The Centre for Work, Organisation and Wellbeing
Invites you to a seminar

Work Culture within the Hospital Context
Presented by Dr Ivan Sainsaulieu
French National Scientific Research Institute

The vast majority of the sociological literature on the relations between professions and organizations posits a tension between a bureaucratic orientation and a professional orientation. Indeed, employment of professionals in bureaucratic organizations has typically been considered to result in varying degrees of deprofessionalization. Although there are several studies of the impact of such organization influences on professional work in the case of health professionals working in the hospital setting, there has been significantly less research conducted of the impact of organizational culture on the orientation of professionals working within these settings as interdisciplinary teams. Our paper reports on research involving in depth, semi-structured interviews with 60 physicians, nurses and other professional and non professional workers (i.e., midwives, pharmacists, etc.) in four different hospital units in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. What we found from a thematic analysis of these interviews is that the unit influences outweighed the influences of professional boundaries on these health care professionals when sources of satisfaction/disatisfaction and issues of relationships with patients, co-workers and management were taken into consideration. In particular, there were clear differences between what we refer to as open units, e.g., emergency and maternity, and closed units, e.g., surgery and intensive care. We discuss in relation to the literature on community orientation.

Where: Bray Centre N54 -2.06
When: Monday 11 February 2008
10.30am

Dr Ivan Sainsaulieu

Dr Sainsaulieu is an international leader in research concerning the management of hospitals. He studies changes in hospital organisation and management primarily through the discipline of political sociology and sociology of work and organisations at both a macrosocial level and microsocial level. At the microsocial level, hospitals present a comprehensive web of actors, with sometimes conflicting managerial and professional agendas, power bases and identities. At a macrosocial level, hospitals are organisations operating in a cultural environment that responds to political sensitivities and public expectations, economic rationales and models of efficiency. Health and hospital systems around the world are responding to international, national and local pressures which have some similarities and understanding these systems is greatly enhanced through international comparison, and research about this is Dr Sainsaulieu’s specialty.

Examination of the issue of Governance and Health Management/Leadership in Australian hospitals is timely given the current climate of analysis of the health system and recent events publicised at the state level. Looking beyond the national context will provide insights that will assist this analysis. Therefore Dr Sainsaulieu’s international/comparative (France and Canada) project is of particular interest.