



## TEACH-IN SEMINARS & DISCUSSIONS – ALL WELCOME

The UCU knows that students are disappointed to be missing teaching and we wanted to take the opportunity to keep teaching, just not for Newcastle University. We enjoy teaching, we want to continue to teach, but we cannot do it whilst the university management profits while cutting our pensions. So for now we will teach for free and we have set up daily teach-ins. *What is a teach-in?* It is a general educational forum, intended to be practical, participatory and oriented towards action. These sessions are open to ALL: students, staff and interested members of the public. More details available here : <http://newcastle.web.ucu.org.uk/2018-spring-teach-in/>.

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Thursday, Feb 22 (11-12) – St. Thomas' Church, Haymarket

### **"What Sort of University Do We Want? And Is it Too Late to Save Newcastle University?"**

According to its statutes, Newcastle University exists 'for the public benefit, to advance education, learning and research.' In recent years this traditional idea of the university has come under radical attack from both government policy and the University's own management. Can Newcastle University be rescued, and if so, how? And how does the pension dispute fit into this?

Thursday, Feb 22 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street

### **"No Words are Too Trivial to Ignore: Using Language to Examine Language Use (& How it Gets Twisted)"**

We will discuss how we (language users) find meaningful interpretations of sentences, even in sentences that *shouldn't* be interpretable, and how our drive to understand the sentences we hear could influence (or be influenced by) our attitudes toward a variety of social issues.

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Friday, Feb 23 (11-12) – St Thomas' Church, Haymarket

### **"Climate Change: Myth or Misery? And What Can We Do About It?"**

Climate facts, fakes and fiction - we get bombarded by it almost daily. Do you understand the complexities of our climate system? Is Climate Change even real, and how do we know for sure? Are we humans responsible for the recent Climate Change? Is Climate Change really so problematic, and for who? Why should we care? It can be difficult to see the wood from the trees, sometimes, with different information spread by scientists, governments, environmentalists, lobby groups, businesses. In this session we discuss some of these myths and ask how, together, we can act to overcome the crippling pessimism to which we can easily succumb.

Friday, Feb 23 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street

### **"The Joy of X: A Brief History of Mathematical Notation"**

The X Factor, The X Files, The X-Men ... the letter X is found all over the English language as a letter designating mystery—or more precisely, something unknown. This is the legacy of fairly recent mathematics, specifically the philosopher René Descartes, known for his famous phrase *cogito ergo sum*. In this public science lecture, I'll tell the story of how X came to be the pre-eminent unknown quantity and why our equations look the way they do.

Friday, Feb 23 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street

### **"Mapping the Musical City: A Workshop Exploring the Sounds of Newcastle"**

We often use maps to plan a route from A to B, but maps can also be more creative, and more meaningful. They can provide a record of the places that matter to us and give a sense of how we experience the everyday world. This workshop will focus on mapping a city's music by quite literally taking a map of Newcastle and inviting participants to contribute their own details: the local haunts, the long-gone venues, the bus stop where you listen on your headphones. The nature of the map will depend on who turns up and the stories they chose to share. Whatever the



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result, this simple session should give us a chance to think about our city and our music in a fresh light. Please bring paper and pens to this session.

*Friday, Feb 23 (12-1) – St Thomas' Church, Haymarket*

### **"From Newcastle University to Hong Kong: Non-Violent Protest and Why 'Occupy' Matters"**

We will explore Occupy's call to action in two very different contexts. Firstly, the session will present some reflections from Newcastle University's student occupation as part of the resistance to proposed increased tuition fees in 2010. Secondly, the session turns to a later incarnation of Occupy through reflections of the birth of the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement of 2014. Thirdly, through smaller group facilitation, the session will discuss what marks these moments of non-violent protest as important.

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*Monday, Feb 26 (11-12) – St Thomas' Church, Haymarket*

### **"The Re-Making of Higher Education as a Private Good: Student Debt, Tuition Fees and Marketization"**

This session explores how the idea of Higher Education has shifted from being a public good to being one that is entirely private, and what impacts this has had on universities, students, and the society of which both form a part.

*Monday, Feb 26 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **"Equality in the University: Putting Class in the Picture"**

Part of my job involves working to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in my Faculty, and much of that work is driven by the University's responsibilities under the 2010 Equality Act, which protects people from discrimination in relation to 9 particular characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). Why is class omitted from that list? How does class discrimination operate in universities, and how would universities have to change if we made a serious commitment to tackling it as an equality issue?

*Monday, Feb 26 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **"Poverty and Education"**

Child poverty has been rising over the last 10 years and is now worryingly high. What effect does this have on children's education? And should schools and universities be taking action to reduce the impact of poverty on children? This session looks at the impact, at a number of policies and initiatives nationally and locally including 'Poverty Proofing the School Day', and asks what you think should happen.

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*Tuesday, Feb 27 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **"The Theatre of his Black Revenge': Heiner Müller's Rewriting of Titus Andronicus (1985)"**

*Anatomy Titus: Fall of Rome* is Heiner Müller's retelling of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. It worsens the brutalities of Shakespeare's original and concludes with Rome destroyed at the hands of the Goths. Not a play for the faint-hearted, but it uses Shakespeare's text to reflect in important ways on the rise and success of violent totalitarian movements in the twentieth century.

