation into information-theoretic measures of causation forces us to confront issues that might otherwise be papered over with a clever phrase.

In another project, research fellow Pierrick Bourrat and I collaborate with the philosopher Peter Godfrey-Smith in the Faculty of Science and with

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microbiologists at Sydney and overseas to examine the currently fashionable idea that mammals like ourselves are in reality symbiotic associations of many different individual organisms, like jellyfish or corals. Triggered by dramatic discoveries about the essential role in human health of the trillions of microorganisms that live in and on each of us, the 'holobiont' concept proposes that an animal plus its microbial symbionts is the real unit of biological organisation. Philosophy is not the only humanities discipline that can illuminate this question. The history of biology and medicine can play a vital role in questioning the presuppositions of current theory and revealing roads that have not been taken, as Karola Stotz and I argued a decade ago in a manifesto calling for greater integration of history and philosophy of science with the biosciences.<sup>1</sup> This year I was able to teach alongside historian and Laureate Fellow Warwick Anderson and distinguished international colleagues at the Sydney International Postgraduate Winter School in History and Philosophy of Science. Our topic was Historical and Philosophical Dimensions of Biological Individuality. Re-reading the great biologists of the 19th and early 20th centuries as they tried to make sense of the many baffling ways in which living systems organise themselves proved a powerful approach to contemporary problems – just as any humanist should expect!

That philosophers can contribute to the biosciences is not really more surprising than that a statistician can contribute to the biosciences. Amongst the many questions that need to be answered in biology are some statistical questions and also some philosophical ones. Aristotle knew this, as did Kant.

Somehow 20th century philosophy convinced itself that while physics and psychology were full of philosophical questions biology was just plumbing. But that was last century.

The work of the Theory and Methods in Bioscience group at the Charles Perkins Centre is funded by grants from the Templeton World Charity Foundation, the John Templeton Foundation and the Australian Research Council. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of any of these funding bodies.

1 Stotz, K, and P.E Griffiths. "Biohumanities: Rethinking the Relationship between Biosciences, Philosophy and History of Science, and Society." *Quarterly Review of Biology* 83, no. 1 (2008): 37-45.



Professor Paul Griffiths

# Archaeology and Australia's Pacific neighbours

## James L. Flexner – new staff profile

**James Flexner** recently joined the Department of Archaeology. He is Lecturer in Historical Archaeology and Heritage.

Australia's east coast covers roughly 4500 kilometres of Pacific Ocean, with the majority of the nation's population living within a few hours' driving distance of the sea. Our nearest neighbours to the north and west are the Melanesian nations of Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Solomon Islands, Fiji, New Caledonia, and Vanuatu. The southern portions of the coast along the Tasman Sea likewise face a Polynesian nation, Aotearoa, or New Zealand, which shares a British settler history with Australia but is shaped by Maori culture, values, and language.

While Australia's leaders focus on China, the Middle East, or Europe in much of their political discourse regarding international affairs, it would be reasonable to say that Australia is nonetheless itself very much a Pacific country both in terms of its history and its contemporary orientation. Pacific Islanders were deeply involved with the development of Australia's economy, particularly in Queensland where they served as labourers in sugarcane plantations and other industries. In current policy, Australia commits considerable resources, including international aid, to its Pacific neighbours, particularly PNG (though the landscape of this is changing).

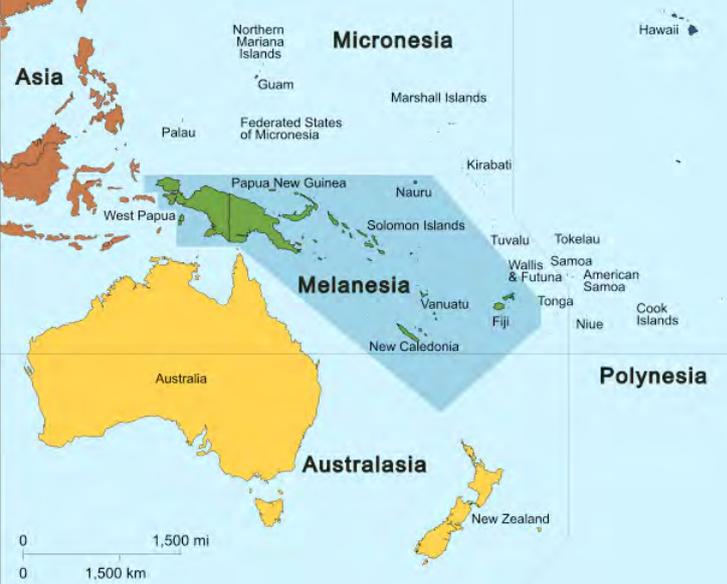
Pacific nations are generally small in terms of both land area and population, contributing to their lack of visibility on the international stage. Vanuatu, where I do my research, has a population

“Vanuatu, where I do my research, has a population of less than 300,000 inhabitants or roughly the same population as Wollongong spread among 86 populated islands.”

of less than 300,000 inhabitants or roughly the same population as Wollongong spread among 86 populated islands. Thus it's easy to forget sometimes about our near neighbours, small tropical islands just a few thousand kilometres or a short plane ride across the blue Pacific. When countries like PNG or Vanuatu do appear in the national news, the stories often relate to political corruption or natural disasters, such as the recent Tropical Cyclone Pam that struck Vanuatu in 2015 with winds topping 280 kilometres per hour. Most Australians who visit these small developing nations come seeking relaxation and an escape from the winter chill in a tropical paradise of sandy beaches, tropical breezes, and crystal blue waters.

### A rich history

What is generally not noticed or remarked upon is the rich and fascinating history of the Pacific “sea of islands” (a phrase coined by the Pacific scholar Eveli Hau'ofa), which seem to float in a timeless present upon the ocean waves. And what



My new collaborative project in Vanuatu, which I coordinate with Dr. Stuart Bedford (Australian National University) and Dr. Frédérique Valentin (Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique, France), explores the deeper 3000-year history of islands in TAFEA, with a special focus on the “Polynesian Outliers” of Futuna and Aniwa, as well as neighbouring areas of Tanna and Aneityum. The languages and customs of Futuna and Aniwa are very much “Polynesian” in nature, that is, they are closer to the language of Samoa or Tonga than those of the much closer neighbouring “Melanesian” islands Tanna, Erromango, and Aneityum. (Polynesia and Melanesia are modern geographical concepts that have a complex and somewhat problematic history, so take the division with a large grain of salt here.) My small vocabulary of Hawaiian words, picked up during my doctoral studies on Moloka’i Island, thus often translated easily to terms and phrases common in Futuna and Aniwa.

a remarkable history it is, filled with epic voyages on the open ocean, long histories of environmental learning, adaptation and management, and complex political struggles. The first written accounts of Melanesian history date mostly to the 1800s and early 1900s, appearing in translation in the works of missionaries and early ethnographers. Rich oral traditions can span even further backwards in time over the last 500 years or so. Before that, however, we must turn to the traces of everyday life that people left behind in the ground, in short, the archaeology of these islands. Archaeology also provides an important perspective on the unwritten histories of the more recent past.

