

Exploring Intersections of Media, Law, Communication and Crime

Wednesday, September 25th, 2024

8:30am-18:00pm

**Hosted by the School of Media and Communication and the
School of Law and Criminology, Murdoch University**

Location: 360.3.002 Innovation Hub, Boola Katitjin

Organising Team: Dr Greg Martin and Dr Lauren O'Mahony

Exploring Intersections of Media, Law, Communication and Crime Symposium

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® = remote presentation

*All times are Australian Western Standard Time (AWST)

8:30 - 9:00	Registration and Coffee
9:00 - 9:05	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country
9:05 - 10:45	<p>Session 1</p> <p>Media, climate and the court: Australian media coverage of climate litigation – Claire Konkes (UTAS) ®</p> <p>Wieambilla: How Australian news media narratives contextualise extremist ideologies and crime – Peita Richards (Charles Sturt University)) and John Gaffey (Charles Sturt University)) ®</p> <p>Abhorrent violent materials: Regulations, responsibilities and restrictions on access for researchers vis-à-vis commercial actors – Peita Richards (Charles Sturt University)) and Mark Nolan (Charles Sturt University) ®</p> <p>Children’s ‘playbour’ as influencers on social media: An investigation into the legal and ethical issues surrounding kidfluencers – Catherine Archer (Edith Coawn University) and Kate Delmo (UTS) ®</p> <p>Teaching ‘crimes of the powerful’: Reflections on the media and corruption – Ruth Delaforce (Charles Sturt University)</p>
10:45 - 11:15	Morning Tea
11:15 - 13:00	<p>Session 2</p> <p>Show of force: Exploring identities and narratives in police podcasts – Alyce McGovern (UNSW)</p> <p>Podcast production and ethical considerations in crime reporting: An analysis – Kylie Sturgess (Murdoch University)</p> <p>Charting the media journey of the Post Office scandal – Greg Martin (Murdoch University), Lauren O’Mahony (Murdoch University) and Rebecca Scott Bray ® (USYD)</p> <p>Too much noise: People seeking asylum and the struggle to speak a different language – Anne Surma (Murdoch University)</p> <p>If it looks like violent extremism, and acts like violent extremism: Examining the framing of two stabbing attacks in Sydney – Sian Tomkinson (Independent Researcher) and Tael Harper (Murdoch University)</p>

13:00 - 13:45	Lunch
13:45 - 15:30	Session 3
	Why do Indonesian police torture thieves? – Jacqui Baker (Murdoch University) and Rus'an Nasruddin (Universitas Indonesia)
	Examining contemporary media recruitment campaigns by criminal justice government agencies – Phillipa Evans (UNSW) and Alyce McGovern (UNSW)
	Simulating death-knocks: Bridging the gap between journalistic ethics and professional practice – Tiffany Fox (Murdoch University)
	Enigma of the dark: The Claremont serial killings and journalism as practice – Mary-Anne Romano (Murdoch University)
	Writing the law – Josephine Wilson (Murdoch University)
15:30 – 16:00	Afternoon Tea
16:00 – 17:45	Session 4
	Law at the margins: Police encounters, public criminals and affective communication in India – Alok Ranjan (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India) ®
	From partition necropolitics to digital biopolitics: Reincarnation of resistance in online archival narratives of the 1947 Partition Archive – Rahul Gairola (Murdoch University) ®
	Analysing crime at the intersections of media and political communication. Travelling concepts as an analytical tool – Dörte Negal (Universität Siegen, Germany) ®
	Podcasting and corporate crime: Challenging dominant representations – Jana Macfarlane Horn (Open University, UK) ®
	'If you're out there, just come home': The use of media appeals, detecting deception and progressing missing persons cases – Yasmin Richards (Murdoch University) ® and David Keatley (Murdoch University)
17:45 – 18:00	Close
19:00	Dinner (venue to be confirmed)

Presentation Abstracts

Session 1

Media, climate and the court: Australian media coverage of climate litigation

Claire Konkes (University of Tasmania)

Urgent action on climate change is one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and social movements are increasingly turning to the courts to provide “bottom up” pressure on governments to meet their international obligations under the Paris Agreement. Most cases are filed in the United States, followed by Australia. By offering an overview of Australian news media coverage of climate litigation, this contribution explores how media coverage is informing public perception and awareness of climate-related court cases and their significance in the broader context of environmental advocacy.

Biography

Dr Claire Konkes is a Senior Lecturer in Media at the University of Tasmania. Previous work as a journalist and environmental campaigner informs her research into the involvement of news and other media in the development of environmental policy and law. Her latest book, *Green Lawfare: The strategic use of law in mediatized environmental conflict* (2024), explores how news and other media contribute to our expectations and hopes for the role of law during environmental conflict.