*Tuesday, Feb 27 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **"Mobilisation and Collective Action: Theory and Practice"**

All forms of industrial dispute require the transformation of individual grievances to collective action. Individual workers must be convinced that withdrawing labour and sacrificing pay is a price worth paying for the cause they are supporting. The teach-in represents an ideal opportunity to discuss how collective action has been theorised and



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how it can be understood in practice. How significant is the cause being disputed? What role do workers' leaders play in mobilisation? And how do identities formed inside, and outside, the workplace influence collective action? This will be very much a discussion-based event, open to everyone interested in discussing the processes with which we are currently engaged.

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*Wednesday, Feb 28 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“Political Protest and Culture: The Work of Politics in the Work of Art”**

Today, we read cultural texts in increasingly political terms. Whether leaving libraries, theatres, galleries, or gigs, we ask the same questions: who can speak for whom? Who is being represented or erased? Was there radical bias or cultural conservatism? This session takes a step back from these debates to think more broadly about the relationship between politics and culture: *what* makes an artwork political? Is it the artist's intention, the work's social context, its relationship to the market, or something else entirely? We will use this moment to consider how radical politics find expression in artistic forms.

*Wednesday, Feb 28 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“Protest (and) Culture in Iceland: On Sierra's Memorial to Civil Disobedience”**

In 2012 a sculpture was unveiled in central Reykjavik by the Spanish artist Santiago Sierra called *The Black Cone: Memorial to Civil Disobedience*. It is an homage to the 2008–09 recession protests in Reykjavik and contributes to the complex and contested narrative of the aftermath of the 2008 banking crash in Iceland. This talk examines the circumstances of this piece; the significance of its location, the links to dramatic changes in the political landscape and protest culture, and its meaning for different memory groups in Iceland.

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*Monday, March 5 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“Transgender Warrior/Union Activist: Leslie Feinberg and Intersectional Struggle”**

This session introduces Leslie Feinberg and excerpts from hir/her autobiographical novel *Stone Butch Blues* (1993) to open a conversation about how we can work together to achieve common political goals while acknowledging and honouring the complexities of our positioning in terms of gender, sex, race, sexuality, class and ability.

*Monday, March 5 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“Representing Women in the Media: The ‘They’ and the ‘We’**

2018 marks the centenary of the *Representation of the People Act* which kick-started women's suffrage and is now being informally described as 'The Year of the Woman'. However, despite this sloganizing, the ways in which women are represented in mainstream media and indeed, how some of us represent ourselves, doesn't always seem so different to the overly sexualised images of women which were prevalent in previous decades. We consider some of the contemporary issues associated with women and media representation and the enduring importance of image in how we develop our own sense of identity.

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*Tuesday, March 6 (11 -12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“What is Revolutionary Thinking?: Levellers and Diggers”**

In this session we consider the purpose and function of two different groups – the Levellers and the Diggers – that appeared in London during the English Revolution. All had disappeared or shifted in political meaning by a decade later, but in that decade they all proposed bold and different accounts of what the revolutionary could and

should involve, to the horror of many of their contemporaries. We will discuss the cultural legacies of these notions of the revolutionary, how their contemporaries reacted to these arguments about equality and the right to liberty (badly), and ask what the Levellers and Diggers can teach us today about political action.

*Tuesday, March 6 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

**“Feminist Activism: Past, Present & Future”**

This considers the role of political and social activism in the history of Western feminism, before opening up a conversation about the function and place of ideas about utopia, community, and collaboration, and the ‘good’ feminist in the Western feminist movement.

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*Wednesday, March 7 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

**“The Madness of King Lear”**

Shakespeare’s play about a mad leader’s ill-advised division of Britain is newly relevant post-Brexit. This talk examines how actors and writers have interpreted King Lear’s madness, and what those interpretations have to teach us both about Shakespeare’s writing and the representation of mental disorders today.

*Wednesday, March 7 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

**“A Right to the City? Reflections on Efforts to Achieve Citizen Influence in Austerity Newcastle”**

The Lefebvrian ideal of the ‘right to the city’ foresees the management and development of cities as driven by democratically generated concerns rather than by capital investment decisions. Stronger local democracy also offers a way of responding to austerity by encouraging activism and the rebuilding of collective bargaining power. However, local government reforms are tending to centralise power and reduce opportunities for local democracy in favour of creeping privatisation and asset stripping. This session will share and debate some of the practical routes available to resist.

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*Thursday, March 8 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

**“Protest in 1890s American Periodicals”**

Financial crisis. Corporate greed. Monopolies. Resistance and revolt. Sound familiar? This was America in the 1890s, a period that bore similarities to our own historical moment. One of the most notable means of revolt was cheaply-produced little magazines known as periodicals of protest. This session considers social protest, 1890s style!

