### Final Examination
#### Autumn Session 2007

**School of Humanities and Languages**

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**Unit Name (In Full):** Contemporary Society  
**Unit Number:** 100960  
**Time Allowed:** 2 hours plus 10 minutes reading time.  
**Number of Questions:** 10  
**Total Number of Pages:** 10  
**Lecturer's Name:** James Arvanitakis

#### Instructions

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING**

1. Write your name and student number on the top of this examination paper and on ALL answer booklets.
2. Each of the 10 questions is worth 10 marks
3. Closed book exam

**DO NOT TAKE THIS PAPER FROM THE EXAMINATION ROOM**
Exam questions: Contemporary Society
Autumn Semester 2007: 2 hour exam

Read the three articles and answer the attached questions.

There are 10 questions each worth 10 marks: please answer ALL questions

Article 1: Macquarie Fields 'riots'

1) After reading the article, what role do you think 'class' played in the conflicts described? Justify your answer by referring to theories of class we have looked at

2) Do you think class is a matter of wealth (and resources), attitudes or status, or a combination of these? What other issues could you include? How is this reflected in the article? Justify your answer by discussing the different theories of class we have looked at

3) Do you agree that class divisions in society are 'socially constructed'? Why?

Article 2: Race and race relations

As we discussed in the lectures and tutorials, race is a concept that leads to confusion by linking biological characteristics to personality traits. Read the attached article which is a transcript from an ABC story and reflect on your understanding of race to answer the following questions:

4) How does the article highlight the confusion between biology and social traits?

5) Do you think this confusion between race and social traits continues in Australian society? Justify your answer.

6) How do you think institutions like universities promote harmony across different groups in society?

7) How has the racialisation of certain criminal events shaped how we perceive those around us who are 'different'?

Article 3: Technology and globalisation

The attached article is critical of the Australia Government's decision to export uranium. Thinking about the meanings of globalisation, progress and technology, answer the following questions:

8) Do you think technological progress is positive, negative or neutral? Justify your answer.

9) What is the relationship between technology and society?

10) What does the article tell us about the relationship between globalisation and technology?

END OF EXAMINATION PAPER
REMEMBER the Melba Flats?

They were a testament to public housing gone wrong. They were so poorly maintained that eventually the only tenants were ones you wouldn't want. They were largely drug users, thieves and other social misfits. And one of the first acts of self-government was the decision to demolish the Melba Flats. There's a lesson in that for the NSW Government as it struggles to deal with the shock of Macquarie Fields this week. About 45km south-west of the Sydney CBD, Macquarie Fields is a public-housing estate.

There's been plenty of nightmarish behaviour for years but this week, two young men died in a high-speed police pursuit. What followed was rioting, violence, arson. Complete chaos.

There aren't too many places like Macquarie Fields with its high unemployment, high concentration of public housing, high number of single-parent families.

About two years ago, Murray Lee, a senior lecturer in criminology at the University of Western Sydney, decided to conduct research into the area as part of a bigger project. What were the local perceptions of crime and safety? Lee knew it was a high crime area, but what he found most surprising was how well people could articulate what the difficulties were: public transport, speeding cars and, worst of all, police indifference to the calls of residents.

"Residents who had been victims of crime believed that police never did anything about the crimes," he says. But Lee says it is difficult for police as well - because the community has been so neglected, it is no longer a cohesive group. "There can't be community policing - because there is no community," he says. And that's one of the reasons why an event like the Macquarie Fields riot is unlikely to occur in the ACT.

Richard Madden, director of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, says that the ACT's superior planning has ensured a mix of public and private housing. "It was a very early policy of 'pepper and salting,'" he says. But Madden also says that managing the mix requires a great deal of public funding - and money for public housing is always short.

Don Weatherburn, author of Law and Order in Australia: Rhetoric and Reality, and a long-time crime statistician, says that while Canberra has high crime rates, those crimes aren't violent ones. The rate of car theft is higher than
NSW, and burglary is not far behind, but no-one's getting hurt. He says it's the key to whether a community will go off the rails.

"Canberra has a property crime problem, but not a violent crime problem, and it takes special factors on top of those problems to provide the trigger." In the case of Macquarie Fields, the special trigger was, he says, hostile policing.

