# Power, Ethics and Positionality: Day School on Advanced Research Methods in Critical Criminology and Social Policy

**Friday 13 May 2016**

## Programme

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Berrill Theatre</td>
<td>Registration, Coffee &amp; Tea</td>
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| 10:00  | Michael Young Building | **Introduction and welcome:**  
**Dr. Julia Downes** (Postgraduate Coordinator)  
**Dr. Vickie Cooper** (HERC) |
| 10:15  | Michael Young Building | **Plenary:** **Prof. Steve Tombs**                              |
| 11:15  | Michael Young Building | **Break (move to workshops)**                                  |
| 11:30  | Michael Young Building | **Workshop 1:**  
Prison Ethnography  
**Dr. Deborah Drake** |
|        | Michael Young Building | **Workshop 2:**  
Disruptive Discourses: Action research, digital media and storytelling  
**Gabi Kent** |
|        | Michael Young Building | **Workshop 3:**  
Doing participatory action research with sexual violence survivors  
**Dr. Julia Downes** |
| 12:15  | Michael Young Building | Lunch (Jennie Lee Building)                                    |
| 13:30  | Michael Young Building | **Plenary:** **Dr. Mary Corcoran**                              |
| 14:30  | Michael Young Building | **Break (move to workshops)**                                  |
| 14:45  | Michael Young Building | **Workshop 4:**  
Ethical Dilemmas  
**Dr. Louise Westmarland** |
|        | Michael Young Building | **Workshop 5:**  
The possibilities of biographical and visual methods for challenging powerful discourses  
**Dr. Dan McCulloch** |
|        | Michael Young Building | **Workshop 6:**  
Researching Online: Using qualtrics for online surveys  
**Prof. Graham Pike** |
| 15:30  | Michael Young Building | **Break (move to closing plenary)**                            |
| 15:45  | Michael Young Building | **Closing Plenary Panel Discussion:**  
**Steve Tombs, Mary Corcoran, Louise Westmarland, Dan McCulloch & Julia Downes** |
| 16:30  | Michael Young Building | **Conference close**                                            |
Plenary Speakers

Power, Ethics and Positionality: reflections on researching the powerful
Prof. Steve Tombs (The Open University)

Drawing upon his experience of researching ‘the powerful’, Steve considers various dimensions of the politics of academic work. The starting point for this session is that, whatever the intentions of the researcher, and whether s/he recognises it or not, criminological work is inherently political: all researchers must, therefore, reflect on this as they construct, undertake and disseminate their work. Steve will address this general issue through exploring a series of specific questions, including: what is the point of criminological research; who/what is such research for; how might it be used; can or should criminological research be neutral; where and why might it be disseminated; what impacts might such work have; and in what ways might research align itself with social movements – what are the pitfalls, possibilities and practices entailed in this? A theme of the session is how rigorous academic work might be undertaken alongside, with and for various social movements.

Biography
Steve Tombs is Professor of Criminology at the Open University. He has a long-standing interest in the incidence, nature and regulation of corporate and state crime and harm. His most recent publication is Social Protection After the Crisis: regulation without enforcement, Bristol: Policy Press, 2016. He works closely with the Hazards movement in the UK, and is a Trustee and Board member of Inquest.

License to research: reflections on entering the ‘mixed economy’ of criminal justice.
Dr. Mary Corcoran (Keele University)

In politically favoured discourse, the voluntary sector is applauded for injecting diversity and authenticity into the ‘field’ of criminal justice work. These attributions are related to idealisations of NGOs as organic, autonomous and embedded entities which collectively comprise civil society. Yet, such projections tend to be contradicted by academic concerns about co-option of voluntary sector organisations through institutional organisation and sponsorship, often but not exclusively by governmental or corporate interests. Drawing on her previous and current research on voluntary sector activity in criminal justice, Mary will consider the enclosure of the research field by different factors and consider their implications for researching the voluntary sector, and making sense of the power relations that they inhabit.

Biography
Mary Corcoran is Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Keele University. She researches and publishes in the areas of women’s imprisonment and prisoner re-entry and reintegration. Her current research critically engages with the ethics, practice and politics of private sector and civil society actors in criminal justice spheres. She is co-editor (with Anthea Hucklesby) of an edited collection, The Voluntary Sector and Criminal Justice (2015). Mary is Principal Investigator for the project Voluntary sector adaptation and resilience in the mixed economy of resettlement, funded by the Leverhulme Trust.
Workshop Information

**Workshop 1: Doing Ethnography in Prisons (Dr. Deborah Drake)**

This workshop introduces ethnography and its origins and uses, particularly in prisons. The session first interrogates the way knowledge is produced through ethnography before going on to examine the practice of doing ethnography and performing the role of ethnographer in a prison setting. The aim of the workshop is to consider researcher authenticity, positionality and integrity during the research process and the complexity of doing so in environments that require high security measures.

**Workshop 2: Disruptive Discourses: Action research, digital media and storytelling (Gabi Kent)**

This workshop explores practical and ethical challenges arising from action research, digital media and storytelling. In particular, we look at working collaboratively with marginalised and hard to reach communities as co researchers. We will draw specifically on the experiences of a project which explored and documented the personal impacts of austerity measures in Northern Ireland. We will also examine how media tools can be used to create disruptive narratives and processes that are mutually beneficial for academics, community workers and community co-researchers.

**Workshop 3: Doing participatory action research with sexual violence survivors (Dr. Julia Downes)**

This workshop will consider the value of research participation in the recovery process of sexual violence survivors. Using experiences within the ongoing Salvage research project, a study of sexual violence within activist groups in the UK, as a springboard for discussion. We will explore the potential of participatory action research approaches to: contest power hierarchies, empower survivors, blur the boundaries between activism and academia, and result in individual and social transformation.

**Workshop 4: Ethical Dilemmas (Dr. Louise Westmarland)**

This workshop will take a case study approach, posing ethical dilemmas faced by researchers, with particular reference to ethnographic situations. Whilst no particular ‘answers’ will result from the discussions, it is hoped that a problem solving, practical approach to difficulties experienced in the field will be evident.

**Workshop 5: The possibilities of biographical and visual methods for challenging powerful discourses (Dr. Dan McCulloch)**

This workshop will consider the use of biographical and visual methods, and their possibilities for challenging ‘common-sense’ and dominant understandings of particular groups. Drawing on a case study using life mapping and auto-photography methods with ‘rough sleepers’, it will also explore some of the implications and issues of collecting biographical and visual data with ‘marginalised’ groups.

**Workshop 6: Researching Online: Using qualtrics for online surveys (Prof. Graham Pike)**

This workshop will explore methods for collecting data via the internet and demonstrate the Qualtrics platform. As well as how to construct simple surveys, we will look at using more sophisticated visual methods including heat maps and hot spots, and also how to conduct online experiments. The workshop will also look at how to use social media to recruit and debrief participants.