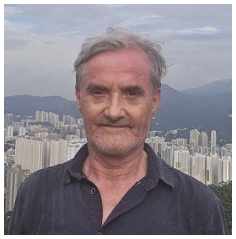
Industrial Relations Research Unit (IRRU)



Seminar Speaker Series – Autumn 2026 (Term 1)

Speakers: **Bill Taylor**

Research Team (alphabetical order)

Title: **Theories of the State in Industrial Relations: in need of an Authoritarian revision?**

Date: **Wednesday 25 November 2026**

Venue: **WBS, room 2.214 (Hybrid via Teams)**

Time: **14:00 – 15:30 (GMT), light buffet lunch served at 13:30**

Abstract: There remains a problem in conceptualising the state in IR and this presentation explores/ implores a need for greater clarity, especially when discussing authoritarian regimes. An advantage of an IR over a political science approach to defining the state is our ability to bring ideology front and centre but we still tend to use liberal terms, such as legitimacy and pluralism in functionalist definitions of the state. By using examples of authoritarian states, it is (hopefully) possible to focus on core power relations and argue for an alternative/ new category – not a 'varieties of capitalist state' but 'state' in authoritarian or democratic forms.

The presentation will focus on some of the IR and politics literature but draws on case research within Asia, particularly Cambodia, Hong Kong, but also China and Singapore. I am indebted to WONG Shu Ting, MOK Hon Hin, LIU Hong Yu and CHAN, Ming Yui as co-researchers and co-authors.

Registration: Email IRRUoffice@wbs.ac.uk to reserve your space