

## 2010 PUBLIC SEMINAR SERIES

# "A Brief History of the Monsoon"

**Presented by Chris O'Brien**

PhD Candidate, Centre for Environmental History  
History Program, Research School of Social Sciences  
The Australian National University

## Abstract

As the heat bites and the air thickens, thoughts turn to the refreshing monsoons. Spectacular and energising, the monsoon has been understood as both an integral and distinct element of the Top End's climate since the earliest attempts to colonise the north, and even before. Sketching the genesis and development of the monsoon as a concept in Western thought, this paper highlights the social, cultural and economic foundations of this vital idea about nature. Charting its history as an idea, this paper will also demonstrate the changing meanings of "monsoon". Reflecting on its importance to predominant ideas of season in the Top End, I will argue that the received understanding of the monsoon has obscured other significant, if subtle, aspects of local climate and distorted efforts to come to grips with it.

**Wednesday 8 September 2010, 12.15pm**

The Seminar Room, NARU, 23 Ellengowan Drive, Brinkin

This seminar is free and open to the public.

The views expressed in this lecture are those of the presenter and do not necessarily represent the view of ANU.