

Newcastle Forum for Human Rights & Social Justice

STAFF SEMINARS: 'Rights and Responsibilities in Times of Transition: Opportunities and Challenges'

- Friday 15 March 2019 – Alexandra Binnekade, University of Basel

'Interviews Are Dangerous Acts: On Actors, Norms, and Research Practices'

Abstract:

Interviews have a long history as research tools. The question of how objective, reliable, and even representative the information harvested from that interview is has been a matter of debate for almost as long. The image of the interview as something contained, which only needed the right tools to be properly evaluated, has been challenged by critical, particularly feminist and post-colonial scholarship (e.g. Lawrence-Lightfoot, Denzin&Lincoln, Cook, St. Pierre). Scholars have increasingly directed their attention to the power-relations and structures that are immanent in every such conversation, to ethical questions, and to the conditions and effects of those practices we as researchers employ so as to turn one particular interaction – sometimes an explicitly cultural one– into academic knowledge. This talk explores Michel Foucault's surprising notion that interviews are dangerous acts. Preparing, conducting, evaluating and writing about interviews combines many perspectives and intentions. I will use examples from my own research and reflect them against the background of current critical and inspiring scholarship in order to outline a set of fundamental questions and concepts for those who do, or plan to work with interviews in their own academic practice.

Bio:

Alexandra Binnenkade is a Swiss historian, who gained her PhD with an award-winning study of 19th century Jewish-Christian contact zones from the University of Basel, where she now is a senior research fellow and adjunct lecturer. Her current research focus, the ways in which the U.S. Civil Rights Movement has been remembered between 1965 and 2012, is the second book for which she relies on interviews, and the second research context in which her interview partners shared "difficult knowledge" with her. She has been a visiting scholar at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA, and at the Georg Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research in Brunswick, Germany. Her fields of expertise cover Swiss history, the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, memory studies and public history, textbook research and writing, all of them connected by a strong interest in methodological issues and debates.

- Wednesday 8 May 2019 – Dr Ben Warwick, Birmingham Law School

Details to be confirmed soon.

WORKSHOPS

- Monday 25 March 2019 (10.30am-6pm) – Workshop with Alison Atkinson-Phillips and Jill Strauss

'Memory, Ritual, and Symbolic Reparations: Challenges and Opportunities for Transitional Justice and Human Rights'

Details to be confirmed.

- Friday 14 December 2018 (11am-3pm), Armstrong Building – room to be confirmed.

‘Human Rights, History, and Law during the Cold War: Interdisciplinary Perspectives’

Convenors: Prof Daniel Siemens (Newcastle University), Dr Sebastian Gehrig (University of Roehampton)

Programme:

Dr Bill Bowring (Birkbeck, University of London): The USSR, Human Rights and the Cold War

Dr Sebastian Gehrig (University of Roehampton): Socialist legality, citizenship, and human rights: the GDR’s attempt to turn Germans into GDR citizens

Discussion

Light lunch

Dr Elena Katselli (Newcastle University): Forcible Displacement and Individual Rights under International Law

Prof Daniel Siemens (Newcastle University): Lawyers Writing History? The United Restitution Organization (URO) and the Holocaust

Discussion

- November 2018 – June 2019

Regional Network on Human Rights

The Newcastle Forum for Human Rights & Social Justice in collaboration with the Edinburgh Global Justice Academy have recently established the Regional Network on Human Rights (RNHR). This network, which consists of members from the Universities of Newcastle, Durham, Northumbria, Edinburgh, Stirling, Dundee and Strathclyde aims to bring together scholars with common interests enabling them to share their published or in-progress work, and explore opportunities for further cooperation. To this effect, the RNHR will organise on a rotating basis a half-day workshop during which researchers from the participating institutions will be able to discuss their work on human rights/social justice.

The launching workshop will take place on 28 November 2018 in Newcastle (1-5pm).

CONFERENCE

- March 2019 – Details to be confirmed

‘Protecting Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict and Situations of Forcible Displacement: An (Emerging) Individual Right?’

A multi-disciplinary conference organised by Dr Elena Katselli, Professor Peter Stone, Dr Ruth Houghton, Professor Rhona Smith, Dr Conall Mallory, Ms Francesca Speed and Mr Richard Poole – Funded by Newcastle University Academic Conferencing Award.