"Both sides get worn down by each other," says Weatherburn. "Police start stereotyping young people in a crime problem area and [behave] badly. Then young people start stereotyping police."

That's unlikely to be an intransigent problem in the ACT. ACT Police refused to comment on whether it did a better job of community policing than its NSW counterparts but plenty of academics have a view. Gregor Urbas, a lecturer in law at the Australian National University, says, "Almost anything is possible, but we just don't have any historical occurrences of street rioting in Canberra, particularly in response to interaction between the police and specific communities in the way we are seeing in Macquarie Fields and earlier in Redfern. There are no indications of the conditions that might lead to that kind of confrontation between police and communities."

There is certainly a link between levels of crime, and poverty and social disadvantage, he says, but areas like that are dispersed in the ACT. "It's not concentrated in suburbs in the same sort of way it is in Redfern and Macquarie Fields," he says.

John Braithwaite, a professor at the Regulatory Institutions Network in the Research School of Social Sciences at ANU, and an expert in restorative justice, says there is a clear way of preventing events such as the Macquarie Fields ones and that is to change the underlying causes, such as high unemployment and poor education. "You can't underestimate the problems of pockets of high unemployment surrounded by areas of low unemployment," he says. He says it leads to alienation.

"People giving up on their future, people feeling that they don't have a stake in the future and in a sense those sorts of problems get worse rather than better whenever everyone around them seems to be going very well." But communities where those problems arise need to start talking before events get out of hand, he says. A number of Canberra schools began programs such as Responsible Citizens, part of the Life at School project, in 1996.

"Restorative justice is a way of dealing with conflict more appropriately," he says.
Australia First Party wants to 'divide and conquer' Anti-immigration group aims to divide and conquer Australian communities

Tanya Nolan
939 words
31 January 2007
Australian Broadcasting Corporation Transcripts

English

ELEANOR HALL: The group responsible for a leaflet drop on Tamworth which warned residents that Sudanese migrants would bring crime, violence and disease to the New South Wales centre, has said its Tamworth action was only the start of a national campaign.

The Australia First Party has declared it will pursue a policy of 'divide and conquer' and will field candidates in local elections around the country.

The Party's founder, Dr Jim Saleam, says the group's aim is to split all Australian communities on racial issues, as Tanya Nolan reports.

TANYA NOLAN: The town regarded as the home of country music has been getting more attention for its race politics than its golden guitars.

Moves by the Tamworth Local Council to go ahead with a resettlement program for Sudanese refugees, then not, then once again allow it, has created more headaches and heartaches for the community than it bargained for.

It's also created an opportunity for a group known for its anti-immigration stance, Australia First, to get a toehold in local politics. New South Wales Chairman, Dr Jim Saleam, says the Tamworth Council has failed its residents.

JIM SALEAM: Our intention is most certainly to divide all towns between those who in our opinion have an Australian view and those who have the anti-Australian view. That will take place in all country towns where this sort of project, up to and including the contract labour programmes, that the State attempts to implement.

TANYA NOLAN: Dr Saleam says a branch will be established in Tamworth and the search will begin for a suitable candidate to run against the Mayor, James Treloar, at next year's election. Dr Saleam says he will begin writing to local Aboriginal leaders to try and win their support and he says he's confident of getting it.

JIM SALEAM: We're Australia First, we are not One Nation. Our view on the Aboriginal question set out by Graeme Campbell was to carry the Aboriginal community with the European community in its awareness of where globalisation and immigration was going. I know from some interaction in Toowoomba that some Aboriginal people have listened to Australia First members and listened to their views. So I believe it's a new idea, a new avenue. We're going to push it to the hilt.
TANYA NOLAN: spoke to three Aboriginal representatives from Tamworth who say they doubt Australia First will get the support it's looking for.

Teresa Andarakis, the non-indigenous chairwoman of the Coledale Community Group in Tamworth says the locals are happy with the current Council.

TERESA ANDARAKIS: The people in Tamworth have voted for that Council for many years. They know the councillors. The councillors are involved in the community and I think that anyone coming from outside stands very little chance of success in Tamworth.

TANYA NOLAN: Tamworth Mayor, James Treloar, told he will not talk about the move, because he doesn't want to give Australia First any publicity. Tamworth Councillor, Warren Woodley, is one of the biggest critics of the way the Council has handled the issue of the Sudanese refugees. He was the one to put forward the motion to rescind the decision not to allow the refugees to settle in Tamworth, but he says the Mayor deserves to stay. And he says Australia First will only damage Tamworth's reputation by trying to get elected onto the Council.