Wieambilla: How Australian news media narratives contextualise extremist ideologies and crime

Peita L. Richards and John Gaffey (Centre for Law and Justice, Charles Sturt University)

The Wieambilla ambush in December, 2022, can be reviewed in three stages: the attack itself; the initial search for motive, with strong references to sovereign citizen ideology; and the classification of the event as domestic terrorism driven by pre-Millennialism Christianity. A discourse and sentiment analysis of 698 headlines retrieved from the Factiva Database reveal that the trajectory of media reporting did not necessarily reflect the official record of events. A narrative that focused on pro-social characteristics of the perpetrators, a tale of good people driven to their end, dominated. The articles construct a profile which is more relatable to the average reader, and whilst the audience may not necessarily empathise with the brutality of their actions, reporting undertook a sustained effort to normalise the pathway to extreme actions. It will be argued that the success of this narrative is reflected in a 36-hour limited news cycle, when the event was officially classified as religiously motivated domestic terrorism; and the continued identification of anti-government actors, under the umbrella of sovereign citizens, as prevailing motivation. It will also consider the impacts of mis-information on future policy directions and political reactions.

Biography

Dr Peita Richards is a research fellow in the Centre for Law and Justice at Charles Sturt University. Her current research is funded by the Office of National Intelligence. Peita draws on an interdisciplinary academic background to examine how social identities are developed and performed across emerging communication technologies. Peita has a continued interest, and background in, international relations, security and law.

Dr John Gaffey is a senior lecturer in Criminology in the Centre for Law and Justice at Charles Sturt University. John's research interests are in crime and the media, focussing on risk communication. John's recent research has examined the role of expert knowledge versus non-expert knowledge in risk communication.

Abhorrent Violent Materials: Regulations, Responsibilities and Restrictions on Access for Researchers vis-à-vis Commercial Actors

Peita Richards and Mark Nolan (Centre for Law and Justice, Charles Sturt University)

With social media becoming an increasingly popular data source for academic research, we consider the legal restrictions, modes of accessibility and responsibilities that come with analysing Abhorrent Violent Material online. This paper will consider the challenges that governments face in protecting citizens from exposure to such materials, as well as the potential for its exploitation by extremist organizations. At the same time, however, we will consider the obstacles this presents to researchers, where AVM scrubbing can result in incomplete data sets and risks findings which are unknowingly inaccurate, particularly for emerging scholars. We debate the avenues of access to individuals accredited with academic institutions to such data in the advancement of empirical based research to analyse and potentially model risk assessment tools; as well as the commercialisation of data by organisations such as X and META. With the current directive by the High Court that Australia cannot extend its own bans on AVM to a global audience, international jurisdictions, and responsibilities globally will remain at the forefront of this debate.

Biography

Dr Peita Richards is a research fellow in the Centre for Law and Justice at Charles Sturt University. Her current research is funded by the Office of National Intelligence. Peita draws on an interdisciplinary academic background to examine how social identities are developed and performed across emerging communication technologies. Peita has a continued interest, and background in, international relations, security and law.

Professor Mark Nolan is Director of the Centre for Law and Justice at Charles Sturt University and is an interdisciplinary law and psychology academic with interests in (federal) criminal law (especially counter-terrorism law), military discipline law, violent extremism studies, and social psychology (especially of social identity processes and practice).

Children's 'playbour' as influencers on social media: An investigation into the legal and ethical issues surrounding kidfluencers

Catherine Archer (Edith Cowan University) and Kate Delmo (University of Technology Sydney)

The legal and ethical concerns around children performing as social media influencers (SMIs) on various social media platforms have been in the spotlight recently with the airing of the Four Corners programme, *Kidfluencers*. Social media influence is big business across the globe, with organisations investing in working with influencers to promote their brands and/or ideas. More recently, some children now 'work', often managed by their parents, to produce posts that promote brands and ideas on behalf of organisations – often to children, but also to adults. This paper, through two extreme case studies of SMI children and a content analysis of Instagram posts, reveals the key legal and ethical concerns related to children working as SMIs. While laws were introduced in the last century aimed to protect children working in the entertainment industry, there are currently no laws in Australia that cover the paid work done by children as influencers on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.

Biography

Dr Catherine Archer is a researcher and senior lecturer specialising in social media and strategic communication at Edith Cowan University (ECU). Catherine researches the impact of social media and other digital communication on families, organisations and society. Catherine has led major research projects for Australian organisations and is an Associate Investigator with the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child. She is Academic Lead for the Communication and Culture Group within ECU's School of Arts and Humanities, and the Course Co-ordinator for the Masters of Communication.

Dr. Kate Delmo is the Head of Strategic Communication Discipline in the School of Communication, University of Technology Sydney. She teaches into the postgraduate and undergraduate programs in Strategic Communication. Her research interests explore the intersection of data, technology, and people. She investigates social media influencers in reshaping cultures and empowering change. Broadly, Kate is intrigued by the role that digital technology plays in encouraging stakeholder coordination and engagement particularly in emergency and disaster resilience. Anchored in the UN Sustainable Development Goals on Sustainable Communities and Climate Action, her projects examine the ecology of crisis, emergency, and disaster risk resilience.

