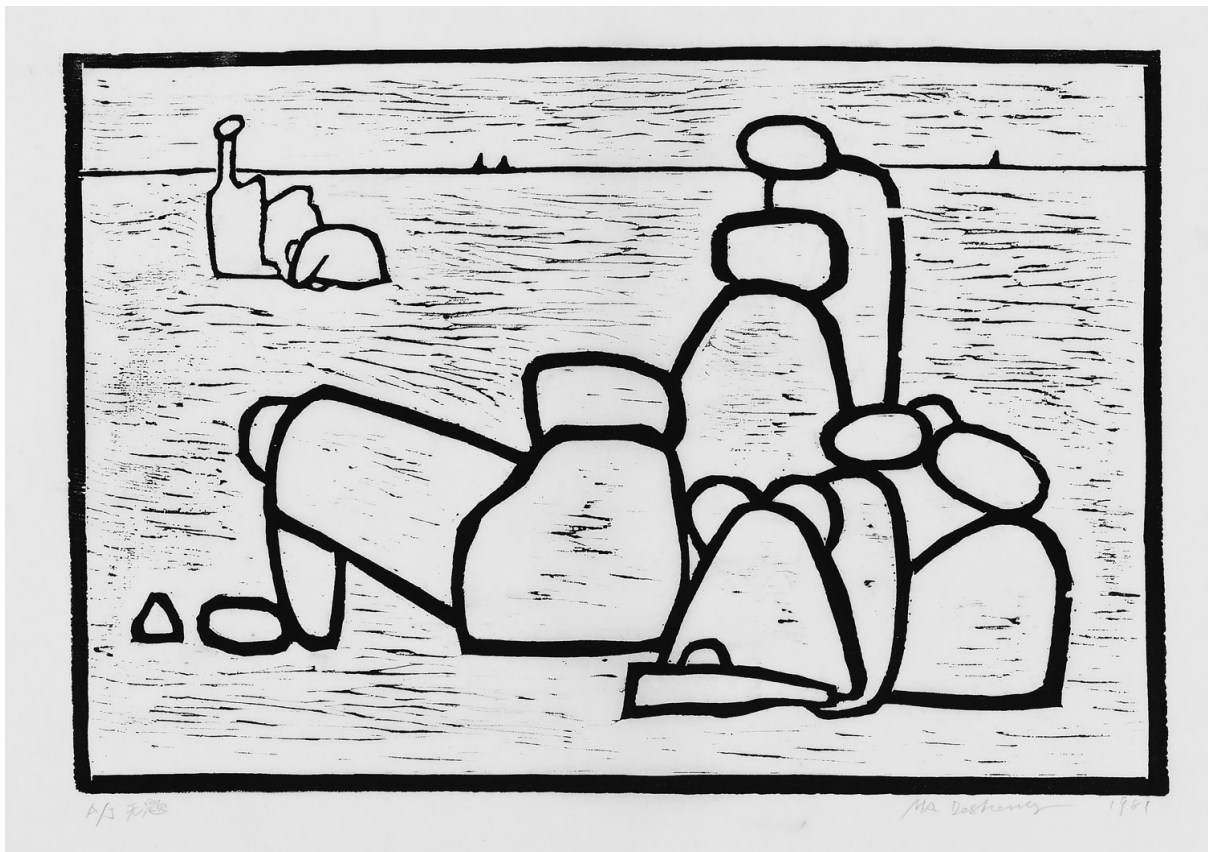


The Feeling of Suffering



The Value of Suffering Project &
Macquarie University Centre for
Agency, Values and Ethics
February 18-19, 2016
Macquarie University

Programme

February 18th

8.45-9.15: Registration

9:15-9:30 Welcome and acknowledgement to country,
Dean of Arts Martina Mollering

9.30-10.30: Brock Bastian “From pleasure to pain and beyond”

10.35-11.35 Michael Brady “The feeling of suffering and the virtues of strength and wisdom”

11.40-12.40 Julia Hush “The experience of pain and suffering: the brain and beyond”

12.45- 2:15 Lunch

2.15-3.15 Wendy Rogers “Screening, suffering and overdiagnosis or ‘A stitch in time... causes suffering’”

3.15-3.30 Coffee Break

3:30-4.30 Cindy Harmon-Jones “Suffering and meaning: pain, dissonance, and meaning-making”

4.35-5.35 Colin Klein “Suffering and the varieties of bodily care”

7.00 Dinner

Programme

February 19th

9.30-10.30: David Bain “Why take painkillers?”