My work in Vanuatu focuses on the archaeology of the southern TAFEA province (named for the five islands of Tanna, Aneityum, Futuna, Erromango, and Aniwa). Archaeology, and indeed all research to do with culture and history in Vanuatu, is a collaborative project. The Vanuatu Cultural Centre plays an instrumental role in organising with local communities to bring in foreign researchers (where necessary) to carry out projects that are of interest to and perceived as beneficial for Vanuatu’s people. Thus my first project, which studied the archaeology of early mission sites dating from the 1830s to the 1920s on Erromango and Tanna grew out of local interest in the history of Christianity, today as integral a part of Melanesian identities as weaving traditional mats or eating island foods such as yams or taro.

James Flexner excavating the mission house at Imua, Tanna, which was inhabited by Rev. John and Mrs. Mary Matheson from 1861-1862. We recovered a huge amount of material from this site, including 16.6kg of pottery sherds from a minimum of 36 vessels.

To understand why this is fascinating, it is worth briefly outlining the settlement of the region. Roughly 3000 years ago, people who made a distinct kind of pottery that archaeologists call “Lapita” (after a village on New Caledonia where the pottery was excavated in the 1950s; we have no idea what these people would have called themselves) spread rapidly throughout Island Melanesia. We find this pottery in an area spanning the Bismarck Archipelago in PNG, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. Part of the



they resulted in large-scale linguistic and cultural changes on some islands. Intriguingly there are some preliminary indications about the adoption of “Melanesian” chiefly political systems in Futuna and Aniwa, and influence of “Polynesian” rituals and beliefs on Tanna and Aneityum from linguistics and ethnography, but we still have to explore how this might have worked in historical terms. For this we must turn to the archaeology of the islands, as it is only in and on the ground that we can start to understand the long-term perspective.

There is also an important ethical component to this research. The first (and indeed last, until this year) archaeologists from the United States working on Futuna and Tanna excavated a number of cave sites in the 1960s, removing human burials as they did so. From one cave on Futuna, the archaeologists removed as many as 15 individuals. The bones of these skeletons ended up in the US, where they were mostly neglected (though some cursory studies were undertaken) until the 1990s when they returned to the National Museum of Vanuatu in Port Vila. Our project has the opportunity to repatriate these remains to the caves where they were found, allowing these ancestral beings to finally rest after a long sojourn. Because of the good relationships we are developing with the communities on Tanna and Futuna, we also have the opportunity to carry out cutting-edge scientific research including radiocarbon dating (which tells us how old the remains are), stable isotope analysis (which can tell us what people ate), and ancient DNA (which can tell us about people’s ancestry). It is this kind of collaborative environment that allows scientists and local communities to work together to forge new knowledge about Australia’s Pacific neighbours in ways that are imminently satisfying for all involved.

Acknowledgement: My ongoing research in Vanuatu is supported by an Australian Research Council Discovery Project Award (DP160103578) in partnership with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre.



reconnaissance on the beach in Aniwa.

current project also seeks these early Lapita sites, which have proven hard to find on Tanna, Futuna, and Aniwa.

In southern Vanuatu, people continued producing pottery for another 1000 years or so (indeed, excavations on Tanna this year found the first pottery from an early site in the north of the island), and then around 2000 years ago, they ceased doing so, probably swapping pottery containers for wood, basketry, coconut shells, gourds, and other materials. Some time within the last 1000 years, when these islands were already populated, another wave of canoes arrived, this time from the east, with people speaking a different language and having different customs to the existing inhabitants. These “Polynesian” people (again, we can’t know what they called themselves) settled on smaller or more remote islands, including Futuna and Aniwa, and it is here that I will focus my Vanuatu fieldwork for the next four years with colleagues and a small number of lucky Sydney students.

When did the Polynesian voyagers arrive? Did they come all at once in large groups of canoes, or was it a gradual flow of people, things, and ideas? What were the initial interactions like? It is unlikely that these voyages were accidental since



# Mosquitoes: health, environment and culture in Australia

Tess Lea

Department of Gender and Cultural Studies

**Tess Lea is part of a research group who have received funding from the Marie Bashir Institute for Infectious Diseases and Bio-security to examine cultural and policy understandings of mosquito risk. Here she outlines some of the questions the team will be asking.**

There is no question that mosquitoes are topical. Some athletes have boycotted the Rio Olympic Games over fears of Zika, an infectious disease which can cause in-vitro encephalitis. Mosquitoes are blamed for a mysterious flesh-eating disease stalking the affluent grounds of the Mornington Peninsula and the leafy suburbs of Melbourne in Victoria, bringing the tropics to the temperate zone in a frightening way.<sup>1</sup> Mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue remain a major cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, to the point where the mosquito has been declared the most deadly animal on the planet.

There are signs of significant changes in global mosquito-related disease patterns due to climate change, disinvestment in preventive programs, globalisation, and the encroachment of new urban development on mosquito habitats. Given these threats, it would be reassuring to think there is a coordinated national plan for dealing with mosquitoes, an approach which is informed by an exquisite sense of what has worked or failed in the past, and by an appreciation for the ecological niche filled by this highly adaptable, supremely aerodynamic and intriguingly feminist species (only the girls draw blood).

“Mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue remain a major cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, to the point where the mosquito has been declared the most deadly animal on the planet.”

**Tess Lea**



But what do we really know about how people respond to mosquitoes, as policy formulators or as citizens? A new University of Sydney research group have recently received seed funding from the Marie Bashir Institute for Infectious Diseases and Bio-security to explore cultural and policy understandings of mosquito risk. Professor Angus Dawson, Dr Chris Degeling, Professor Lyn Gilbert, Associate Professor Tess Lea and Dr Cameron Webb have joined forces to find out how the risks of mosquito-borne disease are being framed in Australian health policy and how this has changed over time, and whether there is a consistent approach to mosquito disease threats by local, state and federal government agencies.

