

**Speaker: Rob Stones**

**Title: *The Political Morality of Sociological Research***

**Abstract:** The traditional conception of sociological research as value-neutral has by now been widely challenged. It remains the case, however, that as sociologists we typically lack the intellectual and conceptual grounding in moral and political philosophy that would allow us to carefully identify, justify and defend the value positions we do take up. The lecture will argue that a neo-Aristotelian approach can provide a powerful and accessible initial frame through which researchers can begin to develop this necessary grounding. The advocated approach takes the diversity of social worlds as a given, and directs sociological research towards the 'internal goods' (the ideals) that are specific to particular sub-worlds. The argument, situated within late modernity, will be empirically illustrated through reference to current subversions of internal goods within the sub-world of higher education.

**About the Speaker:**

Rob Stones is Professor of Sociology at Western Sydney University. He has published extensively in the areas of social and sociological theory and on their use in empirical case study research. In this vein he continues to develop the approach of Strong Structuration Theory (SST), and collaborates with researchers in several specialist substantive areas. Current work, in collaboration with Bryan S. Turner, combines SST with moral and political philosophy to contribute to a more progressive framework for politics, and for research. The approach is based on a distinctive conception of successful societies that places the idea of 'attentiveness' (comprehension and concern) at its centre. Recent book publications include *Why Current Affairs Needs Social Theory* (Bloomsbury, 2015), and *Key Sociological Thinkers*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (ed.) (Palgrave: 2017).