10.35-11.35 Jennifer Corns “Hedonic independence and the negativity bias”

11.40-12.40 Jolanda Jetten “‘The more the merrier’: multiple group membership as a resource to alleviate suffering”

12.45- 2:15 Lunch

2.15-3.15 Laura Ferris “Feeling hurt: revisiting the relationship between social and physical pain”

3.15-3.30 Coffee Break

3:30-4.30 Luke Russell “Forgiving those who have suffered enough”

4.35-5.35 Lorimer Moseley "Pain, chronic pain, damage and The Amazing Protectometer"

6.00 Brief reception

8.00 Dinner

Abstracts

David Bain (Philosophy, University of Glasgow)

Title: Why take painkillers?

Abstract: Unpleasant pains are bad. They are also good, of course, helping us to avoid bodily damage, for instance. But, again, when you undergo an intensely unpleasant pain, this is bad for you and, arguably, not only because of its bad consequences. Murat Aydede, Michael Brady, Matthew Fulkerson, and Hilla Jacobson have all argued, against me, that my evaluativist view, which says that unpleasant pains are experiences representing certain bodily conditions as bad for oneself, cannot accommodate this non-instrumental badness of pain's unpleasantness. For while it is bad for you to be in a bad bodily state, what is so bad about representing that you are? This talk responds to that charge. Negatively, I argue that the view held by three of my critics—what I call the first-order desire view—is scuppered by a variant of the very charge it makes against evaluativism. Positively, I argue that there are two explanatory strategies evaluativists might pursue, one of which, in line with the conference theme, emphasises the sense in which pain's unpleasantness is a conscious feeling.

Brock Bastian (Psychology, University of New South Wales)

Title: From pleasure to pain and beyond

Abstract: We are often focused on pain as an experience that needs to be medicated or ameliorated and one that reduces our quality of life. In this talk I will challenge this assumed wisdom, arguing that pain is not only important for happiness, it is a necessary feature of happiness: without pain we could never experience any happiness at all. I will start with a review of research on hedonics, which suggests that endless pleasure is simply unachievable and that pain may in fact bolster our experience of pleasure. From this perspective pain serves a valuable and important role in facilitating our enjoyment in life. Next, I will turn to work that shows the effects of pain can extend beyond bolstering positive feelings, to show how it might contribute to our happiness in a number of different ways. Starting with a focus on how people interpret or understand their pain, I will present research showing that experiences of pain can serve to resolve feelings of guilt, and relatedly, justify one's indulgence in guilty-pleasures. Moving next to a focus on the well-known ability of pain to capture attention and enhance awareness of immediate sensory experience, I will present research showing that a pain event can also increase sensitivity to tastes and flavours close to the offset of pain. Moving to the social effects of pain, I will present research showing that when shared with others, painful experiences can serve to increase bonding and cooperation between people and may also enhance the creativity of groups. Overall our work highlights another side to pain, one that focuses on the kinds of experiences that may be generated by pain and specifically the various ways that pain may be important for the experience of happiness.

Michael Brady (Philosophy, University of Glasgow)

Title: The feeling of suffering and the virtues of strength and wisdom

Abstract: Sometimes there are significant benefits to our experiencing pain and suffering. But in order for us to get these benefits, two things must be true of us. One is that we know or understand that suffering in these conditions is worthwhile. The other is that we have the capacity to endure suffering in these instances. This requires us to have two virtues which allow us to regulate and control our behaviour when suffering: wisdom and strength of character. In this paper I explain the role that suffering itself can play in promoting strength and wisdom. As a result, suffering helps to provide the conditions for its own regulation and control.

Jennifer Corns (Philosophy, University of Glasgow)

Title: Hedonic independence and the negativity bias

Abstract: It is controversial whether negative and positive affect, or hedonic tone, are independent. Many advocates of hedonic independence appeal to the negativity bias for support. The negativity bias is a broad psychological principle according to which the negative is more causally efficacious than the positive. Bad, as it is often colloquially put, is stronger than good. The principle is widely accepted and currently serves as a constraint on much affective inquiry and theorizing. Beyond its current deployment for empirical inquiry, the principle has significant implications for everyday life and philosophical inquiry. In this talk, I argue that the negativity bias is poorly formulated and poorly supported. I conclude by offering some alternative hypotheses that survive the offered arguments and may prove fruitful, but which do not support hedonic independence.