How is the ecological role of mosquitoes in the local environment to be balanced with the need for mosquito population control? What do different communities in Australia think of mosquitoes and what does this mean for the future of mosquitoes, the environment and health? What are the likely social, cultural and political impacts of mosquito-borne risks to

“How is the ecological role of mosquitoes in the local environment to be balanced with the need for mosquito population control?”

**Tess Lea**

humans in Australia? Will ‘at risk’ communities and broader publics find it acceptable to use GM mosquitoes, bacterial controls and other emerging technologies to reduce mosquito reproduction? Do ‘at risk’ communities and broader publics have a preference for other methods, such as separation of human housing from breeding sites, and if so why?

1 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-08-05/flesh-eating-ulcer-spreading-to-melbournes-outskirts/7693106>

Culex mosquito larvae (with one pupa).



# Genocide, conflict and history

## Dirk Moses in profile

By Chris Hilliard, Department of History

**Dirk has just returned after five years at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, Italy.**

Dirk Moses, who recently returned to the University of Sydney as Professor of Modern History, is one of the world's leading historians of genocide. The very term implies that there are common patterns that make it meaningful to compare the Holocaust with 1990s Rwanda. But the enormity of these events makes it hard to think systematically about them. Much of Dirk's research has grappled with these questions, seeking to understand how the term genocide has been thought of since its invention by the Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin during the Second World War.

“I became interested in the different ways other societies face their dark pasts, however great the distinctions between them.”

**Dirk Moses**

Dirk is currently putting the finishing touches to a book on the origins and meaning of the genocide concept. This book is very much a history of ideas. Dirk is also working on another project, on humanitarian intervention in global conflicts since the late 1940s. That work complements the intellectual history, examining the ways claims of genocide motivated military intervention in a succession of international conflicts. In the course of this research, Dirk has worked on Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and south-east Asia. He has travelled a long way, literally and metaphorically, from the beginning of his career.

Dirk trained as a historian of Germany, completing his BA at the University of Queensland before going on to master's degrees at the University of St Andrews in Scotland and Notre Dame in Indiana, before earning his PhD at the University of California at Berkeley. The book that grew out of his PhD, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (2007), concerned a generation of West German intellectuals born during the Weimar Republic who had been adolescents or young men and women at the war's end. Either members of the Hitler Youth or soldiers, many of them experienced the military defeat and collapse of the Nazi regime in 1945 as a rupture that forced them to reorient their worldviews. 'It's no paradox,' Dirk remarks,





Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe, also known as the Holocaust Memorial.

‘that members of this generation, whom I called the “45ers”, became influential liberals and democrats from the 1960s; it was not despite but because of their youthful socialization in National Socialism that they became reformers, for they had to undertake the hard emotional and intellectual work to consciously develop an anti-Nazi worldview. That could take many forms, ranging from leftwing anti-fascism to liberal and conservative anti-totalitarianism, and they argued bitterly with one another about the “correct” answer to the Nazi past, as was predictable in a country on the frontline of the Cold War.’

These discoveries started Dirk on the road to breaking out of the frame of a nationally focused history. ‘Because the project was a study in how a post-genocidal society deals with the legacies of political guilt and criminality on a mass scale,’ he says, ‘I became interested in the different ways other societies face their dark pasts, however great the distinctions between them. These were common questions in light of the truth, justice, and reconciliation commissions in Latin America and South Africa at the time.’

Australia was wrestling with its own past during this period. The Bringing Them Home report on the stolen generations ‘sparked our own genocide debate’. Dirk contributed an article about frontier violence in Australia to one of the early issues of the *Journal of Genocide Research*. Dirk now edits the journal.

This was in 2000, and Dirk had just taken up a lectureship at the University of Sydney. He wanted to teach an undergraduate unit on comparative genocide. Finding no book on the subject in Australia to set for the students, he edited his own, *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*.

That unit, Genocide in Historical Perspective, has become one of the most popular in the history department. It’s now taught by Dr Marco Duranti, an expert on human rights and one of a cluster of international historians, like Dirk, whose research comes right up to the present. Teaching the Genocide class, Dirk was repeatedly impressed by the students’ sensitivity in dealing with difficult

“Never one to shy away from highly charged contemporary issues, Dirk has just finished teaching a senior unit on the Arab-Israeli conflict with colleagues from Jewish Studies and Arab Studies.”

**Chris Hilliard**

and troubling material. ‘Some of the students hail from families from the former Yugoslavia and discussed the war and massacres there in a scholarly way although national or ethnic differences could have come between them,’ Dirk notes. They took on the role of young researchers joined in the common project of understanding, and that is how it should be; not that this restraint or discipline was easy, especially when a close relative had been killed.’

Never one to shy away from highly charged contemporary issues, Dirk has just finished teaching a senior unit on the Arab-Israeli conflict with colleagues from Jewish Studies and Arab Studies. The students appreciate the multiple perspectives, he notes. ‘It equips them to make up their own minds about the contested questions of justice based a deep empirical understanding of the regions over the last 150 years. Regarding the value of an historical approach, we all saw that the conflicts and debates during the British Mandate period [1923-1948] were prototypical for today’s situation. A primary focus on the last few decades misses the deeper origins of the conflict’s enduring patterns and structures. As in the course on genocide, I have been impressed by the students’



One of six new images accredited to street artist Banksy in Bethlehem.

maturity in negotiating the varying perspectives on the subject. Rather than think in terms of slogans and the talking points they might have received at home or school, or the simplistic analyses and solutions proposed by newspaper commentators, they began to appreciate the dilemmas and multiple factors that constitute complex and longstanding conflicts.’

The Arab-Israeli Conflict has been the first unit Dirk has taught since his return to Sydney after five years as Professor of International and Global History at the European University Institute in Florence. ‘I learned much in this context, not least the ability to experiment with new topics, the value of co-teaching and exposure to the learning styles of different Europeans, which differ as much as the soccer styles of their beloved national teams.’ Dirk opted not to remain in Florence and declined an offer from a US university, to return to Sydney. ‘I’d sunk deep roots here,’ he says, ‘and I felt internationally competitive teaching and research were as possible here as anywhere else.’