Teaching 'Crimes Of The Powerful:' Reflections On The Media And Corruption

Ruth Delaforce (Charles Sturt University)

How do we engage criminology students in understanding crimes committed by those in power? This is a reflective presentation on one approach, in a criminal justice degree at a regional Australian university. The subject is delivered to third year students, reviewing the limits of criminal justice and law, and the role of both traditional and social media. Misinformation, propaganda and investigative journalism are examined through international case studies, focusing on what is meant by 'power' and how it is wielded. Concepts of official discourse and hierarchies of credibility are reviewed in the 1989 Hillsborough disaster and traditional media's presentation of victims. Then, a contrasting approach is undertaken, where traditional and social media are integral to the exposure of corruption and the risks for journalists who investigate such crimes are noted. Students become investigators, explicating the limits of both media and law in crimes that may never result in 'justice.'

Biography

Dr Ruth Delaforce is a Lecturer in Criminology and Policing at the Centre for Law and Justice, Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Charles Sturt University. Her research interests include the military-crime nexus, private military and security companies, plural policing, transnational organised crime, insurgency and counterinsurgency studies. Dr Delaforce is an Associate Editor of *Salus* Journal. Prior to entering academia, Dr Delaforce was employed in the private and public sectors, and law enforcement.

Session 2

Show of Force: Exploring Identities and Narratives in Police Podcasts

Alyce McGovern (UNSW)

It is well established in the literature that modern police forces have become interested in and adept at managing their image in the media (see Lee and McGovern 2014; Mawby 1999). This has manifested in myriad 'image work' activities ranging from the establishment of public relations branches within police forces through to police engagement with 'observational documentary' style television series and social media platforms. In this paper I will consider the more recent move of policing agencies into the world of podcasting. This evolution in police image work has seen several Australian police forces produce podcast series that purport to 'shine a light' on or offer 'a rare glimpse' into the 'real world' of policing. Exploring how such podcasts construct identities of police and narratives of policing, the paper will provide a preliminary understanding of how police present themselves and the work they do to the public using this contemporary media format. In doing so, it will highlight the continued importance of criminological interrogation of police media work in the context of recent conversations on the proliferation of copspeak (Correia and Wall 2018) and Copaganda (Karakatsanis 2022).

Biography

Dr Alyce McGovern is an Associate Professor of Criminology and Program Director for the Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice in the School, of Law, Society and Criminology, Faculty of Law and Justice at UNSW Sydney. She lives and works on unceded Bidjigal land. Alyce's research explores intersecting themes of crime, media and culture, including police-media relations and police image work, and knitting graffiti and craftivism. She is the author of *Craftivism and Yarn Bombing: A Criminological Exploration* (2019, Palgrave), and co-author of *Policing and Media: Public Relations, Simulations and Communications* (2014, Routledge) and *Sexting and Young People* (2015, Palgrave).

Podcast Production and Ethical Considerations in Crime Reporting: An Analysis

Kylie Sturgess (Murdoch University)

Spinelli and Dann (2019) posit that *Serial* (2014), a prominent true crime podcast, extends beyond conventional murder investigations. They contend that the podcast diverges from established journalistic ethics prevalent in traditional media, emphasizing transparency and self-reflection on-air. Its intent is to challenge established professional norms in crime reporting. However, does this assertion hold true for the broader spectrum of crime podcasts? The accolades received by *RedHanded* (2017), winner of the British Podcast of the Year in 2023, along with the record-breaking performances of *Casefile True Crime* (2016) and *The Mushroom Cook* (2024) in online listening statistics in Australia, suggest a significant audience appeal for crime-themed content. Moreover, the televisual success of *Only Murders in the Building* (2021) further underscores the popularity of the genre. Nevertheless, amidst this popularity, questions emerge regarding the ethical framework guiding the creation and consumption of such podcasts. This is an investigation of trends in the medium from 2014 to now, including the results of an informal pilot survey conducted on the motivations of true crime podcasters. Reflection on ethical concerns suggests that there needs to be a formal or more rigorous framework that surrounds these podcasts. In this paper I discuss some of the main considerations that podcast producers should use to guide their practice, including matters of consent, privacy, romanticised content and publishing.

Biography

Dr Kylie Sturgess is a lecturer in Global Media and Communication at Murdoch University. Much of Kylie's research focuses on narrative structure, popular podcasts, media education, philosophy and popular beliefs. Her PhD research analysed how podcasting and blended learning can combine to guide the creation of educational podcasts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Her research has been published in *Personality and Individual Differences*, the *Journal of Radio and Audio Media*, *The Conversation website* and *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Radio* (2023). Kylie occasionally appears on radio and television as a science communicator, discussing pseudoscientific and paranormal beliefs as the "Token Skeptic".