Cindy Harmon-Jones (Psychology, University of New South Wales)

Title: Suffering and meaning: pain, dissonance, and meaning-making

Abstract: Pain and other dysphoric experiences are important sources of cognitive inconsistency, because they conflict with the desire not to experience pain. Thus, according to cognitive dissonance theory, these experiences motivate individuals to resolve the inconsistency by valuing goals they have suffered for and by seeking and finding meaning in experiences of suffering. This talk will present data that suggest suffering increases the meaningfulness of experiences, and will discuss this finding in the context of the action based model of dissonance.

Julia Hush (Physiotherapy, Macquarie University)

Title: The experience of pain and suffering: the brain and beyond

Abstract: Pain is a universal and fundamental experience. In most cases, but not always, it results in human suffering. In this seminar I will discuss the survival value of acute pain and outline current clinical models of pain that help to explain why people can have very different experiences of pain and suffering from similar noxious inputs or bodily damage. The problem of chronic pain will be explained, illustrated by stories of real patients suffering from persisting pain. I will then make a brief foray into what we have learnt from brain imaging about chronic pain, outlining some of my work on changes in brain structure, function and connectivity in chronic back pain, and the implications for how these maladaptive neuroplastic changes may contribute to the experience of suffering. Finally, I will explore the dilemma of assessing pain, in particular, current limitations and recommendations to more comprehensively evaluate the impact of pain and suffering in clinical research.

Laura Ferris (Psychology, University of Queensland)

Title: Feeling hurt: revisiting the relationship between social and physical pain

Abstract: ‘Overlap’ between social and physical pain has excited controversy, and receives a great deal of research attention in the psychological sciences. Although pain overlap research has revealed important insights – by linking social pain to the relative tangibility of physical pain, and highlighting the qualities of the pain experience (qualia) that feature in both pains – there is cause for critical reflection. In developing a stronger psychological analysis of social and physical pain, much can be gained by considering factors beyond pain qualia, such as the nature of pain and its source; pain-related thoughts and emotions; and our own and others’ responses to pain. Drawing these psychological factors into a contextualised model of pain is necessary to bring overlap research back in step with a biopsychosocial approach. In sum, while a lover’s rejection may feel like a slap in the face, we must look past the metaphor to reach a more comprehensive analysis of social and physical pain.

Jolanda Jetten (Psychology, University of Queensland)

Title: ‘The more the merrier’: multiple group membership as a resource to alleviate suffering

Abstract: Over the last few years, social identity researchers have turned their attention to a relatively new phenomenon to be explained: the role of social identity in buffering and overcoming suffering. One new consideration is the idea that social identities (i.e., group memberships) should be considered as valuable resources that people can draw upon in responding to various life stressors. A second relatively new consideration is the move away from discussion of single group memberships to one involving entire social networks, as a means of capitalising on the many social identities that people have at their disposal. Putting the two together, it follows that having access to more group memberships (that have the capacity to act as resources), membership in more groups should arm people to better respond to painful challenges. In this presentation, I will review empirical evidence for this “the more the merrier” idea and will focus on the way multiple group memberships reduce the suffering associated with physical and social pain.

Colin Klein (Philosophy, Macquarie University)

Title: "Suffering and the varieties of bodily care"

Abstract: Both David Bain and I have argued for a link between pain perception and bodily care. Frédérique de Vignemont (2015) has recently argued that such accounts are vulnerable to empirical counterexamples. Patients suffering from somatoparaphrenia no longer claim ownership over body parts in which they still feel pain. Other cases appear to show a dissociation between pain perception and guarding behaviour. I argue that the apparent empirical counterexamples are less pressing than they seem. They can be accommodated by my imperativism (but not Bain's evaluativism). I argue, however, that de Vignemont points to an important lacuna in the imperativist account, as the relevant notion of bodily care has not been sufficiently fleshed out. I claim that there are actually two relevant notions of bodily care: a more basic one which grounds pain, and a broader sense of "care" which can and does include other people and perhaps even other objects. This broader care grounds sophisticated expressions of suffering. Drawing on recent neuroscientific work, I suggest that this phenomenally broader sense of care has under-appreciated clinical and ethical implications.

