

TRUTH

In a Post-Truth Era

11th ANU Spring Workshop
In Social Psychology

ANU Research School of Psychology
Thursday, 6 December, 2018
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Peter Baume Building, Room 2.01

PRESENTATIONS BY:

Rebecca Colvin (ANU Climate Change Institute)
Andrew Frain (ANU Strategic Defence Studies Centre)
Craig McGarty (Western Sydney U., School of Social Sciences & Psychology)
Eryn Newman (ANU Research School of Psychology)
Mark Nolan (ANU Law School)
Emily Read (ANU Research School of Psychology)
Katherine Reynolds (ANU Research School of Psychology)
Michael Smithson (ANU Research School of Psychology)
Lillian Smyth (ANU Medical Education Unit)
Levi West (ANU Department of International Relations)

It may well be that all human endeavours are premised on some manner of supposition about what is true and what is not. At the same time, the methods for determining truth, and truth itself, often remain debated within the sciences, humanities, and arts, as well as among the non-academic populous in general. Indeed, people actively debate whether the earth is flat or spherical, whether humans evolved or were created outright by a more powerful force, whether the earth's climate is changing or not, and whether the expression of negative out-group attitudes reflect the truthful nature of that particular group or are somehow "prejudiced".

Within the discipline of psychology, most researchers work within an assumption of a material reality - a "real world" - and a material basis for the psychological processes they seek to understand. The question of how people come to know that material world - the truthful way people come to understand truth itself - is assumed to be knowable to psychologists. Social psychologists, in particular, have focused much of their attention precisely on how this knowing emerges, including *inter alia* analyses of attributions, social representations, social referencing, and leadership and social

influence (sometimes referred to as "education"). Social psychologists have also proposed and examined a variety of psychological biases and error-based judgements that actually presuppose an accurate - or truthful - way of knowing and acting. In the end, understanding how people come to understand the world around them may well be the master problem of social psychology in particular, if not psychology as a whole. Of course, this is not unique to psychology, as many disciplines seek to answer precisely the same question: How is truth determined?

In this 11th ANU Spring Workshop in Social Psychology, presenters will be discussing truth in the context of mathematics and scientific research methods; truth and basic cognitive and social processes; truth in relation to social norms and social change; and truth in the contexts of prejudice, climate change and radicalization.

All are welcome, and attendance is free. But please inform Michael Platow of your intent to attend no later than 22 November, 2019. Indicate your dietary requirements and intent to join us for dinner by clicking [here](#).

Thursday, 6 December, 2018, Room 2.01 Peter Baume Building (Building 42a)

Time	Presenter	Title
9:00 a.m. – 9:10 a.m.	Michael Platow	Welcome & Introduction
<i>Session 1: Determining Truth: Proofs, Methods, Subjective Judgements</i>		
9:10 a.m. – 9:40 a.m.	Mike Smithson	Is There Truth in Mathematics? A Century-Long Debate
9:40 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.	Andrew Frain	Truth within Social Sciences: Should the “Replication Crisis” Change How We Introduce Social Psychology?
10:10 a.m. – 10:40 a.m.	Eryn Newman	From Feelings to Facts—Reducing Cognitive Bias in Assessments of Truth
10:40 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<i>Morning Coffee/Tea</i>	
<i>Session 2: Truth and Social Processes</i>		
11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Lillian Smyth	Fake News and Information Saturation: The Trouble with Norms Outside the Lab
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 midday	Emily Read	Defining Truth on Social Media through Memes: How Social Processes Influence Perceptions of Negative Intergroup Statements as Prejudice or Truth
12:00 midday – 12:30 p.m.	Rebecca Colvin	Contested Truths in a Wind Energy Debate
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	<i>Lunch</i>	
<i>Session 3: Truth and Security</i>		
1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Levi West	Extreme Truths: Group Dynamics, Self-Selected Information, and the Operationalisation of Extreme Ideologies
2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Mark Nolan	Truth, Preventing Terrorism, and Predicting Reoffending Risk: Post-Sentence Detention for Terrorism and Other Offenders
2:30 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.	<i>Afternoon Coffee/Tea</i>	
<i>Session 4: Determining Truth: Social Processes</i>		
2:50 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.	Craig McGarty	Reality as Relativity: A Case for the Existence of Physical, Mental and Social Things
3:20 p.m. – 3:50 p.m.	Katherine Reynolds	Deciding on “Truth”: Rebuilding Liberal Rationalism Through Insights from Social Psychology
<i>Session 5: General Discussion and Future Directions</i>		
3:50 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Michael Platow	Discussing a Research Agenda for the Future
4:30 – 5:00 p.m.	<i>Drinks & Informal Discussion</i>	
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	<i>Dinner</i>	

2018 Presenters' Affiliations and Contact Information

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