WARREN WOODLEY: The people of Tamworth, I don't believe... they don't deserve all this. I believe that the majority of Tamworth people are compassionate people and they've shown a lot of support for what's happened here. And there's no need... there's no need at all for it. I guess they're hanging their shield completely on the original council meeting where the majority of the councillors said no, we don't want these people here and they thought, oh, here's a group... here's a council, here's a town that sides with us. So they've sort of come here.

It was just a shame that what happened here in the first place happened, because I mean after that it was handled very badly by our Council.

TANYA NOLAN: What's this all doing for Tamworth's reputation, do you think?

WARREN WOODLEY: Well it's very serious, it's very bad, you know? Tamworth is not a town like that.

TANYA NOLAN: ALP (Australian Labor Party) National President, Warren Mundine, himself an Aboriginal man who grew up in nearby Armidale, says Australia First must be "completely nuts" to believe Aboriginal people will vote for it.

WARREN MUNDINE: Oh, I think they'll just probably ignore it. It's bizarre to me that they're such an organisation reaching out to Aboriginal people. That's how desperate they are. None of their policies are supportive of us, and we don't support their policies and so we're very... Aboriginal people have always been strong supporters of refugees and immigrants. You only have to look at the boat people that arrived on Tiwi Islands a couple of years ago. What did
the Aboriginal people do? They sat them down, they gave them a feed, helped them clean up and looked after them. And that's the way we always been.

TANYA NOLAN: The ALP is the only political party so far to have successfully fielded a candidate in past council elections in Tamworth.

ELEANOR HALL: Tanya Nolan reporting.

Document ABCTRS0020070 131e31v0008h
Australians tend to see themselves as no military danger to anyone and find it hard to believe that others could feel threatened by Prime Minister John Howard's decision to develop uranium mining and nuclear power.

How could anyone possibly imagine that Australia might be embarking on a path that could lead to nuclear weapons? How could other countries feel threatened by Australia's involvement in laser enrichment? Why should they be concerned about Australian deals to export uranium? Since the 1970s, Australia has been a leader in non-proliferation efforts, ratified the non-proliferation treaty and is a signatory to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. What more could Australia do?

Clearly, all the developments here over the years are benign, including Howard's recent announcement that the Government would take immediate action to remove unnecessary constraints impeding the expansion of uranium mining and development of nuclear power.

Australian development of uranium mines or nuclear power plants must surely be seen to be as the Government has stated purely peaceful. Unfortunately virtually every country that has developed nuclear weapons has loudly proclaimed that its intentions were purely peaceful.

The four British Calder Hall reactors at Windscale, opened by the Queen in 1956 were designed, not only for power generation, but also to produce plutonium which could be used for weapons. India proclaimed that its first nuclear test in 1974 was a "peaceful device". But, hardly surprisingly, Pakistan did not believe it and maintained its "peaceful" nuclear program, clandestinely developing its own bomb, which it tested in 1998. Israel did not believe Iraq's claims of peaceful nuclear development and bombed the French-built nuclear plant near Baghdad in 1981. Israel itself claims its reactor near Dimona is for research purposes and refuses to officially confirm that it has a nuclear weapons, though leaks and official slips of the tongue leave no doubt that it does have an arsenal.

Independent analysis by the highly respected Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, published early last month, provides a view of how others might see us today. The institute has identified countries it considers to be of potential concern, as distinct from states that are of immediate or acute concern, such as North Korea or the known nuclear weapons states. Australia is considered to be in the group of countries that has the components of the nuclear fuel cycle and has the technological potential for developing nuclear weapons. The institute is not the first to see Australia as a potential nuclear weapons state and there is good reason to fear Australian developments past Australian governments have planned weapons programs.

The Gorton government's 1969 Cabinet Submission for the proposed Jervis Bay nuclear reactor noted that over its 25-year life the reactor would produce six tonnes of plutonium, which would be of considerable value as fuel for fast-breeder reactors.
"or other special purposes". There are not too many other purposes for plutonium, beyond powering reactors and weapons, so there is little doubt about what was intended. University of Newcastle historian and author of Australia's Bid for the Atomic Bomb, Wayne Reynolds, says Defence's joint planning committee's strategic assessments, produced from World War II through to the late 1960s, point to the advantages of nuclear weapons.