Lorimer Moseley (Neuroscience & Physiotherapy, University of South Australia)

Title: Pain, chronic pain, damage and The Amazing Protectometer.

Abstract: Our understanding of the biological mechanisms associated with pain has increased massively over the last few decades, driven at first by the imperative of pain-free life-saving procedures and more recently by the immense societal cost of chronic pain and the potential windfall from finding the pharmacological switch with which to turn pain off. Acute pain is often easy to turn off - chronic pain is usually impossible to turn off. Acute pain often occurs in the presence of tissue damage and subsides in advance of tissue healing - chronic pain often occurs in the absence of tissue damage and persists after tissue healing - local anaesthetics and drugs are of little or no help. Such perplexing observations and a constant stream of experimental and clinical studies showing that pain can be modulated by a seemingly endless array of biological, social, psychological and environmental factors, is revolutionising how we make sense of pain in the clinical sciences. In this presentation, I will review this revolution from my own perspective as a clinical scientist and chronic pain clinician. I will describe the biological mechanisms that underpin pain and chronic pain, their relationship with damage, the concept that pain is just one protective mechanism of many (albeit the Grand Kahuna of mechanisms), and the concept that pain, and other protective outputs, can be understood through the concept of an internal Protectometer.

Wendy Rogers (Philosophy, Macquarie University)

Title: Screening, suffering and overdiagnosis or ‘A stitch in time... causes suffering’

Abstract: The relief of suffering is widely acknowledged as a goal of medicine, on the grounds that many diseases or states of ill health cause suffering to those so affected. Relieving suffering to the extent possible is one of the foundational motives for healthcare practitioners to treat people with diseases.

As well as relief of suffering caused by the presence of disease, many healthcare interventions seek to decrease preventable morbidity and mortality (i.e reduce overall suffering), through activities such as screening. Here the aim is to identify and treat diseases in very early or pre-symptomatic stages. That is, diseases are sought and treated in the absence of any actual or current suffering, in order to prevent future suffering.

Screening activities are thus an example of action consistent with the well known proverb: “A stitch in time saves nine”. A small amount of inconvenience (the screening intervention and any subsequent treatment) is incurred now, to prevent future suffering associated with established disease.

But what if this process, screening and early intervention, actually causes suffering, albeit of a different kind to that potentially avoided by the prevention of advanced disease? In such a case, would screening and early intervention be consistent with the goal of medicine to relieve or reduce suffering?

In this paper I explore one potential answer to this question along the following lines. First, I examine the way that suffering in medicine is conceptualised. Second I identify how some screening programs may cause suffering, in particular through the phenomenon of overdiagnosis. I argue that the suffering associated with overdiagnosis is different to, and perhaps more difficult to live with, than the suffering associated with the development of symptomatic disease. Thus I conclude that screening associated with high rates of overdiagnosis may not be consistent with the goal of medicine to reduce suffering.

