

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATE

MIRIAM WILLIAMS

CURRENT ROLE: LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING, MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

PREVIOUS ROLE: LECTURER, THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

DEGREE: BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE



Miriam's lecturers whilst she was a University of Newcastle student were so inspiring and demonstrated to Miriam how important that role of a teacher is in guiding a student. Miriam is now a lecturer herself and enjoys inspiring her own students.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATING?

Miriam is a lecturer in Geography and Planning at Macquarie University. She teaches into [Sustainable Urban Regions](#) which looks into ideas of justice and sustainability in cities, as well as [Urban Economics](#) which focuses on understanding economic processes in cities with a specific focus on Sydney. Miriam is also the program Director of the Bachelor of Planning and the Deputy Higher Degree Research Director for the Department of Geography and Planning.

Miriam always had a keen interest in the complex processes that shape people's experiences of places and what enables them to make more just and caring worlds. This interest led her to completing the Bachelor of Development Studies. After her degree, Miriam completed an honours project that looked into Fair Trade coffee supply in Australia. It was during honours that Miriam's interest in research sparked. The environment that Miriam completed her honours was incredibly supportive and positive, so she wanted to continue her studies and enrolled in a PhD. PhD research allowed Miriam to focus on key areas of interest for an extended period which she really enjoyed. Miriam's [PhD](#) explored everyday practices of care and justice in urban commons in Sydney. Miriam volunteered at three different community organisations, documented every day practices and then explored how these organisations were making cities more just and caring places. From this process Miriam saw the benefit in making these practices visible and valued through academic research.

Research continued to interest Miriam and she secured a position as a Research Assistant at The University of Newcastle (UON) and Macquarie University, working on a number of different projects. Miriam also lectured in courses that she had studied herself as a UON student. In 2017 Miriam secured a fulltime academic position at Macquarie University where she continues to research as well as teach.

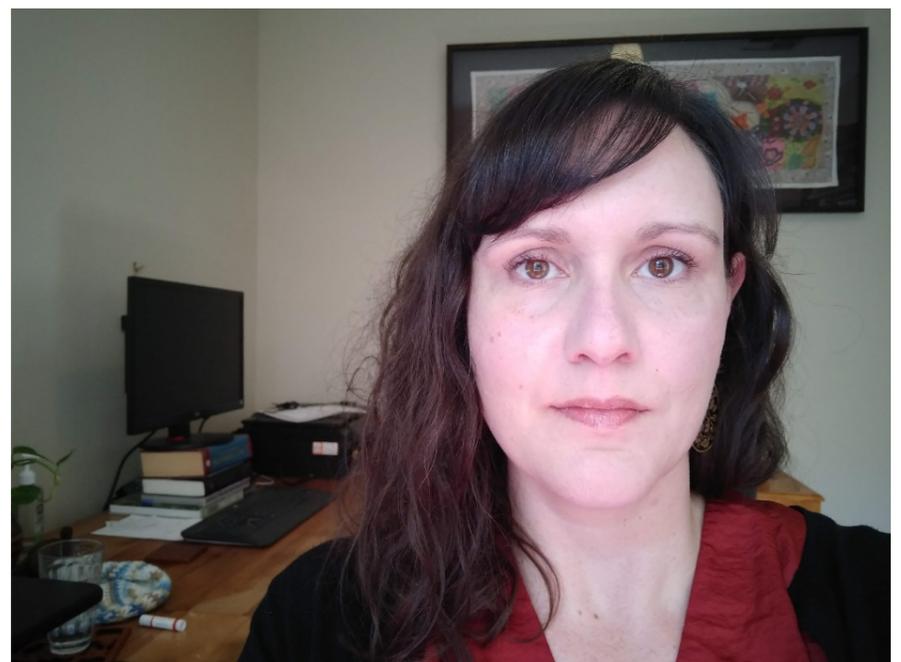


Image: Miriam Williams.

HOW RELEVANT HAS YOUR DEGREE BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED?

For Miriam, her experience as an undergraduate was incredibly positive and transformative. This experience helped her understand the importance of higher education as well as how important the role of a teacher is, in creating a positive learning experience for students. Her experience as a student has helped shape her own teaching and research practices.

Miriam's current research looks at food provisioning initiatives across Sydney investigating about how people are addressing the difficult and complex issues of food poverty and sustainability in a climate changing world. Another area of research Miriam is exploring is how faith-based organisations can contribute to building spaces of connection and wellbeing in high density urban environments.

A key component of conducting research is communication and collaboration. Networking plays a role beyond securing a job. The relationships built during Miriam's undergraduate, honours and PhD play a substantial role as she develops her career.

The relationships that Miriam has built through her research influence the research that she chooses to conduct. While Miriam researches what interests her, she also looks at what the people around her would like to be done and how she can contribute to their work of making the world a more just place.

During her degree Miriam completed an internship with [The Wilderness Society](#). Miriam thoroughly enjoyed gaining professional experience with a non-government organisation. Miriam acknowledges that as a student, it can be a challenge to find the time to volunteer when you are balancing study and work. The [Work Integrated Learning in Development Studies and Human Geography](#), a course that includes a practical workplace component, can be incredibly beneficial for students in providing practical work experience.

ADVICE: ENJOY YOUR TIME

Miriam's advice to current students is to enjoy your time studying and learning. It is understandable that students are eager to graduate and enter into the professional world. Gaining a higher education is a formative and integral time any person can spend developing as a person, and Miriam hopes that you enjoy the time that you are at university.

Once you have graduated don't stop learning. It is important to continue to read and think critically. Continue to try and understand motivations that impacts policies and programs and think about how your actions influence the world.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Miriam's role as a teacher is incredibly important to enable and facilitate learning for current and future students. Miriam's goal is to continue to make a positive contribution in various ways in her role as an academic.

To find out more about Miriam, and our other Development Studies graduates please visit;
uonblogs.newcastle.edu.au/ges/graduate-profiles/
facebook.com/DevelopmentStudiesatUON/

For more information about the [Bachelor of Development Studies](#) you can contact:

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