Charting the media journey of the Post Office scandal

Greg Martin (Murdoch University), Lauren O'Mahony (Murdoch University) and Rebecca Scott Bray (University of Sydney)

Characterised as the most widespread miscarriage of justice in British legal history, the Post Office scandal has been brewing over 20 years, ever since 2000 when Fujitsu installed an automated accounting system named Horizon at Post Office branches across the United Kingdom (UK). Flaws in Horizon were minimised and covered-up by Post Office and more than 900 subpostmasters and subpostmistresses (SPMs) running branches across the UK were prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned for theft and false accounting. Over 15 years, there has been intermittent media interest in the story, and in 2021 a statutory public inquiry was established – a courtroom drama live streamed via YouTube – following the successful High Court appeal of 555 SPMs in December 2019. However, the 'media journey' of the scandal shifted radically when it exploded into public view with the airing of ITV's docudrama, *Mr Bates vs The Post Office*, for four consecutive nights in early January 2024. The broadcast dramatizing the struggle of the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance led by Alan Bates caused more than a million people to sign a petition in support of SPMs, after which the British government announced the introduction of legislation to exonerate and compensate SPMs. This paper uses a version of the media effects model to consider why, despite prior media attention, *Mr Bates vs The Post Office* had such a significant impact on the scandal.

Biography

Greg Martin is currently Associate Dean Research and Innovation in the School of Law and Criminology at Murdoch University. He is the author of *Understanding Social Movements* (2015) and *Crime, Media and Culture* (2019), and co-editor of *Secrecy, Law and Society* (2015) and *The Emerald International Handbook of Activist Criminology* (2023). His latest book is *Social Movements and Protest Politics*, 2nd edition (2024). He is a founding co-editor of the book series Emerald Studies in Activist Criminology, Associate Editor of *Crime Media Culture*, and a member of editorial boards for *Social Movement Studies* and *The Sociological Review*.

Lauren O'Mahony is a Senior Lecturer in Communications at Murdoch University, Western Australia. Her research focusses on Australian women's literature as well as media analysis, media audiences, and creativity. Her research has been published in *The Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *The Journal of Popular Romance Studies*, *Communication Research and Practice*, and *Text Journal* as well as the edited books *Theorizing Ethnicity and Nationality in the Chick Lit Genre* (2019), *The Routledge Research Companion to Popular Romance Fiction* (2021), *Interrogating Boundaries of the Nonhuman* (2022) and *Difficult Death, Dying and the Dead in Media and Culture* (2024). In 2023, *Creativity and Innovation: Everyday Dynamics and Practice* (co-authored with Terence Lee and Pia Lebeck) was published by Springer books.

Rebecca Scott Bray is Associate Professor of Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies in the School of Social and Political Sciences at The University of Sydney, Australia. She works at the intersection of law, criminology and socio-legal death studies, with a focus on issues around death and the dead in law, society and culture. She has particular interests in death investigation, death review and the coronial jurisdiction, and in cultural practices such as death-related art and media. Rebecca was Director of the Sydney Institute of Criminology, Sydney Law School, from 2012-2016.

‘Too much noise: People seeking asylum and the struggle to speak a different language’

Anne Surma (Murdoch University)

The languages of arts and of law address the humanity and the rights of people seeking asylum very differently. Yet both these languages struggle to be heard in the combative din generated by prevailing political and media discourses, which produce people seeking asylum as a language-less menace. In this presentation I reflect on how the use of language as repetitive noise has become normalised and even normative, and consider examples of how, in this context, arts- and law-based approaches are faring in efforts to elevate and defer to the different voices of people seeking asylum.

Biography

Anne’s research explores the use of public language and its role in shaping cultural norms. Some of her published work reflects on refugees writing about their experiences, as well as on public writing about refugees. For example, her short essay “Boochani’s ‘Political Poetics’: Subverting and Reimagining the Fiction of Politics” appears in *Freedom, Only Freedom: The Writings of Behrouz Boochani (2022)*, edited by Behrouz Boochani, Omid Tofighian and Moones Mansoubi (Bloomsbury Academic).

If it looks like violent extremism, and acts like violent extremism: examining the framing of two stabbing attacks in Sydney

Sian Tomkinson (Independent Researcher) and Tael Harper (Murdoch University)

Within one week of April in 2024, the city of Sydney was rocked by two separate violent stabbing attacks. In one case, the stabbing of two Coptic clerics by a young Muslim man, the government and media were quick to establish that this was a terrorist attack. In the other, where five women and one man were killed in a shopping centre by a man who targeted women, the blame was not levelled at ideological extremism but rather ‘psychological problems’, and not to be considered a terrorist incident. In this paper we examine the relative framing of these two events by politicians and the media and highlight how framing violence against women as episodic, individualistic and situational, as opposed to an expression of a thematic, public and pervasive issue, diminishes the capacity to respond effectively to misogynistic violence.

Biography

Sian Tomkinson completed her PhD in gender and media at the University of Western Australia. Her research focuses on how digital communities develop toxic characteristics.