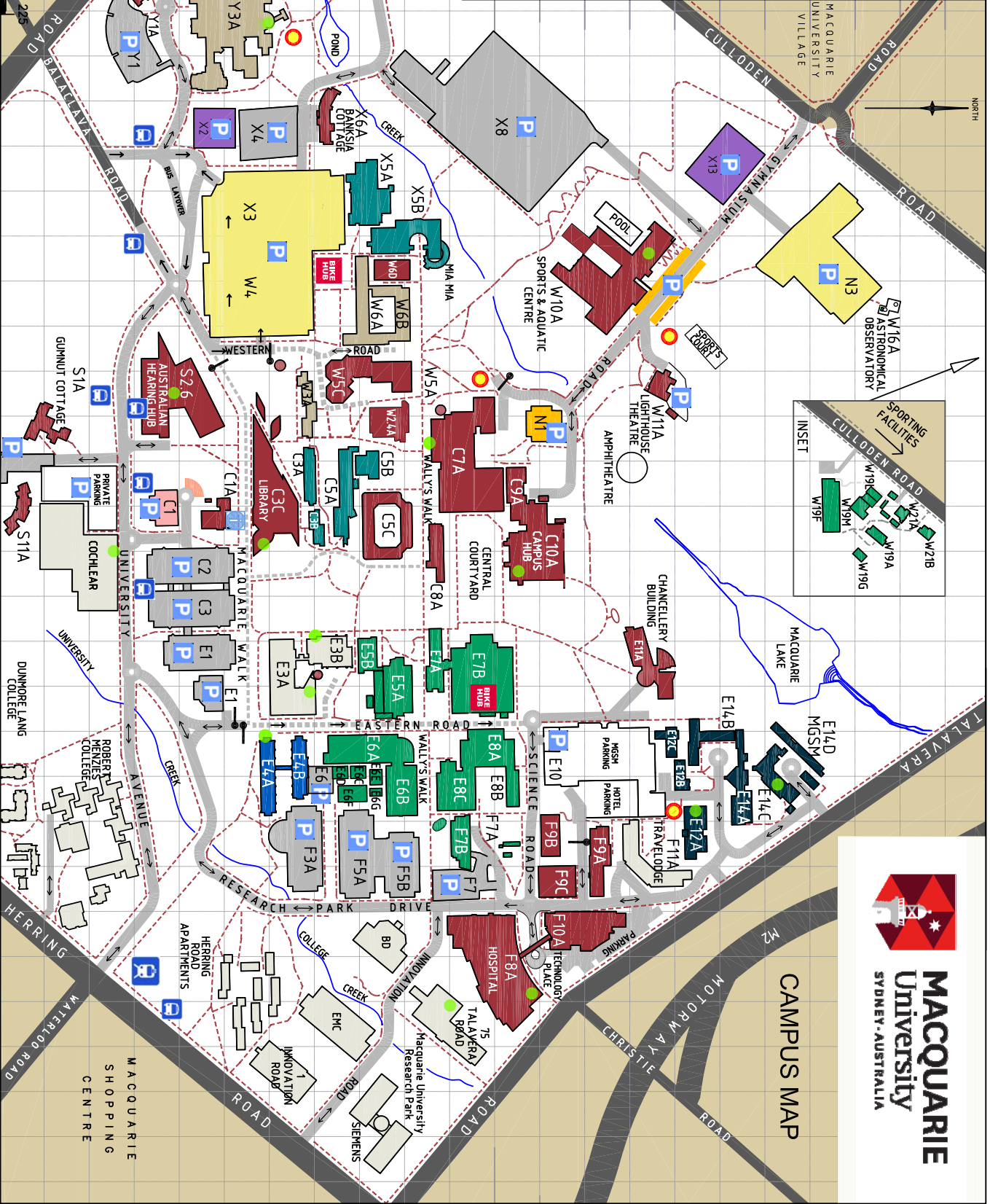
Luke Russell (Philosophy, University of Sydney)

Title: Forgiving those who have suffered enough

Abstract: Forgiveness is connected to suffering in several ways. Typically the victim of wrongdoing suffers in being wronged, then the perpetrator suffers in experiencing the victim's resentment and punishment, and this suffering is taken to be a pro tanto reason for the victim to forgive the perpetrator for that wrong. In this paper I explore some philosophical puzzles regarding these connections. Is suffering an essential part of the economy of forgiveness? If the perpetrator suffers as a result of misfortune rather than punishment, does this suffering count as a pro tanto reason to forgive him? Does the victim's feeling of pity towards a suffering perpetrator rationally undermine the victim's resentment, or merely occlude that resentment? What is the difference from the perpetrator's perspective between suffering as a result of the wrong and suffering guilt, remorse or shame over having performed that wrong?

LEGEND

- PATHWAYS
- ROADS
- SHARED ZONES
- BOOM GATE
- BUILDINGS
- FACULTY OF ARTS
- FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
- FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCE
- FACULTY OF SCIENCE
- OTHER UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS
- MACQUARIE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT (GSM)
- OTHER BUILDINGS
- P PARKING ONLY IN CARPARKING
- P 1 HOUR PARKING
- P STANDARD PARKING
- P CASUAL/STANDARD PARKING
- P OVERFLOW PARKING
- P AUTHORISED VISITOR ONLY
- P PASSENGER DROP OFF (C1)
- P BIKE HUBS
- P SECURITY AND INFORMATION
- P BUS STOP
- P TRAIN STATION
- P DESIGNATED SMOKING AREA
- P CAFE/RESTAURANT



MACQUARIE
University
SYDNEY • AUSTRALIA

CAMPUS MAP

Issued by Macquarie University Property
September 2015

Getting to the conference

All sessions will be held in The Australian Hearing Hub Lecture Theatre, floor 1.

