Tuesday 12 February
Understanding Islamophobia
Professor Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University

In November 2018, the All Party Parliamentary Group in Westminster published its report following a consultation into Islamophobia. The report notes that ‘Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness’. In this lecture, Newcastle University’s new Dean of Social Justice will draw upon recent research about Islamophobia to explore what enables it and how it operates, what its impacts are and who is affected by it, and how to challenge and report it.

Thursday 19 February
LGBT* History Month Lecture
Seeing homosexuality in Joe Orton's What the Butler Saw
Dr Emma Parker, University of Leicester

'I'm from the gutter'. Leonie Orton on her brother Joe. Joe Orton's What the Butler Saw (1966) features no gay characters, yet homosexuality is the absent centre of his final play. In the first half of this talk marking LGBT* History Month, Emma Parker explores how Orton’s queer black comedy subverts sexual double standards, mocks heteronormativity and challenges discourses of deviance. In the second Leonie Orton will read from her memoir, I Had it In Me (2016), in which she explores the origins of her brother’s outrageous humour, in his home town of Leicester and in the Orton family.

Tuesday 24 February
Uranium, the Bogeyman of the periodic table: a case of Dr Jekyll or Mr Hyde?
Professor Steve Liddle, Manchester University

Nuclear: an emotive word. For or against, we already have legacy issues from nuclear power and weapons and there’ll be more in the future. Most nuclear applications use uranium. Professor Liddle will attempt to unpick this complex area and present some facts about uranium and the science that is done with it.

Thursday 28 February
Kurt Schwitters’ Merz Barn – from there to here
Fred Brookes, Merz Barn Historian

When Schwitters’ work was given to Newcastle University, Fred Brookes, a fine art student, was part of the team that surveyed it, supervised its removal, carried out restoration and conservation after it was installed, and has maintained a relationship with it. This lecture will tell the story of how the work came about, what happened to it and why, and what makes it like it is.

Thursday 7 March
Childhood obesity: they should do something about that
Professor Ashley Adamson, Newcastle University

The prevalence of overweight and obesity in the UK is high, yet often we fail to recognise unhealthy weight in children. By the time we reach adulthood, three in every five of us are at least overweight. Behind these figures are the health and social costs of an unhealthy body weight. So whose problem is it, and what can we all do to reverse the tide?

Friday 8 March
Women and Security
Professor Rachel Hamilton, University of Northumbria

Much of the discussion about oral history as a practice has been about its potential for liberation and social change – but what are the limits? How do we ensure that oral history narratives are multi-vocal and not just one story? Professor Hamilton will draw on her research about women working in the 20th century home as domestic servants, focusing in particular on the experience of intimate relations with men, drawing a connecting line through what is now called harassment to illegitimate births and infanticide, to highlight how shame shapes the historical record.

Friday 15 March
Plant diversity is under threat: why should we care and what can we do?
Professor William Wilats, Newcastle University

Plant diversity is under unprecedented pressure: many species are under threat of extinction and this has serious and far-reaching environmental implications. Loss of diversity also diminishes the repertoire of vital and sustainable products provided by the plant kingdom, including foods, medicines, materials and fuel. This lecture will explore how science and technology can contribute to stemming plant diversity loss.

Tuesday 19 March
Defence Lecture
Damsels of Defense: a story of Women, Peace and Security in changing times
Ambassador Clare Hutchinson, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security

At the 2018 Brussels Summit, NATO Heads of State and Governments endorsed the new NATO/EAPC Policy and Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The policy introduces an ambitious vision for transforming the Alliance through its new principles on gender equality and for firmly embedding gender into the policies and programmes related to defence and deterrence. This lecture will provide an overview of NATO’s vision for a gender equal Alliance and will challenge some of the assumptions commonly made about women and security.

Tuesday 26 March
Between the living and the dead: what are the limits of remembering through oral histories?
Professor Paula Hamilton, University of Technology Sydney

Much of the discussion about oral history as a practice has been about its potential for liberation and social change – but what are the limits? How do we ensure that oral history narratives are multi-vocal and not just one story? Professor Hamilton will draw on her research about women working in the 20th century home as domestic servants, focusing in particular on the experience of intimate relations with men, drawing a connecting line through what is now called harassment to illegitimate births and infanticide, to highlight how shame shapes the historical record.
Agriculture and Engineering at Newcastle University explore new ideas through their research. Three early-career researchers from the Faculty of Science, engineering will explain what makes for a good medical story when it is addressed to younger readers. Doctors are both witnesses and participants in the stories of the lives of their patients. In recent years there has been an explosion in books written by doctors for the general public, and it is all about story-telling. The prominent neurosurgeon Henry Marsh, neurosurgeon and author of ‘Skull Cap’ and ‘Let Me Tell You About Your Brain’, explains how he has found writing ‘My Life and Newton’s Cannon’ to be a way of understanding and remembering his patients.

Newcastle University welcomes you to its Spring 2019 Insights programme. Given by public figures and eminent scholars, the lectures cover a wide range of topics, are free and open to all. All seats are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Unless otherwise stated, lectures begin at 5.30pm, last about an hour plus time for questions, and are held in the Curtis Auditorium, Herschel Building.

Audio recordings of some lectures are downloadable from 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. You can also follow us on Twitter: @insightscsi

If you wish to confirm dates/speakers, please contact us on 0191 208 6093 or e-mail public.lectures@ncl.ac.uk. To join our mailing list, please complete the online registration form.

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