**“Science is  
what you know.  
Philosophy is  
what you don't  
know.”**

**– Bertrand Russell**

# On the cutting edge of archaeology

## In the media: Peter Hiscock

Archaeologists have discovered part of the world's oldest axe in a remote part of the Kimberley.

Archaeology has the capacity to transform human views of ourselves. It was archaeological research in nineteenth century Britain and France that revealed humans were not specially created in the recent past but had evolved like other animals. Archaeological discoveries in early twentieth century first hinted at the African origins of our species (subsequently confirmed by modern genetic studies). And from the 1960s onwards archaeological excavations in Australia revealed that the evolution of Aboriginal societies was surprisingly different from European history, challenging the idea that all human societies developed along a single pathway.

One of the amazing Australian discoveries was the excavation of early polished (or ground) axes. Like modern steel axes these are specimens with symmetrical bevels forming the cutting edge, finished by polishing the surfaces so they cut cleanly and reduce the risk of breaking. In most parts of the world polished axes were first made only within the last 10,000 years and are associated with forest clearance for agriculture. But paradoxically in Australia, the land of hunters and gatherers rather than agriculturalists, polished axes were made far earlier. This was first realized in the 1960s when the famous South African

For decades researchers have talked about how unsophisticated the early technologies of Australia were, and yet now we have what has long been considered an elaborate technology from the dawn of human life in Australia.

**Peter Hiscock**

archaeologist Carmel Schrire excavated caves in Arnhem Land and found axes about 18-25,000 years old. As archaeologists began working in remote areas of Australia they found more axes at even earlier dates. Eventually Bruno David from Monash found an axe near Katherine that could be dated at almost 35,000 years ago. Until this year that was the earliest known axe.

In May I announced, with colleagues from around Australia, the discovery of a fragment from the world's oldest axe. This fragment came from an axe that had been



Peter Hiscock

made between 46,000 and 49,000 years ago. It was found in a rock shelter in the Kimberley region of Australia's northwest. The small object, about the size of a thumbnail, came from the bevel of an axe and retains the cutting edge produced by the junction of the two polished surfaces. It was a small but massively information rich object that tells us about the history of axe making technology. We infer that this little specimen came from an axe that was as versatile and as functionally effective as ones used at the start of the twentieth century, and we suggest this axe would have been hafted, probably by combining the stone axe with a wooden shaft, twine, sinew and/or gum to create elaborate composite tools.

This discovery is revolutionary and is attracting much attention. In our publication and in interviews we made the point that this find shows axes were being made here at about the same time human occupation in Australia began. Homo sapiens had evolved in Africa and we currently think they migrated out of Africa and arrived in Australia about 50-60,000 years ago. I think the axe fragment we announced is intriguing because it shows us that the ancestors of Aboriginal people were being innovative soon after they arrived here. My interpretation

“This discovery is revolutionary... we made the point that this find shows axes were being made here at about the same time human occupation in Australia began. Homo sapiens had evolved in Africa and we currently think they migrated out of Africa and arrived in Australia about 50-60,000 years ago.”

**Peter Hiscock**

is that this is evidence showing that in adapting to their new environments these migrating people created new tools, built from resources available in the landscape and designed to be used in that landscape. This is important because for decades researchers have talked about how unsophisticated the early technologies of Australia were, and yet now we have what has long been considered an elaborate technology from the dawn of human life in Australia. The fragment tells us a global story about the colonization of the world by humans as well as a local story of the novel adaptation of people to Australia.

The news frenzy that accompanied our announcement was impressive. The story was picked up by the BBC, the *Washington Post*, CNN, Reuters, Fox News, *Cosmos Magazine*, *The Hindu*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Black Christian News*, *National Geographic*, ABC, SBS, *Koori Mail*, and hundreds other outlets. The discovery struck the right note for many journalists and readers – it was a quirky story from an exotic locality that told what many thought was an unexpected tale. Often journalists interviewed people to get their response.

For example, the BBC quoted archaeologist John Shea from Stony Brook University who said “...it’s a cool find. Again and again, the archaeological record suggests these people were far more clever than past archaeologists were willing to give them credit for. The aboriginal Australian ancestors had a lot more complex technology than we think they did.”

Aboriginal people often reflected on the possible meaning of the find for their identity. The *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted Nolan Hunter, the chief executive of the Kimberley Land Council as saying “These are the direct ancestors of today’s Kimberley Indigenous people, and the evidence of the world’s earliest ground-edge stone axe shows that our people were leaders in technological innovation”. And June Oscar, leader of Bunuba traditional owners, said the find was further confirmation of her people’s ancient and enduring connection to the land.

The news coverage revealed the enthusiasm of the public for evidence about the ancient human past, as well as the eagerness of people to use archaeological information for contemporary social discussions. In this news rich world, archaeology has a renewed capacity to transform human views of ourselves.



The axe fragment dates back to a Stone Age period of 45,000 to 49,000 years ago.





From left, Senior Lecturer in Latin Dr Paul Roche; PhD Candidate Irene Stone; Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History Dr Robert Cowan.

## Classics never date

*Fortuna Audaces Iuvat: Fortune favours the bold. And the bold study Latin, Ancient Greek and the Classics.*

### Monica Crouch (BA(Hons) '95) finds out why.

The world's most widely spoken languages, in rough order, are Mandarin, Spanish, English, Arabic, Hindi and Russian. Latin and Ancient Greek don't make this list – they're not even among the top 100.

But dead? Hardly. The New Testament was written in Ancient Greek. *I, Claudius*, a mini-series about the Roman Empire, was big on the small screens in 1976. Remember *The Secret History*, Donna Tartt's bestselling novel from 1992? Her central characters were a group of classics students. *Harry Potter* author J K Rowling studied Latin and

based Dumbledore on one of her professors. Then there's *Gladiator* (2000), *Troy* (2004), and *300* (2006): all big blockbusters reflecting a lasting interest in the ancient world.

Even Westpac Bank has been known to seek out graduates with ancient languages on their CVs because of their problem-solving ability. Former Westpac chief executive Gail Kelly taught Latin in South Africa before embarking on her renowned banking career.

