Research Seminar

‘Time and World Politics’.

By: Professor Kimberly Hutchings, Department of International Relations, London School of Economics.

The idea of non-simultaneity in the encounter between west and non-west is a common point of view in contemporary explanatory and normative IR theory. As Barry Hindess points out there are two characteristic tendencies in western social and political thought: one is the tendency to assign (non-western) contemporaries to the world of the past; the other is the tendency to consign those belonging to the past to the realm of moral and intellectual failure. This paper argues that these twin tendencies are embedded in predominant strands of cosmopolitan thinking in international political theory. And that this means that the progressive impact and timeliness of many attempts to address urgent issues of global rights and justice are undermined by a presumed, but rarely acknowledged, asymmetry in the ethico-political relation between political theorists of cosmopolitan rights and justice (who fully inhabit and grasp the ‘present’) and the majority of the global audience to whom, or on behalf of whom, their arguments are addressed (who do not fully inhabit or grasp the ‘present’). My interest is in questions about universal human rights, humanitarianism, humanitarian intervention, global distributive justice and cosmopolitan democracy. My aim is to establish how it might be possible for political theory to be orientated in relation to the world political present(s), without the orientalism targeted in Hindess’s analysis.

Kimberly Hutchings is Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics, and currently Visiting Fellow at POLSIS, University of Queensland. Her interests include international political theory, including feminist, critical and postcolonial theory, theories of history and temporality underpinning IR theory, global ethics, politics and violence and the thought of Kant and Hegel. She is the author of Kant, Critique and Politics (1996); International Political Theory: re-thinking ethics in a global era (1999); Hegel and Feminist Philosophy (2003); Time and World Politics: thinking the present (2008); and Global Ethics: an introduction (2010). She is the incoming Lead Editor of the Review of International Studies (from 2011) and a former editor of European Journal of International Relations and Contemporary Political Theory. Her current work includes collaborative projects with Professor Tuija Pulkkinen (Helsinki) on Hegel and Feminist Thought, and with Elizabeth Frazer (Oxford) on the conceptual analysis of politics and violence in western political thought.

→ Thursday 15 April 2010
→ N54 Room 2.01
→ Nathan campus
→ 12.30 -1.50pm

To RSVP, please contact Natasha Vary on (07) 3735 5322 or n.vary@griffith.edu.au no later than 5.00pm Tuesday 13 April 2010.