



**DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

The changing landscapes of geography and anthropology

4 December 2025

Venue: D1, Dragvoll campus

9.15 – 09.30: Opening and welcome,

Professor Harald Aspen, Head of Department

9.30 – 10.30: Radical action in a moment of crisis,

Professor Jenny Pickerill,

School of Geography and Planning, University of Sheffield, England

How can we as environmentalists, academics, geographers, anthropologists, and as humans, respond to the current disjuncture's of the present? This time of rising fascism, accelerating climate change, violent intolerance, and deep inequities calls for radical interdisciplinary thinking. It requires abandoning binaries, dichotomies, and borders, thinking with and beyond our disciplines, places, times, even species, and perhaps, what even seems possible. Using empirical research we will explore this question through environmentalists' complex temporalities as they navigate their urgent, slow, and somewhere in-between, responses to climate change. Working with activists who seek to change their everyday lives so deeply and radically, also raises questions about the purpose of social science research. These differing temporal engagements are powerful when reflecting on what it means to be an academic or scholar-activist in this moment of crisis. While being political in our work is fraught with challenges, it has never been more necessary.

10.30 – 10.45: Break

10.45 – 11.45: Glacial geomorphology & Quaternary geology - a personal retrospect and prospect,

Professor David J.A. Evans

Department of Geography, University of Durham, England

In this talk I will review the development of glacial geomorphological research as it played out over the various stages of my career. The emergence of process-form models in glacial research in the 1970s was informed by groundbreaking survey work on modern glacier snouts and it is this aspect of geomorphology that I have emulated and attempted to develop throughout my career. My journey started as an undergraduate at the University of Wales, Lampeter under the guidance of Mike Walker (Quaternary palaeoecologist), from where I moved to Canada to undertake my MSc (Memorial University) on the glacial landforms and glaciation history of northern Labrador and then my PhD (University of Alberta) on the glaciation and sea level history of NW Ellesmere Island. This period was one of significant expansion in sedimentology in glacial research and this formed the foundation of my later work on tills and related deposits. The subsequent development of process-form models has facilitated a more informed output in terms of Quaternary palaeoglaciology (glacier and ice sheet modelling/reconstruction) and has also increasingly improved the standard of glacial landsystem models, which are applied in assessments of terrain and sub-surface characteristics. In a future where societal relevance is expected of us as geographers, it is this realm of real-world applications where glacial geomorphology, with its increasingly sophisticated modern analogue credentials, will be making significant contributions.

11:45 – 12:30: Break

12:30 – 13:30: Rising Tides/Melting Glaciers: Relational Ontologies and Differential Materialization,

Professor Elizabeth A. Povinelli

Franz Boas Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University

This talk discusses an ongoing academic and artistic project that goes under the title, Melting Glaciers, Rising Tides. The project asks what conceptual framework might help make visible the ongoing operation of colonialism as the Italian glaciers melt and the seas along northern Australia rise. The talk focuses on the difference between approaches focused on relational ontologies and ones focused on differential materializations. What is made visible by the one or the other as we probe the divergent and coupling effects of the Napoleonic dispossession of my (now) Italian Alpine ancestral lands and British dispossession of Karrabing coastal lands in (now) the northern coasts of Australia?

13.30 – 13:45: Break

13:45 - 15:30: Panel discussion

Professor Jenny Pickerill, Professor David J.A. Evans, Professor Elizabeth A. Povinelli, Associate Professor Henrik Brynthe Lund, Associate Professor Francis Chantel Nixon, and Associate Professor Jon Rasmus Nyquist.

The roundtable discussion will critically examine the roles of geography and social anthropology as disciplines today and explore their roles going forward. Drawing on the experiences and expertise of the invited speakers, but also inviting the audience to participate, the discussion will evolve around three broad themes:

- The intersections between human history and earth timescales. How do temporal scales, ranging from geological epochs to lived human experience, intersect and inform our understanding of place, change, and agency?
- The role of researchers and the politics of research in the face of pressing global challenges such as climate change and socio-environmental justice. Who gets to produce knowledge, under what conditions, and for whom?
- The promises and tensions of interdisciplinarity. How to navigate disciplinary uniqueness, collaborative possibilities, and institutional structures that both enable and constrain such work?