

## **Evaluating the role of social and dialectal variation in sound change**

*Gerry Docherty*

In this presentation I provide an overview of current understanding of the role of social and dialectal variation in sound change, drawing on the findings of a range of studies of phonological variation and change and dialect contact in North American and UK varieties of English. In developing this theme, I evaluate the extent to which accounts of sound change which have emerged from sociolinguistic and dialectal investigations are aligned with contemporary accounts of how change is related to speech production, perception and phonological representation. I subsequently focus on a number of theoretical and methodological questions arising from social and dialectal variation which represent significant and largely unexplored challenges to any attempt to develop a model in which the phonetic, dialectal and social dimensions of the sound change process are integrated.