(Map reference S14)

Macquarie University is easily reachable by train on the T1 Northern Line. Be sure to get a train bound for the Macquarie University station (Map reference T27). From the station it is a 10 minute walk to the AHH.

For driving directions to Macquarie, see:

http://www.mq.edu.au/on_campus/getting_to_macquarie/

There is parking just north of the Australian Hearing Hub (lots X3 and W4). All day casual parking is \$40 For information about campus parking, see:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/about/contacts-and-maps/getting-to-macquarie/parking>

Food & Drink

Coffee breaks will be just outside the lecture theatre.

The Australian Hearing Hub has an excellent cafe on the ground floor. It can get busy during lunchtime.

Other nearby cafes on campus include:

Cochlear Cafe (Map U17)

Library Cafe (Building C3C, Map R17)

A food court with a wide variety of options can be found at the Campus Hub (Building C10A, Map L17). The U-Bar is at the top of the Campus hub.

Further afield, Macquarie Centre (Map T29) has a large food court, and The Ranch (off map to south, intersection of Herring and Waterloo Road) has pub food.

Questions? Contact colin.klein@mq.edu.au

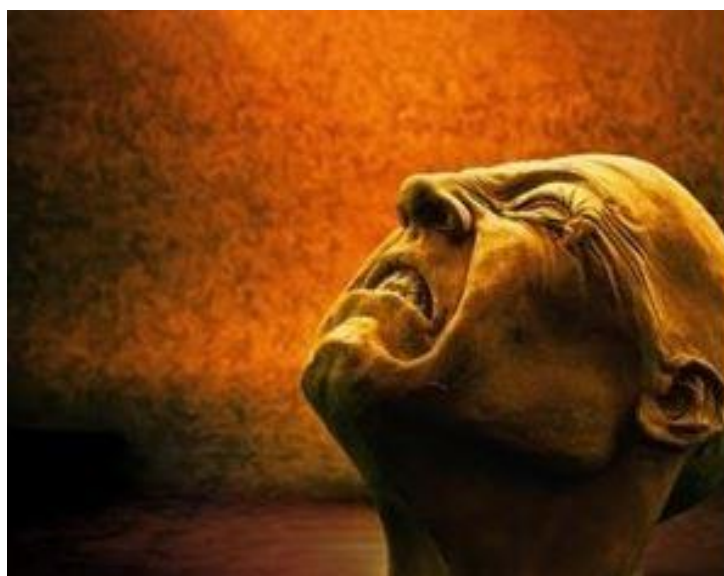
About the Value of Suffering Project

This workshop is part of the larger Value of Suffering Project. Based in Philosophy at the University of Glasgow, the VOS project is a three-year international, interdisciplinary investigation into the neglected roles and values of suffering and affective experiences more generally. Its core team comprises PIs David Bain and Michael Brady, postdoctoral fellow and project manager Jennifer Corns, and PhD student Abraham Sapién-Córdoba.

Affective experiences — those that feel positive and negative—are of the utmost importance to us all. While research into suffering and affective experience more generally is growing in the sciences and humanities, significant holes in our knowledge remain, and there has been a failure to integrate what has been learned across the disciplines.

We hope the Value of Suffering Project will contribute to our understanding of this central part of life, important to us all.

For more information about the project and our research team, please visit: <http://www.valueofsuffering.co.uk/>



The VOS Project is funded by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation and is a partner with the University of Glasgow's Centre for the Study of Perceptual Experience.



About the Macquarie University Research Centre for Agency, Values, and Ethics (CAVE)

The Macquarie University Research Centre for Agency, Values, and Ethics (CAVE) provides a platform for interaction and collaboration between researchers in philosophy, psychology, cognitive science, law, medicine, applied ethics and bioethics. A distinctive feature is its focus upon the philosophical, ethical and legal issues raised by the cognitive neurosciences.

More specifically, its aims are:

- To foster interdisciplinary theoretical research on human agency and the self, moral cognition, the foundations of moral and legal norms, and moral and legal responsibility, and
- To address practical issues at the intersection of ethics, law and medicine (bioethics, clinical ethics, and biolaw) and at the intersection of ethics, cognitive science and law (neuroethics and neurolaw).

Our activities include a conference and workshop program, a distinguished visitors program, support for selected research projects, postgraduate supervision, a postdoctoral program, and a schedule of seminars and reading groups.

Notes

