Evolution on Language Workshop
Speaker Biographies

Professor Robert Berwick
Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems
Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
http://bcs.mit.edu/people/berwick.html

How do complex systems in the physical and biological world – from organisms to human language – arise from the interaction of simpler parts? How can we model these using the tools of mathematics, computation, and control? Can we build computer systems that learn language in the way that people do? Such fundamental questions have driven Professor Berwick’s research over several decades, leading to the first modern computer program to learn language. Professor Berwick has written eight books and more than 200 articles on the nature of human language and its computational properties, how language is learned, how it develops and differs, and how it evolves and changes over time. He has also written extensively as a critic of evolutionary psychology and sociobiology.

Research Areas
- Dynamical System Theories of Language Evolution and Change
- Computational Modeling and Computational Complexity of Human Language
- Biolinguistics and the Genomics of Language
- Detecting Natural Selection
- Evolution of Influenza

Professor Kim Sterelny
Research School of Social Science
College of Arts & Social Sciences
Australian National University
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After studying philosophy at Sydney University, Kim Sterelny taught philosophy in Australia at Sydney, ANU (where he was Research Fellow, and then Senior Research Fellow, in Philosophy at RSSS from 1983 until 1987), and La Trobe Universities, before taking up a position at Victoria University in Wellington, where he held a Personal Chair in Philosophy. For a few years he spent half of each year at Victoria University and the other half of each year with the Philosophy Program at RSSS, but from 2008 he has been full-time at ANU.

Sterelny has been a Visiting Professor at Simon Fraser University in Canada, and at Cal Tech and the University of Maryland, College Park, in the USA. His main research interests are Philosophy of Biology, Philosophy of Psychology and Philosophy of Mind. Over the last few years, he has become increasingly interested in the evolution of human social behaviour and of the cognitive capacities that make human social life possible. His principle book publications include: The Representational Theory of Mind, Thought in a Hostile World, The Evolved Apprentice, Language and Reality (with Michael Devitt), Sex and Death: An Introduction to Philosophy of Biology (with Paul Griffiths) and What is Biodiversity? (with James Maclaurin). He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Royal Society of New Zealand. In addition to philosophy, Kim spends his time eating curries, drinking red wine, snorkeling, bushwalking and bird watching.
Emeritus Professor Brian Byrne
School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences
University of New England

Research interests are in psycholinguistics, with an emphasis on reading acquisition, reading difficulties and language development. Current studies focus on the genetics of reading ability and other aspects of language and cognition. In cooperation with staff at the University of Colorado, USA, and University of Linköping, Sweden, our group has implemented an international study of twin children to help identify the genetic and environmental influences on variability in literacy and language from early childhood to high school. Recently, we have extended the research to include writing, second language acquisition and mathematics.

Associate Professor Drew Khlentzos
School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences
University of New England

Drew Khlentzos is Associate Professor in Psychology at UNE and an Associate Investigator at the ARC Centre of Excellence in Cognition and its Disorders. His research ranges over logic, semantics, psychology and cognitive neuroscience with a particular focus on human reasoning: its nature, neural mechanisms, linguistic expression and pathologies.

Dr Richard Menary
ARC Centre of Excellence in Cognition and its Disorders
Department of Philosophy
Macquarie University
http://www.ccd.edu.au/people/profile.html?memberID=603

Richard Menary is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at Macquarie University, an Associate Investigator and Research Fellow in the ARC Centre of Excellence in Cognition and its Disorders and an Executive Member of Macquarie University's Centre for Agency, Values and Ethics. His research interests include: Philosophy of Mind; Philosophy of Cognitive Science; the evolution of cognition and language. His current research project concerns the phylogenetic and ontogenetic bases for the acquisition of literacy. His publications include: Cognitive Integration, Palgrave Macmillan, The Extended Mind (ed.) MIT Press, and articles in peer reviewed and interdisciplinary journals such as Mind and Language and Philosophical Psychology.