Tael Harper is Associate Professor in Media and Communication at Murdoch University. His research focuses on issues of public communication and technology.

Session 3

Why do Indonesian police torture thieves?

Jacqui Baker (Murdoch University) and Rus'an Nasruddin (Universitas Indonesia)

By examining patterns in non-lethal police shootings rates, we establish that the Indonesian police's shooting in the legs of unarmed petty thieves constitutes a systematic form of extrajudicial police violence. The question then turns to why do Indonesia police engage in this form of torture, particularly against motorbike thieves? By examining media reports of non-fatal shootings, socioeconomic data and crime victimisation rates, we argue that rather than hiding these practices, police torture exists precisely in order to be displayed in the news media to satiate ideas of crime and punishment amongst an aspirational middle class, who otherwise are the primary victims of crime. As such, we argue that police torture recognises and mollifies the discontent of Indonesia's permanently economically insecure. In this way, we underscore the continued value of political economy analysis to understanding police violence in emerging economies.

Biography

Jacqui Baker is a lecturer in Southeast Asian Politics at Murdoch University. She is a researcher, international development practitioner and academic who has studied Indonesia for over 20 years, focusing on issues of democratization, security and policing, human rights and corruption and law reform. She has also worked and consulted for numerous international, Australian and Indonesian institutions including The Asia Foundation, Amnesty International, UNODC, Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Justice, and U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. She is an editor at the Journal for Southeast Asian Studies and a host of the podcast Talking Indonesia.

Rus'an is an assistant professor at the Department of Economics and Vice Director of the Postgraduate Program in Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia. He is also a research associate at the Institute for Economic and Social Research (LPEM FEB UI). His research interests are development economics, impact evaluation, applied econometrics, and public policy. He currently works on the topics of food security, rural-urban migration, social capital development, education and well-being, tobacco economics and smoking among children, and monitoring the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 with the main focus on Indonesia. He has published papers in scientific journals such as World Development, Papers in Regional Science, Journal of Happiness Studies, Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, Marine Policy, and Case Studies on Transport Policy, and many more. He is an active member of the Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) and the Indonesian Regional Science Association (IRSA). He received his bachelor's degree in economics from Universitas Indonesia, Master of International and Development Economics, and a Ph.D. degree from the Australian National University.

Examining Contemporary Media Recruitment Campaigns by Criminal Justice Government Agencies

Phillipa Evans (UNSW) and Alyce McGovern (UNSW)

Criminal justice government agencies across Australia employ a range of contemporary media platforms to depict the work they do, describe the individuals and communities they work with and who work for them, and represent their services to the public. More recently – and in the context of some agencies struggling to attract and maintain staff – these agencies are turning to new, digital and social media platforms to engage in staff recruitment campaigns. In this paper, we will examine how select criminal justice related government agencies use these media recruitment strategies to frame the work that they do and the misalignment between what is represented and the challenges of the job.

Biographies

Dr Phillipa Evans is a Senior Lecturer and Director of Student Engagement and Work Integrated Learning in the School of Social Sciences at UNSW Sydney. Dr Evans has over 20 years' experience as a social worker in clinical, policy and academic

roles in a variety of contexts including youth justice, child protection and mental health. Her research interests span across criminal justice settings and includes working with families, early intervention, community corrections and prison settings, with a focus on the interpersonal skills of justice staff and supporting the organisational implementation of these skills through specialist training, coaching and supervision, fostering an environment conducive to lasting positive change.

Dr Alyce McGovern is an Associate Professor of Criminology and Program Director for the Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice in the School, of Law, Society and Criminology, Faculty of Law and Justice at UNSW Sydney. She lives and works on unceded Bidjigal land. Alyce's research explores intersecting themes of crime, media and culture, including police-media relations and police image work, and knitting graffiti and craftivism. She is the author of *Craftivism and Yarn Bombing: A Criminological Exploration* (2019, Palgrave), and co-author of *Policing and Media: Public Relations, Simulations and Communications* (2014, Routledge) and *Sexting and Young People* (2015, Palgrave).

Simulating death-knocks: Bridging the gap between journalistic ethics and professional practice

Tiffany Fox (Murdoch University)

A theoretical understanding of journalism is vital for preparing students for an industry constantly under pressure to adapt to new technologies and commercial pressures. However, the 'trade' of journalism, including the practical application of journalistic ethics when reporting crime and tragedy, is best learned on the job rather than in the classroom. Bridging this gap between students' theoretical understanding of ethical practice in the classroom and the practical applications of journalistic ethics in a fast-paced news environment presents a challenge for higher education journalism programs. Research shows simulations are an effective active-learning strategy, and real-world scenarios can help students build connections between the theory they are studying and how it is practised in the industry. This presentation will discuss simulating professional practice using a real-world tragedy-based scenario to allow first-year journalism students to develop long-term strategies for ethical reporting.

