Tuesday 17 October
British Academy Lecture
One is not born, but becomes, a genius: Another Simone de Beauvoir
Dr Kate Kirkpatrick, University of Oxford
Simone de Beauvoir has often been called the ‘mother’ of second-wave feminism, with The Second Sex its bible. ‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’ is widely cited as a slogan for the view that gender is socially constructed. But the book itself never uses the word ‘gender’ – and its central question is not ‘What is a woman?’. Rather, The Second Sex is an existential experiment with a liberatory aim, asking: How, in the feminine condition, can a human being accomplish herself?

Tuesday 24 October
Green energy materials in 3D: Crystal gazing on the atomic scale
Professor Sаiful Islam, University of Oxford
The supply of low carbon energy is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Major breakthroughs in green energy technologies require advances in new materials and underpinning science. With the aid of 3D glasses, this talk describes the materials science of lithium batteries for electric vehicles and novel compounds for next-generation solar cells, as well as highlighting the use of materials modelling to gain atomic-scale insights.

Wednesday 25 October
Note: 6.00pm start
Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne Lecture
The way, the word, and the water: The archaeology of 17th century Newcastle
Dr Pam Graves, Durham University
There are iconographical aspects to the material environment of the 17th and early 18th century city: the merchant houses on Sandhill and aspirations to a New Jerusalem created by Puritan-leaning merchants during the Commonwealth; the merchant ledger slub in St Nicholas’ Cathedral; and the provision of public water supply, the idea of the material culture of neighbourhood applied to Newcastle.

Tuesday 31 October
Black History Month Lecture
Black lives in the archives
Peter Bradwaille, opera singer, writer, broadcaster and artist
This lecture opens up questions about Black lives in the archives – what is revealed and what is concealed? How has our understanding of history been shaped to favour one reality above all others? Drawing on his own Barbarian heritage, the speaker will explore how oral tradition and living culture add a depth of understanding to lives that are often too thinly-drawn in surviving records.

Thursday 2 November
We have heard the chimes at midnight: Verdi, Falstaff and time
Dr Martin Pickard, conductor and repetiteur, Opera North
As Opera North’s production of Verdi’s Falstaff, part of its Green Season, arrives in Newcastle, its former Head of Music shows how the great composer plays with ideas of time in this, his final masterpiece. Although the opera, based on Shakespeare’s The Merry Wives of Windsor, is set in a bustling present, Verdi uses subtle musical means to evoke a poetic past – and occasionally to stop time altogether.

Thursday 9 November
Everything you need to know about the menopause (but were too afraid to ask)
Kate Muir, menopause expert, writer and documentary maker
Kate Muir has produced two award-winning menopause documentaries with Davina McCall for Channel 4 and is working on a new book on the contraceptive pill following her latest Pill Revolution documentary. Her book, Everything You Need to Know About the Menopause (but were too afraid to ask), was published in 2022. Kate regularly speaks on women’s health, the menopause and contraception, and is an activist for The Menopause Charity.

Thursday 14 November
How the end of Empire upended the Union
Professor Stuart Ward, University of Copenhagen
‘First the empire went’. The end of empire did indeed raise formidable challenges to the durability of a unitary Britishness, but they appeared in a language, imagery and symbolism that resonated far beyond the physical confines of the UK. To survive, Britishness needed to be reconceptualised as a global category of analysis, allowing us to trace the historical evolution of British sensibilities from the outside-in.

Thursday 16 November
Tyneside Geographical Society Lecture
Amy Lamé, performer, writer and Night Czar of London
In 2016 Mayor of London Sadiq Khan created the Night Czar, tasked with ensuring London thrives as a 24-hour city. Their work is driven by working in partnership with the night time industries, local authorities, the Metropolitan Police, Transport for London, and the public. The role involves championing London’s nightlife – including safeguarding venues – not only in the capital but across the UK and internationally.

Thursday 23 November
Disinformation online – the biggest threat to public discourse ever seen?
Barbara Spooner, Managing Director, Digital Safety CIC
The functioning of society depends on the quality of information in circulation. Digitisation and reliance on social media and artificial intelligence to frame public discourse is increasingly allowing criminals, and those who act against our state, the opportunity to threaten its discourse. Digitisation and reliance on social media and artificial intelligence to frame public discourse is increasingly allowing criminals, and those who act against our state, the opportunity to threaten its discourse. Now is the time to open the debate on digital safety and understand how it affects us.

www.ncl.ac.uk/events/public-lectures
Newcastle University welcomes you to its autumn 2023 INSIGHTS programme. Given by public figures and eminent scholars, the lectures cover a wide range of topics and are held in the Curtis Auditorium, Herschel Building. Unless otherwise stated, lectures begin at 5.30pm and last for approximately one hour, including time for questions.

All our events remain free and open to all, but pre-booking is required. Bookings for lectures will open at 10.00am one week before the event. To reserve your place visit www.ncl.ac.uk/events/public-lectures or telephone our booking voicemail line 0191 208 6136.

Recordings of some lectures will be available on our website at www.ncl.ac.uk/events/public-lectures after the lecture has taken place. Additions or changes to the programme will also be published on our website. To join our mailing list, please complete the online registration form.

The University will make all reasonable efforts to deliver INSIGHTS events. However, it may be necessary to make changes in response to significant disruption.

John H Holmes Memorial Lectures for 10- to 14-year-olds
Humans vs artificial intelligence
The 2024 Holmes Lectures will be given by researchers from Newcastle University’s Faculty of Medical Sciences and School of Computing and will take place in the Curtis Auditorium, Herschel Building.

■ Wednesday 17 January 2024, 5.00-6.00pm
Humans: Can you learn to train your brain?

■ Wednesday 24 January 2024, 5.00-6.00pm
Evolving video game technology: Humans vs artificial intelligence (who will win?)

Bookings open on 1 November. To book a place visit www.ncl.ac.uk/events/public-lectures. For group bookings and school visits, please email the Public Lectures office at public.lectures@ncl.ac.uk or telephone our booking voicemail line 0191 208 6136.