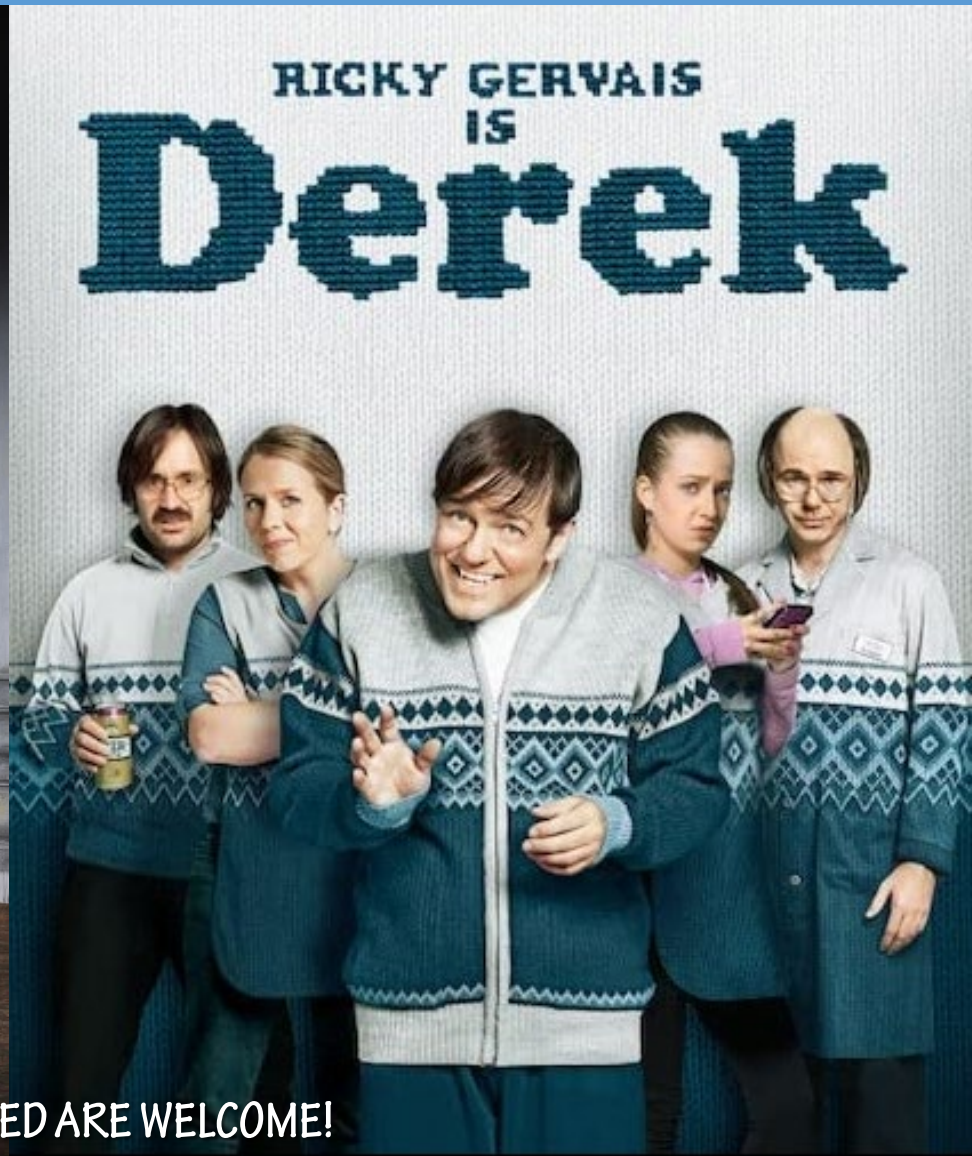


Friday Seminar

When serious is funny

Fall
2022

Date : 7 October 2022
Time : 1:00 – 2:30 pm
Venue : NAH 114



Love on the Spectrum is an Australian reality series that follows a number of young adults on the autism spectrum, as they search for love and go on dates with others who also are on the spectrum. The show ran for two seasons, in 2019 and 2021, and was recently also made in a US version. The series was generally well-reviewed both by people who themselves are on the spectrum and by neurotypical viewers. Much of the charm of the series is that it evokes laughter, frequently at the seriousness of the people it portrays. My talk will explore how the series invites viewers to find the protagonists' serious behaviour funny. I will compare the laughter raised during *Love on the Spectrum* with laughter encouraged by British comedian Ricky Gervais's 2012–2014 series **Derek**, which is about a character whom many viewers identified as being on the autism spectrum. I will discuss similarities between the two series, but will conclude by proposing that the laughter invited by seriousness during these two series in fact is structured very differently.

Speaker: Professor Don Kulick

Professor Don Kulick is Chair Professor of Anthropology at HKU and Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology at Uppsala University, Sweden. His books include *A Death in the Rainforest: How a Language and a Way of Life Came to an End in Papua New Guinea* (2019); *Loneliness and its Opposite: Sex, Disability and the Ethics of Engagement* (with J Rydström, 2015); *Language and Sexuality* (with D Cameron, 2003) and *Travesti: Sex, Gender and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (1998).