New professors

Anthony Bale
Professor of Medieval Studies
Professor Bale is currently leading a study entitled ‘Remembered Places and Invented Traditions: Thinking about the Holy Land in the Late Medieval West’, which focuses on the post-crusade artefacts that Western Europe created while holding onto the memory of crusades and negotiating the cultural consequences of the loss of the Latin kingdom.

Charlie Bristow
Professor in Sedimentology
Professor Bristow uses observations of sediment erosion and deposition in deserts, rivers and along the coast to inform modern habitat management as well as interpretation of ancient sedimentary rocks. In summer 2012, Professor Bristow went to Siberia to investigate glacial outburst floods from the Altai Mountains. Closer to home, he is collaborating on a study of peat bog restoration in Yorkshire, funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Ian Crawford
Professor of Planetary Science and Astrobiology
Professor Crawford’s lunar research includes both the remote sensing of the Moon from orbiting spacecraft and the laboratory analysis of lunar samples. He also has long-standing interests in astrobiology: the study of the astronomical context of the origin and evolution of life, and what this tells us about the possible prevalence of life elsewhere in the Universe. His research group is studying extreme environments on Earth as potential Mars analogues, and in 2011 they conducted fieldwork at Kverkfjöll, a subglacial volcano in Iceland.

Nazanin Derakhshan
Professor of Psychology
Professor Derakhshan investigates how cognition and emotion interact and how positive or negative emotions can affect cognitive processes such as attention, working memory and cognitive performance. Her research group is currently looking at the effect of emotions on attentional control, cognitive effort and cognitive performance. This work has implications in clinical settings, with the aim of enhancing attentional control in reducing anxiety and depression, and enhancing resilience in the face of adversity.

Penelope Gardner-Chloros
Professor of Sociolinguistics and Language Contact
Professor Gardner-Chloros is currently working on a comparison of multicultural London English and multicultural Paris French. By comparing language variation and change in the two locations, Professor Gardner-Chloros and colleagues will attempt to identify general processes of language contact and language variation and change in large multicultural metropolises. The project will lead to a better understanding of sociolinguistic aspects of language contact and also social questions connected with migration and the consequences for education.

Gerald Roberts
Professor in Earthquake Geology
Professor Roberts’ research looks at active normal faults in Italy and Greece that have hosted devastating earthquakes, using field mapping, structural analysis and radiometric and cosmogenic dating to constrain rates of earthquake recurrence. He also studies faults on Mars to provide new insights into the understanding of terrestrial fault lines.

Rob Swain
Professor in Contemporary Theatre Practice
Professor Swain is a practising theatre director and the programme director of Birkbeck’s MFA Theatre Directing. His research work particularly focuses on the development of new pieces of theatre, involving innovative uses of music and plays based on real lives.

Carol Watts
Professor of Literature and Poetics
Professor Watts’ research focuses on eighteenth-century literature and contemporary poetics. She runs the innovative Voiceworks project with colleagues at Guildhall Conservatoire, bringing together Birkbeck postgraduate writers with composers and singers to produce songs performed annually at Wigmore Hall. Professor Watts’ current research explores the connections between poetic practice and surgery, working with a surgical team from Imperial College.

This year eight members of Birkbeck staff were promoted to the post of Professor

Clockwise, from left: Professors Ian Crawford, Nazanin Derakhshan, and Penelope Gardner-Chloros

Birkbeck is an inspiring institution in which to teach, learn and practise.
Professor Rob Swain