

SEMINAR SERIES

- SARA AHMED -

ABOUT

Sara Ahmed is a feminist writer and independent scholar working at the intersection of feminist, queer and race studies. Her research is concerned with how bodies and worlds take shape; and how power is secured and challenged in everyday life worlds as well as institutional cultures. Until the end of 2016, Sara was a Professor of Race and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London and was previously based in Women's Studies at Lancaster University and currently her primary focus is now on writing and research.



<https://www.saranahmed.com>



Join **Professor Tara Brabazon**, Dean of Graduate Research at Flinders University in a weekly discussion of Sara Ahmed and the trajectory of theory and politics.

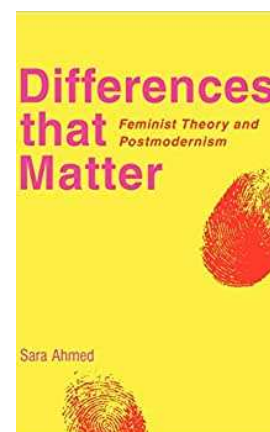
For any queries please contact the Office of Graduate Research at gradresearch@flinders.edu.au.

21 JANUARY

Differences That Matter: Feminist Theory and Postmodernism

Differences That Matter challenges existing ways of theorising the relationship between feminism and postmodernism which ask 'is or should feminism be modern or postmodern?' Sara Ahmed suggests that postmodernism has been allowed to dictate feminist debates and calls instead for feminist theorists to speak (back) to postmodernism, rather than simply speak on (their relationship to) it. Such a 'speaking back' involves a refusal to position postmodernism as a generalisable condition of the world and requires closer readings of what postmodernism is actually 'doing' in a variety of disciplinary contexts. Sara Ahmed hence examines constructions of postmodernism in relation to rights, ethics, subjectivity, authorship, meta-fiction and film.

Available in eBook format from ProQuest eBook Central through Flinders

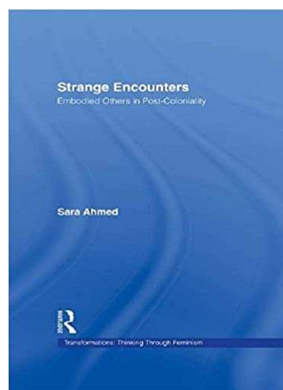


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THURSDAYS | 10AM ACDT | ZOOM

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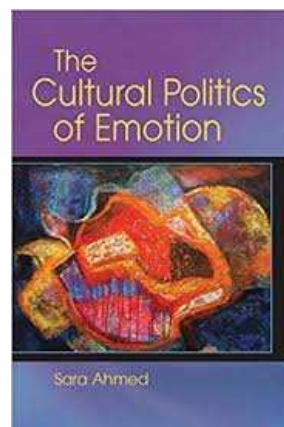
28 JANUARY**Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality**

Examining the relationship between strangers, embodiment and community, *Strange Encounters* challenges the assumptions that the stranger is simply anybody we do not recognize and instead proposes that he or she is socially constructed as somebody we already know. Using feminist and postcolonial theory this book examines the impact of multiculturalism and globalization on embodiment and community whilst considering the ethical and political implication of its critique for post-colonial feminism. A diverse range of texts are analyzed which produce the figure of 'the stranger', showing that it has alternatively been expelled as the origin of danger - such as in neighbourhood watch, or celebrated as the origin of difference - as in multiculturalism. The author argues that both of these standpoints are problematic as they involve 'stranger fetishism'; they assume that the stranger 'has a life of its own'. *Single physical copy available at the library.*

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04 FEBRUARY**The Cultural Politics of Emotion**

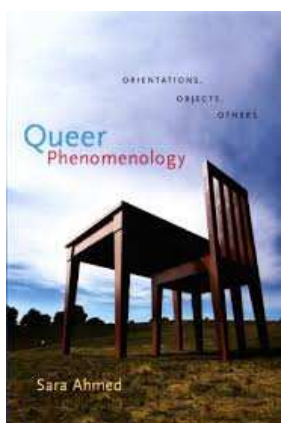
Emotions work to define who we are as well as shape what we do and this is no more powerfully at play than in the world of politics. Ahmed considers how emotions keep us invested in relationships of power, and also shows how this use of emotion could be crucial to areas such as feminist and queer politics. Debates on international terrorism, asylum and migration, as well as reconciliation and reparation, are explored through topical case studies. In this book the difficult issues are confronted head on. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* is in dialogue with recent literature on emotions within gender studies, cultural studies, sociology, psychology and philosophy. Throughout the book, Ahmed develops a theory of how emotions work, and the effects they have on our day-to-day lives. New for this edition A substantial 15,000-word Afterword on 'Emotions and Their Objects' which provides an original contribution to the burgeoning field of affect studies A revised Bibliography Updated throughout. *Available in eBook format from ProQuest eBook Central through Flinders*



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11 FEBRUARY**Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others**

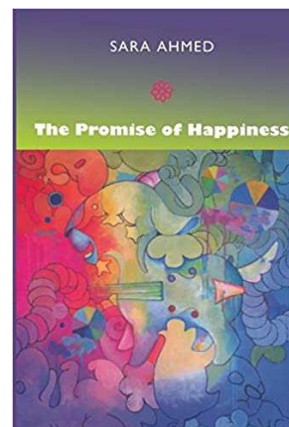
In this ground-breaking work, Sara Ahmed demonstrates how queer studies can put phenomenology to productive use. Focusing on the “orientation” aspect of “sexual orientation” and the “orient” in “orientalism,” Ahmed examines what it means for bodies to be situated in space and time. Bodies take shape as they move through the world directing themselves toward or away from objects and others. Being “orientated” means feeling at home, knowing where one stands, or having certain objects within reach. Orientations affect what is proximate to the body or what can be reached. A queer phenomenology, Ahmed contends, reveals how social relations are arranged spatially, how queerness disrupts and reorders these relations by not following the accepted paths, and how a politics of disorientation puts other objects within reach, those that might, at first glance, seem awry. *Available in eBook format from Duke University Press through Flinders*