The University of Sydney isn't immune. Every year, the Department of Classics and Ancient History welcomes up to 100 students into its Latin and Ancient Greek programs, and more than 500 into its Ancient History units. The University's January Latin Summer School attracts more than 200 students aged 14 to 90 from across Australia. There are sold-out stagings of Greek tragedies and extracurricular Latin reading groups for students who wish to keep up their skills.

"People love Latin," Senior Lecturer in Classics Dr Bob Cowan says. "They have a massive appetite to learn it."

Senior Lecturer in Latin Dr Paul Roche agrees. “Latin is a blueprint for understanding other languages,” he says. “It’s behind French, Italian, Spanish and the other Romance languages.” PhD candidate Irene Stone (BA(Hons) ’12 DipLangStudies ’14), whose work focuses on speeches and speech making in Herodotus’s Histories, adds: “The ancient languages assist in the ability to write good English.”

The notion persists, however, that studying these languages is difficult. Dr Roche sees it differently. “Latin has a very clear grammar,” he says. “There are a lot of grammatical rules in Latin, and that initially takes a bit of getting used to. But once you’ve got them under your belt, you find the more rules a language has, the less ambiguity it has.”

Dr Roche has taught students who use Latin as a research tool for ancient history; those who are curious about the literature of the period; and English majors interested in the deep roots English has in Latin. “We have scientists and of course law students – a lot of the law’s technical terminology is in Latin,” he says.

Ancient languages are also a key that unlocks the classics. “This is the study of the great civilisations of Ancient Greece and Rome – their history, literature, archaeology,” Dr Cowan explains. “They are endlessly fascinating periods in themselves, but also have had an immense influence on Western – and world – civilisation ever since.”

Dr Cowan believes the classics are a great way to delve into the hearts of cultures that were simultaneously like our own and yet strangely alien. “One moment we feel as though we’re having a goblet of wine with Horace, discussing life and love,” he says. “The next we’re watching a Roman general cancel a battle because the sacred chickens aren’t eating their corn properly.”



Red figure neck amphora depicting Iphigenia and Pylades, a scene from the ancient Greek play Iphigenia at Tauris by Euripides. From Campania, Italy, 350–325BC. NMS1.17, Nicholson Museum.

For Dr Roche, the joy of Latin is in its literature. “It was produced by a group of people who had such a depth of feeling for the human experience,” he says, citing the poets Virgil and Horace as particular favourites. “They answered ethical questions that are still relevant today – they’re in the same category as Homer, Dante or Milton.”

Dr Roche is careful to point out that while we have this wonderful treasure trove of literature, it comes largely from a privileged male point of view, so we need to exercise caution when using these texts to recover the experience of women and minority groups such as slaves and foreigners. Even so, he adds, some female voices survive directly to us in the poetry of Sulpicia in Latin and Sappho in Ancient Greek.

Studying the classics embodies the University of Sydney principles of nurturing deep and specialised knowledge while exploring new

“One moment we feel as though we’re having a goblet of wine with Horace, discussing life and love,” he says. “The next we’re watching a Roman general cancel a battle because the sacred chickens aren’t eating their corn properly.”

**Paul Roche**

thinking. “Classics is the original interdisciplinary subject,” Dr Cowan says. “History, literature, philosophy, democracy, art, archaeology, politics, language, linguistics, theatre studies, gender studies – all are an integral part of classics.”

In person, all three of these scholars exude what Stone calls the “pure magic” of engaging with ancient texts in their original form. But in the more earthly realm of careers, where does a graduate with a classics degree go? “This sort of study – ancient history combined with an ancient language – ensures a student not only covers the exacting task of learning an ancient language, but also becomes adept at pinpointing and solving problems,” Stone says.

**First published in SAM Heritage, July 2016**

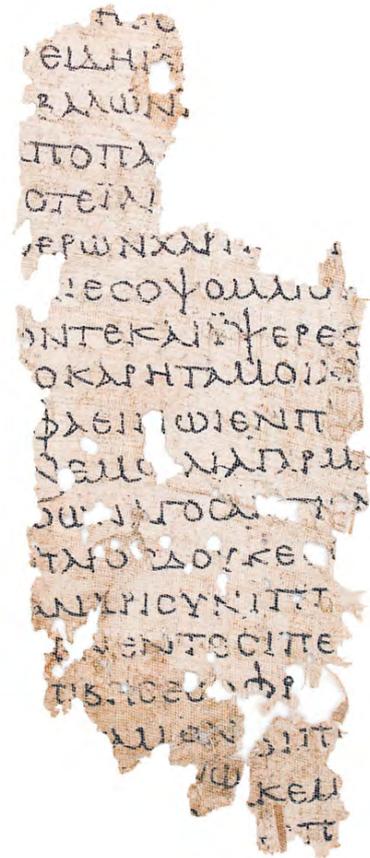
### Courses: brush up or begin

The Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Sydney offers a 10 percent discount for alumni attending its wide range of classics courses. Choose from ancient history, classical language classes, reading Latin for pleasure, courses on the Minoans and the Mycenaeans and an introduction to philosophy. For more information, please visit:

- [cce.sydney.edu.au/alumni](http://cce.sydney.edu.au/alumni)
- [cce.sydney.edu.au/courses/language-culture](http://cce.sydney.edu.au/courses/language-culture)
- [cce.sydney.edu.au/courses/arts-humanities/history](http://cce.sydney.edu.au/courses/arts-humanities/history)

Graduates go into law, commerce, public service, as well as academia and teaching, Dr Cowan says. Stone adds: “Any number of modern careers will benefit from a knowledge of ancient history, Latin or Greek – law, maths, architecture, medicine, international diplomacy.”

Fancy revisiting your classical studies or taking up a whole new interest? Carpe diem.



Fragment of The Iliad, an epic poem in Ancient Greek by Homer, written on papyrus. From Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, 2nd century AD. NMS35.5, Nicholson Museum.



Division 2

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# ArtSS Career-Ready

## A student's experience

### Kin Pan: Philosophy major

**Kin Pan** talks about his experience undertaking an ArtSS Career-Ready winter placement. ArtSS Career-Ready offers students in the faculty the opportunity to apply for competitive paid placements with organisations like ACON, Allianz, BT Investments, Challenger, Commonwealth Bank, KPMG, NSW Government, PwC, Telstra and Westpac, offered exclusively to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences students.

