

*The School of Social Science Seminar Series Presents:*

## **Bullying as intra-active process in neoliberal universities**

**Dr. Sheridan Linnell, Art Therapy, UWS**  
**Dr. Cath Laws, Australian Catholic University**

*Date:* Monday 30 May 2011  
*Time:* 1:00pm - 2:30pm  
*Venue:* School meeting rooms via video link  
Kingswood Campus Building P.G.26  
Bankstown Campus Building 1.1.30

### **ABSTRACT**

The reformed neoliberal universities, with their micro-management of ever-increasing productivity, competitiveness, and individualization, have recently been described as unhealthy institutions, creating conditions that incite incivility, workplace bullying and other forms of employee abuse. In their paper, Katerina Zabrodska, **Sheridan Linnell, Cath Laws** and Bronwyn Davies employ collective biography (Davies & Gannon, 2006, 2009) as a form of "diffractive methodology" in order to provide new, theoretically driven insights into workplace bullying in neoliberal universities. Drawing on the concepts of intra-activity (Barad, 2007) and performativity (Butler, 1997, 1999), they examine bullying in universities as an intra-active process that informs and is informed by the desire to be recognised and to perform oneself as a viable academic subject - one who is professional, flexible and accountable within a neoliberal environment. Cath Laws and Sheridan Linnell will talk about the process of, and the insights produced through, participating in the collective biography workshop on bullying in academe and the collaborative writing of this paper.

### **SPEAKERS**

**Cath Laws** is an educator, activist and researcher. She reads her life's work as exploring ways those at the margins can come to act with agency and be read/read themselves differently. Her PhD thesis looked at the discourses operating in relation to marginalized children and young people. Cath has taught in regular and special settings, including schools for those categorized as having emotional and behavioural disorders and juvenile justice schools. She has also worked in out of school contexts in NSW state child protection policy, professional learning for staff and as NSW state wide Manager, Behaviour Programs. In 2006 Cath Laws received the NSW Department of Education and Training Director-General's Award for service to public education. While Cath is now retired, she continues to trouble the dominant discourses surrounding those at the margins through her lecturing work at the Australian Catholic University as well as her research.

**Sheridan Linnell** works in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Western Sydney, where she lectures in art therapy. She has previously participated in and co-written papers about collective biographies in the areas of school bullying, academic writing and the ethics of listening. A strand of Sheridan's postdoctoral research is concerned with how academic subjectivities are performed within the current context of higher education.

*Plan to attend this regular series of seminars*

For information contact: Laura Schatz (Convenor) [L.Schatz@uws.edu.au](mailto:L.Schatz@uws.edu.au)