Biography

Tiffany Fox is a journalist by trade and an academic by circumstance. Tiffany reported for regional and metropolitan newsrooms and as a freelance journalist for more than 15 years, before falling into academia after being invited to be a sessional academic for a Media Law and Ethics unit. Since then, she taught and developed content for a range of journalism disciplines, from introductory units to business, political, data and investigative feature journalism units. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Enigma of the Dark: The Claremont Serial Killings and Journalism as Practice

Mary-Anne Romano (Murdoch University)

The Claremont Serial Killings have been a case that has gripped the city of Perth for more than twenty years, and this study investigates the journalistic methods and news depictions that have surrounded the case. The study addresses the difficulties encountered by a former journalist who was doing research on the case, as well as the notion of journalism as a ritual. The study investigates the history of the Claremont serial killings and investigates the concept of journalism as a created reality. Additionally, the research investigates the function that journalism plays in the formation of collective memory. The researcher draws attention to the difficulties involved in analysing a case that already has its own story and investigates the manner in which this narrative has been produced. Their findings shed light on the consequences that this narrative has for journalistic practices.

Biography

Mary-Anne Romano is an astute media, journalism, public relations, and communications professional with over 20 years of industry and academia experience. She possesses an extensive tertiary background, predominately in media,

communications, strategic communications, and journalism, and is currently completing a PhD, titled: *The Claremont Serial Killings and Journalism as Ritual*.

Writing the Law

Josephine Wilson (Murdoch University)

What does writing have to do with the Law? What might we, in English and Creative Writing, have to offer the legal profession? In June 2024 I participated as one of four writers in two programs run by the National Judicial College of Australia. Titled Writing Better Judgements, these two- and half-day workshops brought together Judges and Magistrates from all states, first in Sydney and then in Perth, to share in a program designed to challenge unexamined conventions of writing judgements, and to assist them to find their way towards different forms of expression. I will outline the structure of the workshops and offer some reflections upon what I learnt about the writing lives of those who deliver judgements across various courts, and the very real issues they might face in the changing landscape of media and publishing. I then suggest that the study of literary discourse within Literature offers a conceptual grounding that can be taken into many disciplines and fields – including the Law.

Biography

Dr. Josephine Wilson is Lecturer in English and Creative Writing at Murdoch University, Western Australia. Her first novel *Cusp* was published by UWAP. Her novel *Extinctions* (UWAP) won the Miles Franklin Literary Award (2017), the Colin Roderick Award (2017) and was short-listed for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards. Prior to joining Murdoch, Josephine taught at UWA and Curtin, and worked as an independent interdisciplinary writer.

Session 4

Law at the Margins: Police Encounters, Public Criminals and Affective Communication in India

Alok Ranjan (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

This paper investigates the interplay of the law and the politics of crime control in the manifestations of the punitive practice of police encounters in contemporary India. Departing from the frame of a breakdown of the 'rule of law', we explore the possibilities within the law to constitute new legal-ethical orders and perceptions of crime and deserved punishment. Towards explaining the practice of encounters, the paper deals with exceptional provisions in Indian penal laws. It argues that the law has not been negated but creatively stretched to its margins to fulfil the demands of instant justice. Finally, it highlights the centrality of participative communication to populist punitive measures. We discuss visual thrill created by news media-enabled speculations about a possible encounter with a suspect criminal. At an intersection of political analysis and affect theory, this paper offers an analytic concept of 'marginality of law', a space where the law can legitimise excessive practices ordinarily unjustifiable'.

Biography

Alok Ranjan is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. He has been awarded a 'University Grants Commission- Junior Research Fellowship'. His doctoral research centres on the affective encounters between the state apparatus and impacted populations in the context of coal mining projects and land dispossession in India. This project explores rural practices of democracy and active disobedience as a mode of public power. He worked as a policy researcher for Land Conflicts Watch, researching and reporting on a land dispute in the state of Jharkhand in India. Besides, he has presented conference papers on themes of provincial citizenship, Indigenous People's resistance and politics of crime across universities, including Columbia University, George Mason University, and Tata Institute of Social Sciences. He has served as a panellist in an ethnography roundtable at the University of Melbourne and a discussant at a few conferences and policy summits. Alok writes on issues of contemporary politics and popular culture on online platforms, along with journal articles.

From Partition Necropolitics to Digital Biopolitics: Reincarnations of Resistance in Online Archival Narratives of the 1947 Partition Archive

Rahul Gairola (Murdoch University)

This talk examines the necropolitics of Partition survivors' online accounts by engaging in a study of the *1947 Partition Archive*, a digital archive that coalesces a crowd-sourced community of activists collecting the autobiographical takes of Partition witnesses before they pass away. As such, these narrating refugee/migrants are doubly tangled in the diasporic necropolitical web: they escaped the cross-border genocide of Partition wrought by the British Crown's self-interest at the close of WWII, yet now are subject to death as age creeps forward. However, I would propose that the opposite is occurring for liminal diasporas of the Partition in the digital milieu with respect to the *1947 Partition Archive*. Indeed, the oral recording and digital archiving of these seniors, whose bodies/ memories/ stories are themselves biological archives of Asian trauma, is another kind of migration but into an eternal, electronic format. To further explore this contention, I comparatively analyse the digital narratives of three different Partition migrants currently living in different places around the globe by using a digital forensics methodology. Given that all humans arrive and depart in the throes of death, Partition witnesses herein acquire a modality of digital biopolitics that evokes a kind of cultural reincarnation.

