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## *The Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies*

### SEMINAR SERIES

# War, Democracy and Popular Culture in Fifth-Century Athens

**Dr David Pritchard**

UQ Cultural-History Project, Centre for the History of European Discourses,  
Discipline of Classics and Ancient History

**Wednesday, 22 October 2008**

**12:00 – 1:30pm**

**Don Carruthers Room Level 5, Dorothy Hill PSE Library,  
Hawken Bldg (50) (Enter library and take lift to Level 5)**

<http://www.uq.edu.au/maps/pdf/StLuciaMap.pdf> at K5 co-ordinates

**Classical Athens** is famous for creating what is the most fully developed democracy of pre-modern times and for its related cultural revolution that laid the foundations for the historiography, theatre, philosophy and visual arts of the antique and modern worlds. Little known (and certainly never hymned) is the city's contemporaneous military revolution. Athens of the fifth century intensified and transformed the waging of war, killed tens of thousands of fellow Greeks, attacked other democracies, and ignored some of the traditional customs of battle. By the time its democracy was fully elaborated, in the 450s, war had come to dominate the politics and popular culture of the city and the lives of its citizens. War consumed more money than all other public activities combined, was waged more frequently than ever before, and was the main topic of debate in the democratic council and assembly. Certainly this military revolution was made possible by the unrivalled size of Attica and its citizen population and the unprecedented supply of money from the Athenian maritime empire. However, the practical innovations Athens made to the waging of war, the efficiency of its military operations, and the disturbing willingness of its non-elite citizens to fight and die in battle were direct consequences of the new practices of the democracy. To a large extent the twin revolutions of Athenian culture and warfare can be understood as flip sides of each other.

**David Pritchard** is a cultural and social historian of ancient Greece. His publications have investigated the evolving shared identities of classical Athenians, cultural and educational participation under the Athenian democracy, the position of Attic women, and the ancient Olympic Games. Before joining the UQ Cultural History Project in July 2008, David held postdoctoral research fellowships at the University of Sydney and Macquarie University where he gained a PhD and University Medal in Ancient History. David is currently systematically estimating the monetary costs of festivals and war in classical Athens and exploring how the open debates and popular culture of its democracy fed directly into the achievements and costly excesses of its war-making. Currently he is finalizing a sole-authored book on the relationship between sport and war in classical Athens.

The seminars are free, and all academics, staff, students, and interested persons are welcome.

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