Masterclass:

The Graduate School of the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, UCC, and the Centre for the Study of the Mood Foundations of Economy & Society, UCC & WIT, present a Masterclass on the theme:

"The Value of Social Science to Human Existence in Hypermodernity"

Friday, November 15th 2024

1.00pm – 3.00pm, CACSS Seminar Room

Keynote speaker:

- **Professor John Brewer, Queen's University Belfast.**

Internal speakers:

- Professor Arpad Szakolczai, UCC.
- Dr Niamh Hourigan, Sociology, UCC.
- Dr Gav Mullally, Sociology, UCC.

Professor John Brewer:
"The Public Value of Social Science: Society as a Vocation"
The social sciences are under threat from two main sources. One is external, reflected in the rise of populism, the other is internal, reflected in the rise of the market and managerial practice of scholarship. The other, internal threat is social science's withdrawal from publicly-engaged teaching and research into the protective bunker of disciplinarity. In articulating a vision for the public role of social science in the twenty-first century, John Brewer argues that these threats also constitute an opportunity for a new public social science to emerge, confident in its public value and fully engaged with the future of humanity in its teaching, research and civic responsibilities, while also remaining committed to the ideals of the Enlightenment. He argues that a new social science must replace the 20th century model of science as vocation, which was appropriate then as part of the professionalisation of social sciences but which is inappropriate for 21st century global challenges, which are better addressed by the new model of society as vocation.

Professor Arpad Szakolczai:
"Social Science in an Era of Apocalyptic Control"
Arpad Szakolczai traces the origins of global financial speculative capitalism and mass-mediatized politics through genealogies of the Integrated and the Astute, theatre and spectacle, and the Gift and the Sacrifice. He argues that the Agora is the original name for the place where the public opinion is formed, through rational discussion. Drawing from social and political thought from the Greeks to Weber, and from anthropology and literary criticism, Arpad Szakolczai argues that modernity and enlightenment are characterized by a variety of schismogenic logics, upon by trickster figures under liminal conditions, by upending and recursively entrenching mimetic errors, culminating in the present in permanent liminality and global liberal market society as apocalyptic totalitarian

renewal. Pathways back from our potential descent into darkness towards guiding principles are explored in themes of the redemptive and transformative powers of beauty, friendship, care, love, and ethics of mutual, harmonious reciprocity as permeating an anthropologically universal round forms such as play, rationality and gift relations, generating increasing giving experiences as the basis of moral economy.

Dr Niamh Hourigan: "Public Sociology, Back-translation and the Media: Towards a Rationale"?
Drawing on Michael Burawoy's call for a public sociology (2005) and his sharp distinction between 'different potential publics' within that call, this presentation explores the significant challenges faced by sociologists in engaging with broadcast, print and social media. The concept of 'back translation' - translating sociological concepts and research into everyday language - is considered as a key skill for those who are engaging in this process and the suitability of different types of sociological research for back translation is examined. Finally, building on the range of challenges in doing public sociology identified by Diane Vaughan (2006), within the recommended reading, the paper concludes by asking how this process will ultimately impact on the discipline of Sociology as media frames change and transform.

Dr Ger Mullally: 'Social Sustainability: Public Engagements and Engaging Publics'
Sustainability, or rather unsustainability, is regarded as one of the grand challenges of our time. In this talk we will address the call for public sociology (Burawoy 2005) through the prism of the growing literature on transdisciplinarity and sustainability in order to consider the role of sociology in addressing the challenges of the 21st century. Particular focus on the themes of pedagogy and public engagement, research and public policy and the role for the university in linking publics and polities. The core reading (Walz and Jahding 2012) will orient the Masterclass to the value of critical thinking and meaningful learning as key challenges for public sociology.

Panellists:

John D. Brewer is Professor of Post Conflict Studies in the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation and Social Justice at Queen's University, Belfast. He was previously Professor of Sociology at the University of Aberdeen. He has had visiting appointments at Yale University, St John's College, Oxford, Corpus Christi College Cambridge and the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University. He was President of the British Sociological Association and is now Honorary Life Vice President, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and Fellow of Royal Society of Arts, Member of the Royal Irish Academy, a member of the UN Roster of Global Experts, and a former founder Director of the Centre for Police Studies at the University of Hull and former Director of Social Sciences. He has an honorary degree from Bristol University for services to social science. He is Book Series Editor for Policy Press's new Public Sociology book series.

Aspasi Stabulcioi is Professor of Sociology at UCC and co-director of the Centre for the Study of the Moral Foundations of Economy & Society. He taught at the European University Institute and was visiting Professor at the Universities of Konstanz, Bologna, and Milan (Cattolica). He has just finished his seven-volume series about the genealogy of the modern world, including *Marx Weber and Michel Foucault: Parallel Life-W orks* (1998),

Reflexive Historical Sociology (2000), *The Genesis of Modernity* (2005), *Sociology, Religion and Grace: A Quest for the Renaissance* (Routledge, 2007), *Comedy and the Public Sphere: The Re-birth of Theatre as Comedy and the Genealogy of the Modern Public Arena, 2015*), *Novels and the Sociology of the Contemporary* (2016), and *Permanent Liminality and Modernity: The Sacrificial Carnival Through Novels* (2017, in press), all published by Routledge. He received the UCC Career Research Achievement Award in November 2014.

Niamh Hourigan is Head of the Department of Sociology at UCC. As well as being an academic specialist in culture, globalization, & politics, Dr Hourigan is a high-profile social commentator on current affairs, politics, and social issues in Ireland. Dr Hourigan is frequently featured on the national press, radio and television to such programmes as 'Prime Time', 'Tonight with Vincent Browne', 'DriveTime with Mary Wilson', amongst others.

Gar Mullally is co-Principle Investigator of ***ENTRUST: Energy System Transition Through Trust***, a Horizon 2020 project funded under Horizon2020 SC1 and ***Mobile Work Spaces***, a Fulbright project funded under Horizon2020 SC1, and also the lead researcher on Dr Mullally's long-term dedicated focus on interdisciplinary approaches to ecological politics and sustainable development. He has initiated & led the development of a University-wide module on Climate Change and on Sustainability & Society. Most recently (with E. Byrne & C. Sage), he is the author of a path-breaking book *Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Transitions to Sustainability*, London: Routledge 2016.

Context/Background

Social science was born with the dual, and contradictory, purpose of promoting modernization or containing modernity, in the footsteps of the spread of Newtonian, Cartesian science and the Enlightenment project. Today, we live in a world that is manifold and polycrisis dead end, while under the rubrics 'hypermodernity' (by no means postmodern) conditions of neoliberalism the very legitimacy of a "social" science has come under attack. Social scientists must reconsider their vocation, following the example of Max Weber, beyond being tied to his words, and not shying away from uncovering traditions and retrieving lost connections.

Central Questions:

- What is the purpose of social science?[Q1]
- How can social science make itself relevant to the intractable problems facing humanity in the twenty-first century?[Q2]
- What is the modern 'public sphere'?
- If the public life today has become the "political terrain", "foreground capitalism", "commercialized" spectacular carnival" what role can social science play on this contemporary stage?

Key readings for the speakers' topics are included in the folder (attached), as well as an essay title for students who wish to take this Masterclass for credit.