*Thursday, March 8 (12-1) – St Thomas’ Church, Haymarket*

**“Can Nonviolence Change the World? From Vietnam Teach-ins and Martin Luther King to Strikes at Newcastle University”**

This session explores the striking claim that nonviolence is better and more effective than war in responding to injustice, even in limit cases like resisting Nazi aggression. It links this to teach-ins (which emerged from the anti-Vietnam War movement) linked to Martin Luther King’s anti-war politics and his 1967 visit to Newcastle, and to the current strike at Newcastle University.



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*Thursday, March 8 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“Nonviolent Direct Action in the Civil Rights Movement”**

The story of the civil rights movement is one that proceeded from nonviolent respectable civil rights activists to angry, militant leather jacketed Black Power advocates. The problem is that that story is completely wrong. This session will explore how we reconsider the supposed dichotomy of nonviolence and armed self-defence.

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*March 12 (11 to 12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“Literature, Labour, and Leisure: What We Can Learn from the Rise of Literary Professionalism”**

When literature becomes work, is it still pleasure? And if it is work then are we professionals in reading and writing? This session will turn to accounts from nineteenth and twentieth-century British authors to assess the relationship between literature, leisure, and work, and will reflect on how the growth of professional authorship has parallels with the professionalization of both staff and students in higher education institutions. Following a short talk/provocation, all are invited to share their experiences of reconciling a personal love for reading and writing with a culture preoccupied by impact, employability, and professionalism.

*Monday, March 12 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“A Good Death”**

Learning from the past is generally construed as taking away lessons about politics or, even more often, it is understood as simply avoiding the same strategic “mistakes”. In this not-so-bleak talk, I turn this approach upside down and bottom up, and present what I have learned from working on the history of death: in this pursuit one generally only encounters detailed evidence when things went terribly astray. However, this offers the opportunity to distil disparate everyday examples into some lessons of how make death — after all an unavoidable human condition — potentially a bit better.

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*Tuesday, March 13 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“An Introduction to Sartre and Radical Freedom”**

This session introduces the main ideas of Jean-Paul Sartre concerning the notion of radical freedom.

*Tuesday, March 13 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“May 68, Student Power and Education”**

Throughout France in May 68, there was a mass student protest movement and a general strike of 8-10 million workers. Through leaflets, graffiti, posters, the student movement questioned every facet of education from exams to elitism. It went alongside occupations of high schools and universities, and the idea that education should be about more than a mass-produced recycling of the values of French society.

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*Wednesday, March 14 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

### **“Why the Tackle should be Banned in School Rugby”**

Most injuries in youth rugby are due to the collision elements of the game, mainly the tackle. The speaker will argue that a cautionary approach to child injury requires the removal of the tackle from the school rugby game and an end to compulsion in school sport.

*Wednesday, March 14 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

**“Burned like a tattoo’: Friendships, Groups and Hierarchies in School”**

40 years after graduating high school, anthropologist Sherry Ortner set out to find and talk to her fellow students of the class of ’58 about their experiences of school. She found that it was the friendships, cliques and hierarchies they remembered most vividly: these relationships were ‘burned like a tattoo’ on their memories (2002). This talk explores these relationships that play such a significant part in both personal histories and the cultural imagination. Drawing on fieldwork in a London school, and using our own experiences of friendships and hierarchies in school, we’ll explore how these relations are central to processes of growing up and how we become ourselves through our relations with others.

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*Thursday, March 15 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

**“Is Literature Dangerous? Everyday Resistance in the Renaissance”**

Although there are plenty of cases where Renaissance writers were imprisoned or humiliated for making political statements, there were still ways that they could use literature to resist their disciplinary society. This talk will use a few historical examples (such as the ‘tactics’ used by early women writers) to introduce the concept of “everyday resistance” proposed by Michel de Certeau.

*Thursday, March 15 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

**“Convincing the Rats to Bell the Cat: The Radical Politics of *Piers Plowman*”**

In 1381, a group of peasants, artisans, and low-level workers coordinated a mass revolt against the King of England and his corrupt government. While the king was too young to rule, his senior officials created top-heavy wealth by cutting money for the poor and increasing taxation. Despite having no easy way of communicating with each other, the peasants spread their message of equality and rebelled together against the social and economic structures that were designed kept them in their positions. *Piers Plowman*, a poem written around the time with a lowly ploughman as its hero, was used as a watchword for the revolt. Since then, the poem has been held up as a cry for the common people against oppressive governance and a demonstration of the power of literature to effect change.

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*Friday, March 16 (11-12) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

**“Why Does the Past Matter?”**

The past is often used politically. Numerous elections, and political shifts in recent years have involved the mobilisation of particular pasts. In this session I introduce some examples, before opening a discussion on some of the issues that arise. I ask what our own role is in these situations, and look to considering how we might act against occasions when the past is used to foster divisive and dangerous politics.

*Friday, March 16 (12-1) – Hotspur Pub, Percy Street*

**“The Nineteenth-Century Radical Press and Lessons for Today”**

In the early decades of the 19th century, a radical press emerged in Britain that was distinctively working class in character. How popular were these newspapers, and how radical? To what extent did they contribute to a growing class consciousness in the ‘workshop of the world’ and do they have an equivalent in 2018?