#### **Kin, you're undertaking a Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications) and Bachelor of Laws – what made you choose to do a major in Philosophy?**

Choosing to do a major in Philosophy has challenged me to think critically and autonomously. I enjoy the freedom to study a variety of topics, such as morality, which not only interest me but are important to society. I'm no longer surprised when something I've studied in a Philosophy class becomes useful in my study of Media and Communications and Law. I believe that the unique critical thinking and problem solving skills which are developed in Philosophy class are rewarding both professionally and intellectually.

#### **How did you hear about ArtSS Career-Ready?**

I heard about the ArtSS Career-Ready program through a Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Student eNews email. I had also heard about the program through word of mouth.

#### **What was the interview process like?**

After I sent my application to ArtSS Career-Ready, I was notified that I had been shortlisted. The shortlisted applications were forwarded to NSW Procurement. I then had a phone interview with NSW Procurement in which I was asked about my interests and skills, before being invited to a panel interview. Given that the Procurement role would focus on content strategy and

creation, I was encouraged to provide examples of video content and writing that I had produced. I was also asked various behavioural questions to see how I would fit into the organisation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I had an opportunity to learn more about the role and the work that NSW Procurement does.

**On its website, NSW Procurement says it is 'a world class organisation supporting government agencies to meet business outcomes, maximise value for money and create a competitive NSW economy'.**

#### **What project work did you do?**

Along with fellow intern Suji Jeong, I worked within the Capability Development Team on the creation of a Procurement



Kim Pan

Knowledge Community (similar to a Community of Practice). This involved researching the corporate social media landscape, collaborating with the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA), and developing a project plan for the successful launch of our Procurement Knowledge Community. We also helped develop digital content for this online community, such as shooting video interviews and writing up case studies.

**What aspects of your Bachelor of Arts degree do you think were most relevant to the work you were asked to do?**

The media production skills that I had developed in my Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications) were really important, and particularly my video production experience. Beyond that, the ability to think independently and problem solve was also useful due to the autonomous, project-based nature of the work to which I was exposed. That ability has been developed particularly through the practical media work I've done, and my study of philosophy.

**What's your take-away message about having undertaken the placement?**

My take-away message is to really consider and take advantage of any professional opportunities offered to you. Before the placement, I was a bit hesitant because I knew very little about either procurement or the public sector. Having now completed the placement, I'm really grateful to have had the opportunity to learn more about NSW Procurement. The whole experience has opened my mind to new career paths which I would not have even considered or known about if not for this placement. I feel as though that kind of information is invaluable to a university student who is not entirely sure about his or her future.

**Would you recommend applying for an ArtSS Career-Ready placement?**

If you'd like to learn more about how a Bachelor of Arts can translate into professional opportunities, I would certainly recommend applying for an ArtSS Career-Ready placement. I found my experience to be incredibly rewarding, with the opportunity to meet and collaborate with various professionals who are passionate about their roles and their contribution to NSW.

NSW Procurement is responsible for purchasing everything for the NSW Government, “from paper clips to helicopters.”

Ambulance service of NSW helicopter



# Philosophy behind bars

## An interview with Sam Shpall from the Department of Philosophy

Sam joined the University in 2016. He's particularly interested in the connection between philosophy and law, ethics and love and sexuality. For four years, Sam took philosophy behind the bars of New York's State Correctional Facilities, working with the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI).

### **You have worked in a number of prisons across New York State. Can you tell me something about the prison populations?**

Thanks so much for the opportunity to chat about these topics! The first thing I would note about our prison population is that it is overwhelmingly young men who are convicted of violent crimes in the United States—just as it is overwhelmingly young men who perpetrate acts of violence around the world. This is a striking demographic generalisation that we need to think about deeply. There are some obvious partial explanations of violence, like joblessness and disillusionment and alienation, but it is not easy to concoct simple remedies for unemployment and spiritual malaise. And there are other causes, like problematic conceptions of masculinity, which we are only beginning to understand.

Second, you can't talk about incarceration without talking about race. Communities of colour have been disproportionately impacted at every level of the American criminal justice system, from policing to lawyering to judging to sentencing to paroling. This is especially true for black communities. All I

“The Bard Prison Initiative creates the opportunity for incarcerated men and women to earn a Bard College degree while serving their sentences.”

[bpi.bard.edu](http://bpi.bard.edu)

can say here about this massive topic is that I really encourage people to read more about it.

Third, there are links between poverty and crime, just as there are links between poverty and lack of educational opportunities, inadequate public services, poor health outcomes, and other social ills. In some important senses the links between poverty and crime seem to be general ones, applying across various racial and ethnic categories. However, we also have to face up to the fact that our prison populations especially reflect the interlocking forms of marginalisation encountered by poor young people from particular social groups.

For example, many black communities are intensely segregated, largely as a result of decades of racist housing policy and white flight. I think this makes it easy for us to ignore what are ultimately shocking facts about unequal access to education, vital health services, and so on, even when we live in metropolitan areas that are on the whole demographically diverse. Perhaps this point will resonate with Australians familiar with the residential segregation of indigenous communities.

Finally, although women are much less likely to commit violent offenses, they are increasingly touched by more expansive law enforcement efforts, and by harsher sentencing regimes for drug and property crimes. There has been a 700% rise in the number of incarcerated women over the last quarter century in the United States. Most of these women are mothers.



All of this information is crucial, but I want to say something about my students as people, with concrete life histories and individual psychologies. Many of them faced tremendous hardships as children—abuse, neglect, poverty, contact with drugs and violence, etc. Many attended inadequate schools, and were funnelled through the “school to prison pipeline”: a pipeline of punitive discipline that pushes young people out of schools and into the ambit of juvenile and criminal justice. They made stupid decisions, sometimes grave and catastrophic decisions. Their choices affected innocent people, including their own beloved parents, spouses, and children. They are human beings who understand better than anyone else what they have done and the debts they owe. They have worked extremely hard to be admitted to BPI. They recognize that college in prison is a special opportunity and they take it seriously. Never before have I encountered such engaged and appreciative students.

**You have taught some of New York’s most disenfranchised people about political philosophy. How did the students respond?**

I appreciate your noting the irony of having disenfranchised people engage in the project of political philosophy, which I think of as a more foundational kind of democratic participation than, say, voting.

