

# CONTEMPORARY DRUG PROBLEMS

3rd & 4th  
October  
2011,  
Prato, Italy

## Keynote Speakers

### Robin Room **Alternative terms for problematising alcohol and drugs: their conceptual and social implications**

Phenomena relating to alcohol and other drugs are problematised using many terms. English-language terms, such as inebriety, abuse, addiction, misuse, alcoholism and dependence, have varied significantly over the last century, and some have changed in meaning during this time. These terms tend to focus attention on use or the user, while others, such as the liquor question or drug panics, broaden the frame to include the social milieu in what is problematised. Other European languages mobilise terms with no exact English equivalent, and conversely, some English terms have no equivalent in other tongues. The terms chosen by speakers indicate the conceptualisation of the nature of what is being problematised, and imply specific directions for seeking solutions. This paper explores the ways in which terms problematising alcohol and other drug phenomena are located in systems of thought which, on the one hand, contest each other, and on the other, often overlap and coexist.

*Robin Room is a professor at the School of Population Health, University of Melbourne and at the Centre for Social Research on Alcohol and Drugs at Stockholm University. He is also the Director of the AER Centre for Alcohol Policy Research at Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre. He coauthored three books which appeared in 2010: Drug Policy and the Public Good; Cannabis Policy: Moving beyond Stalemate; and Alcohol – No Ordinary Commodity (2nd ed.). Robin was Editor of Contemporary Drug Problems from 1985 to 2010.*

### Helen Keane **Addiction and its Others: Diagnosing problems and non-problems in the DSM**

The constitution of addiction as an objectively verifiable medical disorder is a persistent preoccupation of drug science. Most recently this 'problem' of addiction has been constituted via neuroscientific accounts of brain dysfunction produced by long term drug use. However, the diagnosis of addiction remains inseparable from evaluations of individual conduct within specific social and medical contexts. This presentation examines the reformulation of addiction and substance dependence in the draft DSM-V, highlighting the relatively limited influence of neuroscience and the continued salience of judgements about legitimate and illegitimate drug use. *Helen Keane has published widely on the social and cultural aspects of drug use and addiction. She is the author of What's Wrong with Addiction? (2002) and is currently working on a project examining ADHD and the figure of the child in educational and medical discourses. She teaches at the Australian National University.*

## BEYOND THE BUZZWORD: PROBLEMATISING 'DRUGS'

Hosted by *Contemporary Drug Problems*, the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University, the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University, and the Centre for Population Health at the Burnet Institute, this conference will bring together leading international researchers in drug use and addiction studies from a range of research disciplines and methods – both qualitative and quantitative.

### Conference theme

The consumption of mood-altering drugs is consistently framed as one kind of problem or another. Across the last century, drug consumption has variously been framed as a 'law and order' problem, a 'health' problem and a 'social' problem. In the process, an array of related phenomena are also framed, including the people who consume drugs, the putative effects of the drugs, the risks associated with their use and the drugs themselves. Indeed, as Derrida has commented, 'drugs' operates largely as a buzzword: a popular catch-all for a diverse collection of substances, actors and effects. What are the implications of problematising 'drugs'? What do particular problematisations allow and disallow, create and silence? What solutions do they entail? This conference invites presenters to reflect on these questions in light of Deleuze's observation that:

*[a] solution always has the truth it deserves according to the problem to which it is a response, and the problem always has the solution it deserves in proportion to its own truth or falsity – in other words, in proportion to its sense. (Deleuze, 1994: 158)*

If solutions and their effects are shaped by the ways in which we constitute problems, what might we identify as the contemporary

drug problems to which researchers in this rich and challenging field should address themselves? What kinds of sense do we want our understandings of drug consumption, our recommendations and our actions to make?

In addressing these questions, presentations could address the following areas:

- ◆ The relationships between licit and illicit drugs
- ◆ Drugs and crime
- ◆ Gender and drugs
- ◆ Drugs and risk
- ◆ Drugs and bodies
- ◆ The 'user'
- ◆ Treatment: what and who is being treated?
- ◆ Drug 'paraphernalia'
- ◆ Abstinence
- ◆ Drugs research instruments and techniques
- ◆ The popular culture of drugs

Presentations on topics other than these will also be considered.

### Conference dates, venue and accommodation

The conference will be held on 3rd and 4th of October 2011 at Monash University's Conference Centre in Prato, Italy. Further information on this venue and accommodation options in Prato is available at [www.ita.monash.edu](http://www.ita.monash.edu).

### Conference format

The conference will run over two days. Each day will begin with a plenary presentation, followed by several concurrent streams running throughout the day. Presentations will run for 20 mins to be followed by 10 mins for questions and discussion.

### Call for papers

Please submit abstracts of approx. 300 words



to [CDP@curtin.edu.au](mailto:CDP@curtin.edu.au) by 25 March 2011.

Participation is limited and preference will be given to abstracts that address the conference theme.

Abstracts will be reviewed by the conference committee and delegates will be notified of the outcome of their submission by late April 2011.

### Registration fees

Full rate	-----	\$450
Early bird rate*	-----	\$350
Student rate	-----	\$275

\*Early bird deadline is Friday June 10, 2011.

A registration form will be available for download soon at: <http://ndri.curtin.edu.au/events/cdp2011/>.

### Conference publication

Following the conference, *Contemporary Drug Problems* will publish a special issue or issues featuring selected papers from the conference. Further information on the journal can be found at [www.federallegalpublications.com/contemporary-drug-problems](http://www.federallegalpublications.com/contemporary-drug-problems).

### Further information

All queries should be directed to Nicola Thomson, Editorial Assistant, *Contemporary Drug Problems*, at [CDP@curtin.edu.au](mailto:CDP@curtin.edu.au). Updated conference information will be posted regularly at <http://ndri.curtin.edu.au/events/cdp2011/>.



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