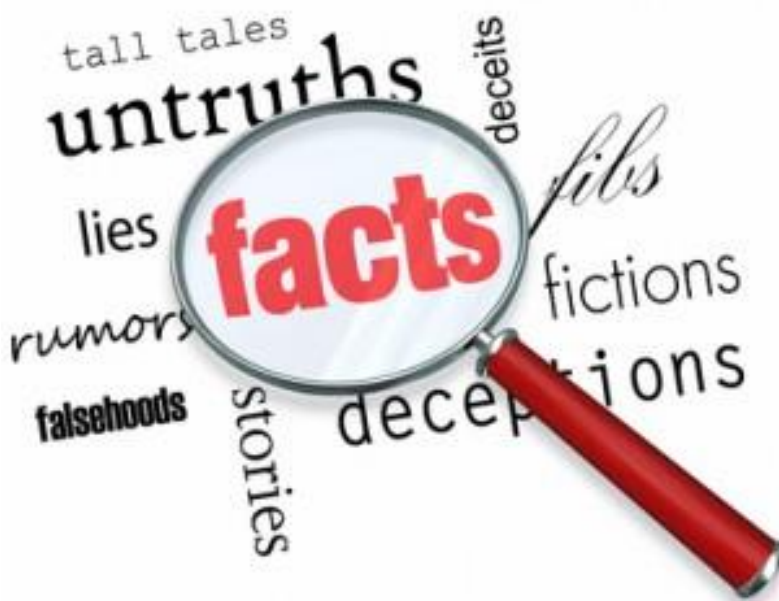


St Clare's Seminar Series

Since its inception in 2000, the St Clare's Seminar Series has provided an opportunity for students to explore a stimulating range of issues and ideas. Each semester the series is linked by a common theme. Themes in previous years have included 'Utopias and Dystopias', 'Revolution and Independence', 'Nature and Culture', and 'Youth and Age'.

Spring Semester 2019 Fact and Fiction



As the writer Mark Twain once remarked, 'truth is stranger than fiction, because fiction has to make sense'.^{*} In a 'post-truth' era of 'alternative facts' and 'fake news', Twain's comment raises some interesting questions. How do we distinguish fact from fiction? Can the truth ever be fully known? Do attitudes to truth change according to time and place? Has the information revolution – and especially the rise of social media – contributed to a crisis of truth? Does fiction still have something true to tell us beyond the world of facts? This interdisciplinary series will explore these questions from a variety of critical and theoretical perspectives.

^{*} Fact check: This comment is widely misquoted. What Twain actually said was: 'Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't'. (See Mark Twain, *Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World* (1897), cited in <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2015/07/15/truth-stranger/#note-11639-1>)

Spring Semester 2019

Fact and Fiction

Venue: Room L.25, 1st Floor, St Clare's Library, 137 Banbury Road
Time: Wednesdays at 4.30pm

Wednesday 23 January
The Chatbot Will See You Now: Fact, Fiction, and Artificial Intelligence
Dr Keith Hopper, Kellogg College, Oxford

Wednesday 30 January
Facts and Feelings
Prof Derek McCormack, School of Geography and Environment, University of Oxford

Wednesday 6 February
The Psychology of Sleep: Fact and Fiction
Georgia Cook, Oxford Brookes University

Wednesday 13 February
'Sundry strange things': Renaissance Monsters
Victoria Staveley, St Clare's, Oxford

Wednesday 27 February
Is Philosophy's Goal to Discover the Truth or to Discover Oneself?
Dr Magnus Moar, Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education

Wednesday 6 March
Fears, Fictions and Fantasies: Christians Imagining Jews in the Middle Ages
Paul Sinclair, St Clare's, Oxford

Wednesday 13 March
Hoax, Fraud and Practical Jokes: The Fascination of the Unreliable Memoir
Andy Rattue, Principal, St Clare's, Oxford

Wednesday 20 March
The Stories That Made Us: What Really Happened to Little Red Riding Hood?
Julie Bolitho, St Clare's, Oxford

Wednesday 27 March
Fact and Fiction in Pro-Trump Art
Dr Karen Heath, Rothermere American Institute, Oxford

Requirements for Credit for the Seminar Series (for Liberal Arts students)

1. Attend every seminar. Please ensure that you sign the attendance sheet. If you have not signed in or have missed a seminar, you will need to speak with the convenor, Keith Hopper.
2. Keep a journal in which you record your thoughts about each of the nine seminars. Include in your journal entries a summary of the content of each seminar and your own personal reflections on each topic discussed. The journal must be handed in no later than Wednesday 3 April 2019.
3. Write a 3,500-4,000 word paper, addressing some aspect of the theme of this seminar series, i.e. 'Fact and Fiction'. Your paper topic must be approved by the convenor before submittal. The deadline is Wednesday 3 April 2019.
4. You will need to pass an oral examination in which your paper and journal will be discussed. You will be required to answer questions relating to your essay. The oral examination will take place on 24 April 2019.