My students responded in exactly the way I hoped and expected. My classes, in and out of prison, are dialogues. I am very invested in the Socratic ideal of active inquiry. My BPI students were energized by the argumentative vibe of our conversations, and there was a real bond that developed because the discussions were so fraternal and good-spirited. Several told me that it was disorienting, at first, to feel that their opinions and perspectives mattered. It was moving to see a sense of intellectual agency developing with this affirmation, and contributing to feelings of purpose and self-worth. It made me even more firmly convinced of the emancipatory potential of the life of the mind.

I have to say that I find felon disenfranchisement both shameful and counterproductive. It is shameful because wrong-doing citizens are still subject to the laws of our society, and part of the ideal of democratic legitimacy is that when we break the law and get punished, our punishment is in a real sense self-inflicted. When we intentionally undermine this important ideal it is an occasion for shame. More important, disenfranchisement is just bad policy. It has negligible deterrent value, whereas enfranchisement has real utility in promoting pro-social behaviour. People who feel a sense of ownership in their government are less likely to commit crimes.



Sam Shpaull

Many of us think of felons as people who have forfeited their rights and been banished from the polity. This is misguided. The vast majority will return to our communities, having paid dearly for their mistakes, looking desperately for a chance to work and to make amends. Rational and compassionate policymaking would capitalise on every chance to encourage positive behaviour like political participation.

**You must have introduced your students to some interesting philosophy – which philosophers and concepts did they respond to most?**

They liked almost everything! But two experiences were especially memorable. First, I taught Susan Okin’s book *Justice, Gender, and the Family* in a women’s prison, and the famous chapter on “Vulnerability by Marriage” blew their minds. It gives a classic analysis of how injustice permeates the family structure, and does so in a way that is both accessible and profound. One of my students summed it up in class: “Sam, I just want to say thank God for the feminist movement.”

Second, teaching Elizabeth Anderson’s book *The Imperative of Integration* in two maximum-security men’s prisons was an incomparably interesting and meaningful experience. Anderson presents a masterful diagnosis of black-white inequality in America, and a subtle overall argument about how it threatens the legitimacy of our democracy. So many threads of this rich book resonated with my students. It was an inspiring example of how philosophical theorizing can touch everyday problems, and make us feel that

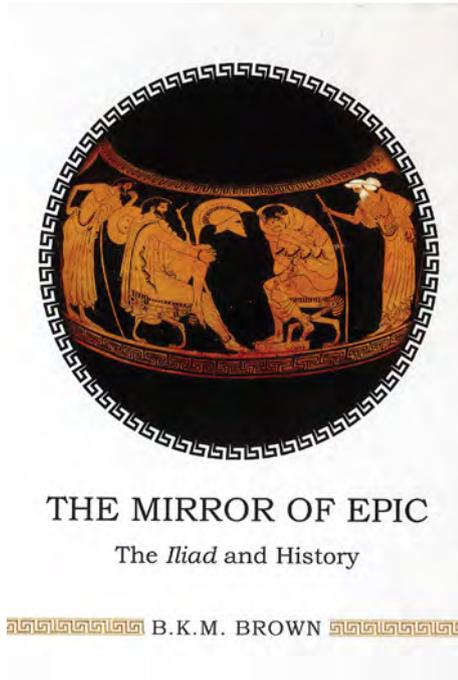
fundamental but largely unarticulated aspects of our worldview are finally getting expressed.

**You’ve said that philosophy can be vital to our everyday lives as social and political beings—and it seems like it was for at least some of your BPI students. I know you are relatively new to Australia, but do you see any opportunities for philosophical thinking to have an impact on our political discourse?**

I don’t think we should feel beholden as thinkers to cost-benefit analysis or an obsession with practical outputs. But you are right that I do conceive of philosophy as a kind of intellectual gymnastics: it involves creativity, flexibility, and precision in the exercise of our minds. So I think of the discipline as involving a kind of implicit training for citizenship. Just this month we’ve confronted chilling visions of juvenile detention in the Northern Territory. It is time to reflect on the aims and methods of punishment—hopefully, in my view, to move as a society towards a more rehabilitative model, and away from methods that are both illegal and an assault on human dignity.

Similarly, it is time to have a more informed and sophisticated conversation about Australia’s harsh treatment of asylum seekers. The dominant political parties remain stubborn in the face of international condemnation, largely because the Australian public supports them. But the government’s “deaths at sea” argument for its current policies is a bad argument. (Interested readers might check out the recent *Academics for Refugees Policy Paper* for some important criticisms.) As people get more information about Nauru and Manus Island, and think more carefully about the meaning of current policies for Australia’s democracy, I am confident that opinions will change. And I am hopeful that lots of Sydney Uni students will be among the thoughtful, open-minded people making strides forward on these and other issues.

# Selected publications

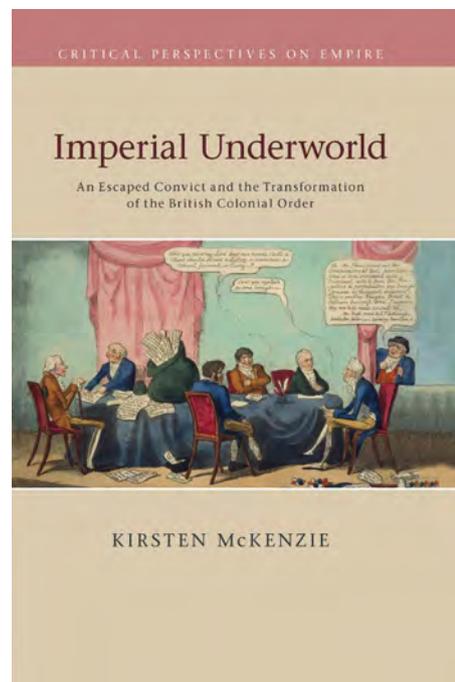


**Ben Brown (Classics and Ancient History)**  
***The Mirror of Epic: The Iliad and History***  
**Academic Printing and Publishing, 2016.**

In order to treat the *Iliad* as historical evidence one must first consider the interpretative implications of its performance as an historical event. Combining Bourdieu’s theory of practice with Baudrillard’s concept of symbolic exchange, Brown approaches the *Iliad* as the trace of a historically motivated speech act whose ritual function was to distil new social possibilities from the context of its performance. In its narrative performance the *Iliad* charts a passage from stasis to funerary agon giving shape to emergent discourses about value and subjectivity. In essence an aetiological narrative, whose performance realizes what it utters, the *Iliad*, Brown argues, stages the foundation of political society.

