You are invited to a special event hosted by the Cultural Enquiry Research Group (CERG)
School of Education and Arts

Workshop in
Assemblage Theory and its Discontents
Facilitator: Professor Ian Buchanan, University of Wollongong

Date: Tuesday 14 October 2014 from 2:30 – 5:00pm, Room: TBA

This workshop will focus on the concept of the assemblage because, in contrast to virtually all of Deleuze and Guattari’s other conceptual inventions, it has been taken up very widely, in art, architecture, cultural studies, urban planning, and so on, often without any direct connection (much less attribution) to their work. Indeed there has emerged this thing called ‘assemblage theory’, which is a Frankenstein’s monster (in Latour’s sense) if ever there was one. Assemblage theory is slowly attracting adherents, albeit from very different directions – loosely, one may point to two main lines of attraction: Deleuze and Guattari, and Latour. These two lines are usually treated indifferently, as though the concept was the same in both Deleuze and Guattari and Latour, which it isn’t, even though Latour took the idea from them. More often than not, though, even if the names of Deleuze and Guattari and Latour are invoked, the concept of the assemblage is simply a term of convenience used to retrofit pre-existing historical accounts of the development of certain aspects of society, particularly the birth of cities.

Manuel DeLanda’s *A New Philosophy of Society* is probably the best known instance of this latter type – it aligns itself with Deleuze (*not* Guattari), though tactfully (or tactically) it owns only to being Deleuze 2.0, and instructs us to feel free to ignore its connection to Deleuze altogether. But rather than argue that DeLanda and others have got Deleuze and Guattari wrong – even if that’s what I actually think is the case – I propose instead that we should separate Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the assemblage from assemblage theory. Assemblage theory, which is only partially inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, has generated very interesting and important new ways of thinking. It is not my intention to critique this, but I do want to insist that it has diminished or reduced the concept. If everything is or must be an assemblage then the term loses precision, indeed it loses its analytic power. I want to try to restore that analytic power precisely by sharpening the edges of our definition and proposing a new set of rules for use of the concept.

- Places are limited and early registration is strongly recommended. Please email Marnie Nolton m.nolton@federation.edu.au

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**Professor Ian Buchanan** (University of Wollongong) is the founding editor of *Deleuze Studies* and the author of numerous essays and books on the work of Deleuze and Guattari. His current obsession is to develop a ‘practical’ form of ‘deleuzism’ for application in social and cultural research.