You are invited to a seminar hosted by the Legal Intersections Research Centre

*The Problem with the ‘Problem Gambler’*

Presented by Dr Fiona Nicoll

Date: 2 November 2015  
Time: 2:00 – 4:00 pm  
Location: Moot Court (67.202)  
RSVP: Online

Research on gambling has been dominated by the psy-sciences since 1980 when ‘pathological gambling’ was first included in the third edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-III). Over the past two decades scholars in sociology and anthropology have provided valuable insights about the role of gambling in shaping institutions, selves and subcultures. This lecture will demonstrate the unique contribution of cultural studies to existing accounts of gambling. In particular, I will argue that our interdisciplinary method and unique attention to everyday life, popular culture and embodied social identities poses a significant challenge to the distinction between ‘problem’ and ‘recreational’ gamblers which both organises gambling studies and shapes regulation to protect ‘vulnerable individuals’. Drawing on the literature on bio-power and governmentality, I develop the concept of ‘finopower’ as an alternative lens for understanding subjective experiences and inter-subjective exchanges at proliferating intersections between gambling, finance and play. This move generates new ways of thinking about the ideological functions of the figure of the ‘problem gambler’ in a cultural landscape dominated by gambling industries’ political and economic power.

Dr Fiona Nicoll is a senior lecturer in cultural studies at the University of Queensland. She is the author of *From Diggers to Drag Queens*; co-editor and co-author of *Transnational Whiteness Matters* (Lexington Press 2008) and the academic editor and co-author of *Courting Blakness: Recalibrating Knowledge in the Sandstone University* (in Press UQP 2015). A founding member of the *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association*, Dr Nicoll has also worked closely on projects using art and media to raise awareness about Indigenous Knowledge matters within the university. Between 2012-2014 she worked with Australia’s leading public artist and UQ Adjunct Professor, Fiona Foley, to deliver a public installation with eight cutting-edge Aboriginal artists in the university’s iconic heritage space: The Great Court. She is currently completing the first cultural study of gambling titled *Gambling in Everyday Life* (due with Routledge in 2016).