**Kirsten McKenzie (History)**  
***Imperial Underworld: An Escaped Convict and the Transformation of the British Colonial Order***  
**Cambridge University Press, 2016**

During a major overhaul of British imperial policy following the Napoleonic Wars, an escaped convict reinvented himself as an improbable activist, renowned for his exposés of government misconduct and corruption in the Cape Colony and New South Wales. Charting scandals unleashed by the man known variously as Alexander Loe Kaye and William Edwards, *Imperial Underworld* offers a radical new account of the legal, constitutional and administrative transformations that unfolded during the British colonial order of the 1820s. This is a narrative rife with daring jail breaks, infamous agents provocateurs, and allegations of sexual deviance. Such colourful and salacious aspects of colonial administrations cannot be separated from the real business of political and social change.



## Miranda Johnson (History)

### *The Land is Our History: Indigeneity, Law and the Settler State*

Oxford University Press, 2016.

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*The Land Is Our History* tells the story of indigenous legal activism at a critical political and cultural juncture in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. In the late 1960s, indigenous activists protested assimilation policies and the usurpation of their lands as a new mining boom took off, radically threatening their collective identities. Often excluded from legal recourse in the past, indigenous leaders took their claims to court with remarkable results. For the first time, their distinctive histories were admitted as evidence of their rights.

Miranda Johnson examines how indigenous peoples advocated for themselves in courts and commissions of inquiry between the early 1970s to the mid-1990s, chronicling an extraordinary and overlooked history in which virtually disenfranchised peoples forced powerful settler democracies to reckon with their demands.

“An important book, *The Land is Our History* offers critical insights into the tensions between white settler colonialism and indigenous peoples in the struggle over land. Over the last thirty years, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada shifted from policies of assimilation to recognition of indigenous claims to land. This book traces the structures of power which dispossessed indigenous peoples from their lands at the same time as it recognizes the capacity of indigenous leaders and particular judges and lawyers to change this trajectory. It brilliantly shows the capacity of law to offer, from time to time, power to the powerless, to those who have moral claims but lack economic and political power.”

Sally Engle Merry

New York University

THE LAND IS OUR HISTORY



Indigeneity, Law, and the Settler State

MIRANDA JOHNSON

**David Brophy (History)**

***Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier***

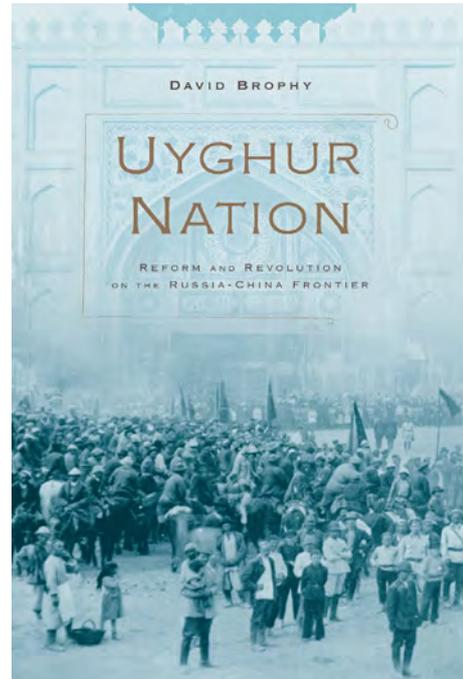
**Harvard University Press, 2016**

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The meeting of the Russian and Qing empires in the nineteenth century had dramatic consequences for Central Asia's Muslim communities. Along this frontier, a new political space emerged, shaped by competing imperial and spiritual loyalties, cross-border economic and social ties, and the revolutions that engulfed Russia and China in the early twentieth century. This book explores how a community of Central Asian Muslims responded to these historic changes by reinventing themselves as the modern Uyghur nation.

As exiles and émigrés, traders and seasonal laborers, a diverse diaspora of Muslims from China's northwest province of Xinjiang spread to Russian territory, where they became enmeshed in political and intellectual currents among Russia's Muslims. From the many national and transnational discourses of identity that circulated in this mixed community, the rhetoric of Uyghur nationhood emerged as a rallying point in the tumult of the Bolshevik Revolution and Russian Civil War. Working both with and against Soviet policy, a shifting alliance of constituencies invoked the idea of a Uyghur nation to secure a place for itself in Soviet Central Asia and to spread the revolution to Xinjiang. Although its existence was contested in the fractious politics of the 1920s, in the 1930s the Uyghur nation achieved official recognition in the Soviet Union and China.

Grounded in a wealth of little-known archives from across Eurasia, *Uyghur Nation* offers a bottom-up perspective on nation-building in the Soviet Union and China and provides crucial background to the ongoing contest for the history and identity of Xinjiang.



“Nothing I have read in the last fifteen years comes close to this work in terms of intellectual breadth, rigorous analysis, and contribution to the field. This book will not only revolutionize thinking about the history of the Uyghur nation and the political history of Xinjiang during this period, it will set a new bar for future scholarship and inspire readers to think again about the processes, challenges, and opportunities within shifting political landscapes that lead to the creation of nations.”

**Laura Newby**

University of Oxford

# News and Events

Archaeology?  
Classics and Ancient History?  
Gender and Cultural Studies?  
History?  
Philosophy?

Whatever your interest there's always something happening at SOPHI. Our staff are in the news, on the airwaves, at the festivals and in the media. We have all sorts of events – everything from Sydney Ideas to Summer Schools in Greece and Rome.

As part of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, SOPHI has a vibrant culture, and we look forward to meeting you.



History graduate Noel Pearson and philosopher Jonathan Lear in conversation at a Sydney Ideas event.

## Sydney Ideas

Think again

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## What is SOPHI?

The School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry (SOPHI) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences is home to the Departments of Archaeology, Classics and Ancient History, Gender and Cultural Studies, History and Philosophy, as well as the Centre for Time and the Centre for Classical and Near Eastern Studies in Australia (CCANESA).

At SOPHI we aim to enrich your knowledge and improve your skills. We help you develop the attributes that make our graduates so highly sought-after: critical thinking; the ability research; to synthesise complex information into a concise and convincing narrative; to formulate a clear and logical argument; and to offer innovative approaches to problem solving. Our students are curious and passionate about their studies and our graduates go on to extraordinary careers in a wide range of fields.

– [sydney.edu.au/arts/sophi](https://sydney.edu.au/arts/sophi)

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