

[The Centre for the Study of Contemporary Muslim Societies presents:](#)

**'The Strange Afterlife of Islamism in Militant Laicism In Turkey'**

**Dr Christopher Houston, Macquarie University**

*Date: Tuesday 14 September 2010*

*Time: 1:00pm - 3:00pm*

*Venue: [Bankstown Campus](#) Building 23.G.41*

**ABSTRACT**

Since the election of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) to national government in 2002 Turkish society appears to exist on a political knife-edge, with rumours and reports of a military coup an almost daily presence. Reactions to the leaks vary wildly, from claims that the AKP is engaged in a political witch-hunt to deepening criticism of the military's power and ongoing calls for its de-politicization. Both responses reflect the very polarized political landscape in Turkey. This paper traces out one key strategy of the secular establishment (led by the military), their efforts to create political momentum through their representation of the AKP as Islamizing society and of themselves as cast heroically to prevent it. By contrast, it argues that radical Islam in Turkey exists only in the minds of militant secularists, and that it is militant secularism itself that is the primary obstacle to social peace and the democratization of civil society in Turkey.

**SPEAKER**

Dr. Christopher Houston is Head of Department of Anthropology, Macquarie University, Sydney. He is the author of numerous articles on Turkey, including the books *Islam, Kurds and the Nation State in Turkey*, and *Kurdistan: Crafting of National Selves*, both with Berg Press, Oxford. His current research is on the recent history of Istanbul, particularly in the years before and after the 1980 military coup.

If you are planning to attend, please RSVP to [E.Garcia@uws.edu.au](mailto:E.Garcia@uws.edu.au) by Friday 10 September.