Biography

Rahul Krishna Gairola, Ph.D. (University of Washington, Seattle; USA) is The Krishna Somers Senior Lecturer in English & Postcolonial Literature and a Principal Fellow of the Indo-Pacific Research Centre (IPRC) in the School of Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences (HASS) at Murdoch University, Western Australia. He has published seven books and over 50 peer-reviewed research articles. He has globally delivered invited talks and conference papers and held research funding at many respected international forums for over two decades. He previously taught at the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India, and The City University of New York, USA. He is an editor for both Routledge and Oxford University Press and is a 2024 Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Münster, Germany, in affiliation with the Marie-Skłodowska-Curie-Programme of the European Union, in the *Migration-Diaspora-Citizenship* global research network.

Analyzing crime at the intersections of media und political communication.

Travelling Concepts as an analytical tool

Dörte Negnal (University of Siegen)

The presentation draws an outline of crime as a travelling concept as a criminological approach to media and political communication. Crime as a travelling concept emerges at the intersection of media, political communication and institutions concerned to law making and law breaking. Political charges create discursive concepts that travel across disciplinary and temporal boundaries. The emersion of crime as a travelling concept allows an analysis of political charges. Political charges refer to (a) collective relevance and orders, (b) involve and create public spheres, (c) carry out conflictual ties, always also by invoking and creating (d) governmental apparatuses. In this way, something is elevated to the status of a 'matter of concern' and calls for action. Publics are mobilised and a social arena is opened up, which underlines the relevance settings. The 'matter of concern' marks a difference to current conditions, circumstances, modes of governance, etc. In the course of charging, travelling concepts tend to become the concern of state and non-state government apparatuses. They become a public concern. The presentation will outline a framework for analyzing crime at the intersections of media and political communication.

Biography

Dr. Dörte Negnal, is an Assistant professor at University of Siegen and Lecturer and researcher in criminological social research and legal gender studies. Her research addresses questions on social problems and social control, statehood and concepts of danger as well as gender studies and approaches in qualitative social research, esp. ethnography. She studied Sociology (Free University Berlin) and International Criminology (University of Hamburg). In her PhD project she analyzed the construction mechanisms of social groups while problematizing them as dangerous. In her latest ethnography she elaborates the concept of transitional work as collaborative work on the deconstruction of security authority cases.

Podcasting and corporate crime: challenging dominant representations

Jana Macfarlane Horn (Open University, UK)

Despite its profound societal impact, corporate crime often receives little attention in public and media discussions of criminality. My research examines how contemporary media, particularly podcasts, portray corporate crime and harm, arguing that new media platforms are better equipped to challenge dominant discourses of corporate power. Focusing on two emblematic corporate crime cases: the Rana Plaza collapse (2013) and the Deepwater Horizon explosion/oil spill (2010), I analyse how language shapes the (re)contextualization of events and reflects underlying ideologies and power dynamics. Findings suggest that podcasts, as relatively independent media, are inclined to critique corporate power structures. They often present corporate crimes as systemic issues rooted in neoliberal capitalism, advocating for challenging profit-driven priorities. This underscores the importance of further research into podcasts' capacity to influence discourse on corporate crime and crimes of power.

Biography

Jana is currently finishing her PhD in Criminology at the Open University in the UK. Her research focus is predominantly on corporate crime and its portrayals in the media. She is currently working on researching podcasts, especially when it comes to their potential to challenge dominant discourses of corporate criminality, but she is also interested in researching the intersection of 'new' media and crime more widely.

“If You’re Out There, Just Come Home”: The Use of Media Appeals, Detecting Deception and Progressing Missing Persons Cases

Yasmin Richards (Murdoch University) and David Keatley (Murdoch University)