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18 FEBRUARY**The Promise of Happiness**

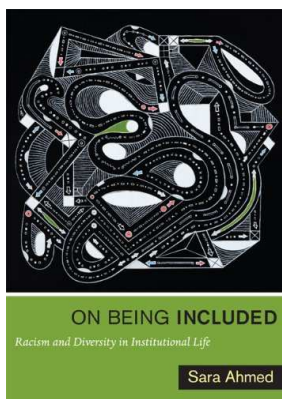
The Promise of Happiness is a provocative cultural critique of the imperative to be happy. It asks what follows when we make our desires and even our own happiness conditional on the happiness of others: “I just want you to be happy”; “I’m happy if you’re happy.” Combining philosophy and feminist cultural studies, Sara Ahmed reveals the affective and moral work performed by the “happiness duty,” the expectation that we will be made happy by taking part in that which is deemed good, and that by being happy ourselves, we will make others happy. Ahmed maintains that happiness is a promise that directs us toward certain life choices and away from others. Happiness is promised to those willing to live their lives in the right way. *Available in eBook format from Duke University Press through Flinders*

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25 FEBRUARY**On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life**

What does diversity do? What are we doing when we use the language of diversity? Sara Ahmed offers an account of the diversity world based on interviews with diversity practitioners in higher education, as well as her own experience of doing diversity work. Diversity is an ordinary, even unremarkable, feature of institutional life. Yet diversity practitioners often experience institutions as resistant to their work, as captured through their use of the metaphor of the "brick wall." *On Being Included* offers an explanation of this apparent paradox. It explores the gap between symbolic commitments to diversity and the experience of those who embody diversity. Commitments to diversity are understood as "non-performatives" that do not bring about what they name. The book provides an account of institutional whiteness and shows how racism can be obscured by the institutionalization of diversity. Diversity is used as evidence that institutions do not have a problem with racism. *On Being Included* offers a critique of what happens when diversity is offered as a solution. It also shows how diversity workers generate knowledge of institutions in attempting to transform them. *Available in eBook format from Duke University Press through Flinders*

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04 MARCH**Wilful Subjects**

In *Wilful Subjects* Sara Ahmed explores wilfulness as a charge often made by some against others. One history of will is a history of attempts to eliminate wilfulness from the will. Delving into philosophical and literary texts, Ahmed examines the relation between will and wilfulness, ill will and good will, and the particular will and general will. Her reflections shed light on how will is embedded in a political and cultural landscape, how it is embodied, and how will and wilfulness are socially mediated. Attentive to the wayward, the wandering, and the deviant, Ahmed considers how wilfulness is taken up by those who have received its charge. Grounded in feminist, queer, and antiracist politics, her sui generis analysis of the wilful subject, the figure who wills wrongly or wills too much, suggests that wilfulness might be required to recover from the attempt at its elimination. *Available in eBook format from Duke University Press through Flinders*

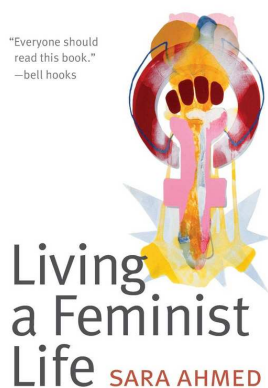


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11 MARCH

Living A Feminist Life

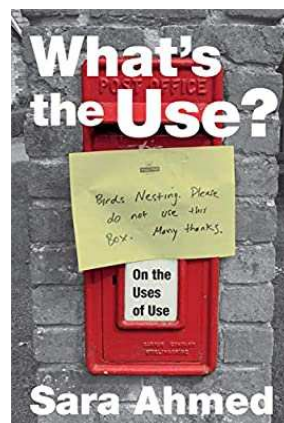
In *Living a Feminist Life* Sara Ahmed shows how feminist theory is generated from everyday life and the ordinary experiences of being a feminist at home and at work. Building on legacies of feminist of color scholarship in particular, Ahmed offers a poetic and personal meditation on how feminists become estranged from worlds they critique—often by naming and calling attention to problems—and how feminists learn about worlds from their efforts to transform them. Ahmed also provides her most sustained commentary on the figure of the feminist killjoy introduced in her earlier work while showing how feminists create inventive solutions—such as forming support systems—to survive the shattering experiences of facing the walls of racism and sexism. The killjoy survival kit and killjoy manifesto, with which the book concludes, supply practical tools for how to live a feminist life, thereby strengthening the ties between the inventive creation of feminist theory and living a life that sustains it. *Available in eBook format from Duke University Press through Flinders*

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18 MARCH

What's the Use?

In *What's the Use?* Sara Ahmed continues the work she began in *The Promise of Happiness* and *Wilful Subjects* by taking up a single word—in this case, use—and following it around. She shows how use became associated with life and strength in nineteenth-century biological and social thought and considers how utilitarianism offered a set of educational techniques for shaping individuals by directing them toward useful ends. Ahmed also explores how spaces become restricted to some uses and users, with specific reference to universities. She notes, however, the potential for queer use: how things can be used in ways that were not intended or by those for whom they were not intended. Ahmed posits queer use as a way of reanimating the project of diversity work as the ordinary and painstaking task of opening up institutions to those who have historically been excluded. *Available in eBook format from Duke University Press through Flinders*



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