These assessments were along the lines that: Australia had a small, white population, the region to the north was teeming with Asians, World War II had seen Australia isolated internationally and in a World War III there would be no time for Australian allies to reinforce a position in the Far East, and, finally, China had massive conventional forces and after 1964 had nuclear weapons.

As a result, the broad feeling was that Australia would need to have weapons from a cold start. Reynolds says all of these things factored into an Australian determination to get access to the weapons themselves. Initially, the weapons were expected to come from Britain in return for Australia's cooperation in making testing sites available at the Monte Bello Islands, Emu Field and Maralinga. Reynolds says Prime Minister Robert Menzies and other ministers were all of the view that some time after 1957 Australia would have access to British weapons. But when the British reached a deal with the Americans in 1957 to work cooperatively on a nuclear program, the Americans would not agree to the weapons being supplied to Australia.

"The Americans said we could not have the bomb but we can give you all the other facilities that go with nuclear weapons capability, command and control, delivery systems and, under certain circumstances, the weapons themselves." Reynolds says the Australian Atomic Energy Commission was also quite clear in its determination to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Members of Defence, the Prime Minister's department and John Gorton, the Prime Minister from 1968 to 1971, were all strong advocates of a nuclear capability and even called for a costing of nuclear weapons. With this history, one can understand why foreigners might think that Australia could again turn to weapons development.


But the institute also notes that Australia is a major producer of uranium and that the Government plans to further develop its domestic nuclear program. Howard's uranium and nuclear taskforce, headed by Dr Ziggy Switkowski, found that 25 nuclear power reactors could supply one-third of Australia's electric power by 2050. One of the factors that clearly worries the institute is Australia's involvement in enrichment.

The institute's research coordinator, Dr Ian Anthony, told The Canberra Times that Australia had developed a unique technical approach to uranium enrichment, a key proliferation-sensitive part of the nuclear fuel cycle. Sydney-based company, Silex, has developed the laser enrichment process out of work that began at the Lucas Heights research reactor in the 1960s, and has negotiated an agreement with United States multinational General Electric to commercialise it.
Anthony says General Electric sees the technology as a means to expand its engagement in the international supply of nuclear fuel. "The international community is trying hard to persuade Iran to give up uranium enrichment using the argument that existing capacities are sufficient to meet anticipated civilian demand and new centres of production are unnecessary," Anthony says.

"There is an inconsistency involved with creating new enrichment technologies and new enrichment capacities in western countries, when those same countries are putting forward the opposite argument in the dialogue with Iran. It is predictable that Iran will argue that this is just another in a list of double standards being applied with some 'have' countries able to further develop their technical base and benefit from it financially while other 'have-not' countries will be forever shut out of the train of technical development in parts of the civilian nuclear fuel cycle."

Anthony says it is not the institute's intention to suggest that Australia is intending to acquire nuclear weapons, either now or in the future. Rather, the institute is examining the choices that Australia is making and will make in the light of changes in the international nuclear sector and the potential impact of those changes on tendencies in nuclear proliferation. Reynolds notes that once the Canadians developed their CANDU nuclear power technology, General Electric snapped up the patent and then developed it with the Canadians.

The Americans initially held up the Silex development but then, out of the blue, for $80 million, General Electric snapped it up. Almost at the same time, Howard began to talk about Australia moving into enrichment.

Reynolds says if the CANDU pattern holds true there will be a tri-partite arrangement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, a commercial partner brokered by the US Government, and the Australians, in a minor role, developing the technology. The arrangement would be part of the global nuclear energy partnership process. Australia could then attempt to fulfill its long-standing determination to lead a regional consortium, operating under the guidance of the US.

Immediately to our north, earthquake and volcano-prone Indonesia is planning to build a number of nuclear reactors to supply electricity by 2010 for Java and Bali. Australia-Indonesian talks have discussed the potential for collaboration in research between the two countries. If the countries maintain good relations and build trust, this development need not fuel fears of weapons development. But if relations sour, each country's involvement in the nuclear industry will be viewed with suspicion and that in itself might fire another regional, nuclear weapons spiral.