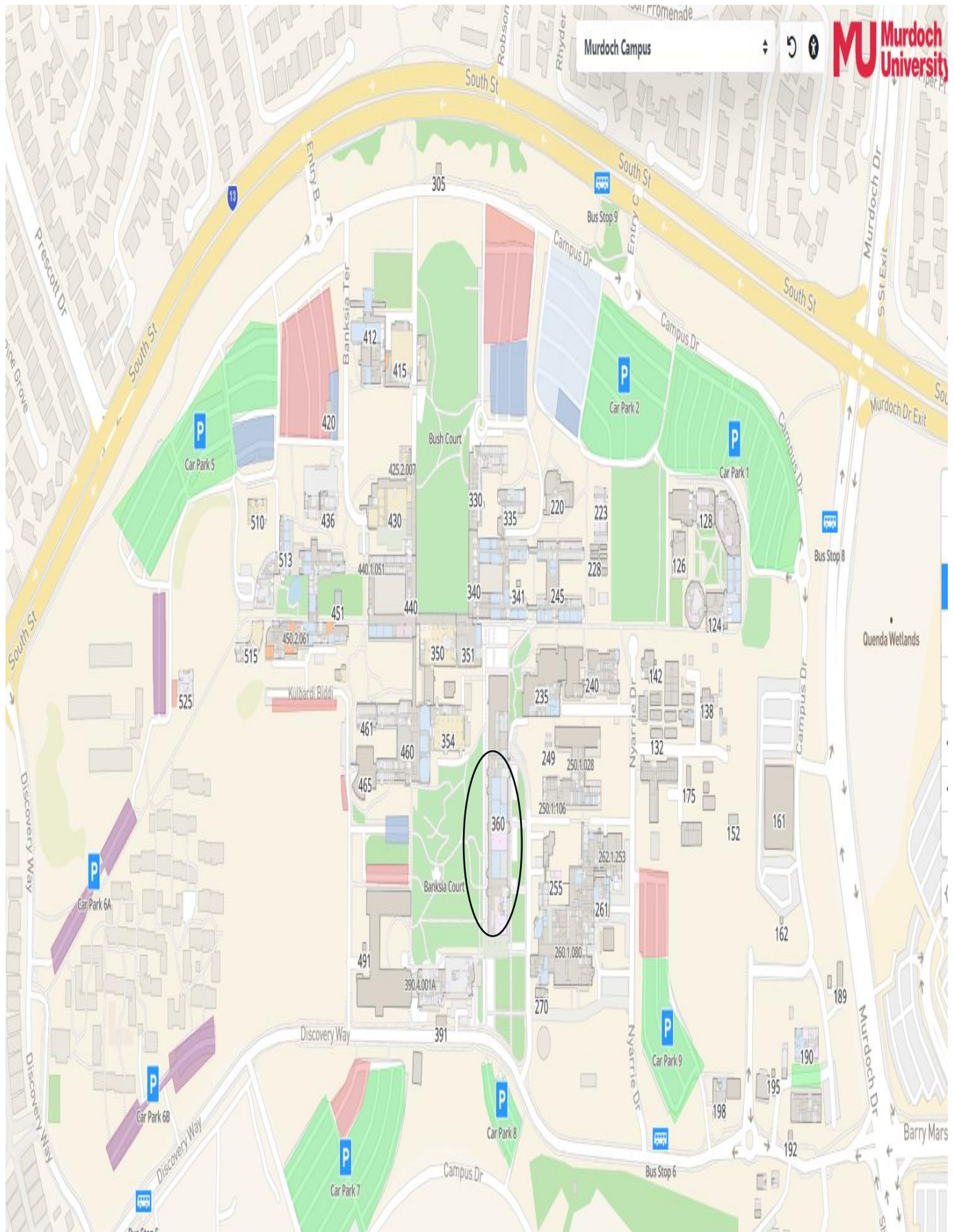
Missing persons cases are complex investigations, typically lacking physical evidence. Thus, investigators must seek alternative investigative routes to facilitate information elicitation in a time-sensitive period. One approach to mitigating these challenges is utilising the media. There is a need to maintain public interest in missing persons cases, to help raise information. As such, police may liaise with or collaborate with the media to revive public interest, obtain information quickly via news broadcast, and generate new leads. The current research examines how deception detection using media appeals may assist in progressing missing persons cases, using 70 (40 truthful and 30 deceptive) missing persons media appeals. The application of this research is to highlight potential synergies between media, police and investigating missing persons cases. These synergies may provide insight for future information-gathering strategies, and the development or application of novel methods to these cases to better understand the language of missing person appeals.

Biography

Yasmin Richards is a PhD and academic tutor at Murdoch University. Her research predominantly focuses on analysing the criminal behaviours of real-world suspects to identify intervention strategies that assist law enforcement with ongoing investigations. She has conducted research nationally and internationally, in addition to having published several papers in the areas of adolescent offending, deception detection and missing persons cases.

Dr David Keatley is a Professor of Criminology at Murdoch University. David’s work and research focuses on complex patterns of (criminal) behaviour in real-world contexts. David typically uses timeline analyses, alongside other methods and techniques, some of which he has developed, to analyse the temporal process of crimes (including interrogation analyses and major crimes/cold case reviews). David is a Vidocq Society Member (VSM), as well as a member of several other homicide investigators associations. David has published over 90 papers in leading, peer-reviewed journals.

Symposium Location: Building 360 Boola Katitjin (circled below)



Room location Boola Katitjin, level 3, room 360.3.002 (circled below)

Entry through the Northern Plaza or via the lifts or escalators on the first floor (south side)

