As we come to the end of another academic year and approach the start of another, I am happy to report that the School of Public Policy continues to go from strength to strength. Approximately 400 master students across our eight programmes will graduate this year and over ten PhDs will have defended. The faculty and international standing of the Department also continues to grow with the recruitment of five world class faculty and two eminent honorary professors in Jack Straw and Michael Jacobs that will join us this term.

In terms of our new hires starting in 2011/12, I would like to welcome them all to the Department and I am sure that they will add much to our academic and public policy profile.
Professor Peter John joins us from Manchester University and is a world expert on Agenda Setting and Public Policy process. He intends to conduct work on Rediscovering the Civic: Achieving Better Outcomes in Public Policy. This project intends to use survey analysis and experiments to understand the contribution of the civic to policy outcomes. In addition, to the above he has a long running project on Agenda-setting in the UK funded by the ESRC which is part of a larger European Agenda-setting project and another comparative project on Distributive Politics and Policy in the US and UK, with Anthony Bertelli, University of Georgia. Peter will be teaching courses Theories and Actors in Public Policy, Agenda-setting and Making Policy Work and is the author of the core text book Analysing Public Policy.

Professor Neil Mitchell joins us from Aberdeen and has established a transatlantic reputation in the field of Human Rights and Business and Politics. His current work is on the democratic and human rights consequences of non-state actors including militias, non-governmental organisations and transnational corporations. His collaborative work on militias is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. His collaborative research on corporate political activity received funding from the Joyce Foundation. The Dirksen Congressional Centre supported his collaborative work on the role of the congressional Human Rights Caucus and its influence on global human rights policy. He has recently published Agents of Atrocity: Leaders, Followers and Violations of Human Rights in Civil War with Routledge. Neil will be teaching courses in Global Public Policy and Human Rights Methods.

Dr Jan-Emmanuel De Neve our new lecturer in Political Economy is joining us from his PhD at the LSE and has already established himself in the new economic field of Happiness. His PhD research is on Ideological Change and the Economics of Voting Behaviour in the US. He will be teaching a new exciting course on Comparative Political Economy and the course Public Policy Economics and Analysis.

Dr Lisa Vanhala will be joining us from Oxford and will be teaching a new and exciting course in Environmental Activism. Lisa’s research project is on the law and politics of European environmental protection and is entitled ‘Beyond Just Law and Politics: A Socio-Legal Analysis of European Legal Mobilization by the Environmental Movement’. In the first year of her appointment she will hold the prestigious British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow. Lisa’s first monograph, Making Rights a Reality? Disability Rights Activists and Legal Mobilization was published by Cambridge University Press in 2011.

Dr Laura Valentini also joins us from Oxford University, where she conducted research on contemporary political philosophy issues. However, we would also like to think that she is returning home to UCL and the School where she wrote her PhD. She recently completed a book on global justice titled Justice in a Globalized World: A Normative Framework with OUP. Besides global justice, she is interested in ideal/non-ideal theory, human rights and democratic theory. Laura will be developing courses in the field of Global Justice.

In addition, to the wonderful new faculty, 2011/12 also looks to be a very interesting period of high profile public policy events and talks at UCL. With plans afoot in the autumn term for talks on Lobbying Codes of Conduct and the Transparency by Diana Wallis the Vice President of the European Parliament, Industrial Activism by Pat McFadden MP, The Future of the UK and Europe by Jack Straw MP, Tax Reform by Professor Richard Blundell UCL and Institute for Fiscal Studies and Public Engagement and Shared Values and Policy Outcomes by Martin Porter President of the Centre Brussels & Edelman and Climate Change and Risk by Bill McGuire.

I do hope to meet new students and alumni at a number of these events next year.
In this sixty second interview we quiz Dr Sherrill Stroschein, Lecturer in Politics and MSc Democracy and Democratisation Programme Director.

Dr Sherrill Stroschein
Lecturer in Politics and MSc Democracy and Democratisation Programme Director

What is your name?
Sherrill Stroschein

When did you join UCL?
I joined in September 2005.

What are your responsibilities in the Department?
On the teaching side, I run the MSc in Democracy and teach courses for the MSc and also supervise PhD students. On the administrative side, there is quite a stunning amount of paperwork and e-mail related to these responsibilities. On the research side, like my colleagues I try to produce as much published work as possible in spite of the other duties. There is always a tension there.

What do you particularly like and dislike about your job?
I like teaching, which also involves learning from the students. Research keeps me up-to-date on a field that is constantly evolving and I enjoy incorporating some ideas learned via research into teaching. I am not a fan of paperwork and even sometimes of e-mail, which can eat time away from the other areas.

What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?
I grew up on a sheep ranch in the US and then became an academic so I suppose working through that trajectory is quite important to me.

Most inspirational person that you have met whilst at UCL?
There are so many students from quite difficult circumstances – from countries that have undergone economic or political collapse or who are trying to write papers and dissertations carefully to avoid upsetting their home governments. I always marvel at some of the things they have to go through. I find it inspiring that they are able to join the world we create for a while.

Favourite location around UCL?
That one is easy – the Housman Room. It is a kind of public space where faculty can go and exchange ideas across departments or engage in marking or just catch up on the news. There are plans to eliminate it in the new UCL Masterplan, which would really reduce cross-unit interactions.

What would your ideal afternoon/evening in London include?
A nice long pub lunch with friends, perhaps followed by a stroll on Wimbledon Common. It would not involve a computer...

What is your favourite book?
I have avidly read and re-read Jane Austen, I must admit. Some of her perceptions about interaction appear in a book called Why by Charles Tilly, which makes one think more about how people conduct conversations after reading it.

What are your hobbies?
I sing in some choirs (one large, one small) and I am learning more about different music styles. The UK is a wonderful venue for choral music. I tend to walk all over London as much as possible and sometimes get out to some good walking venues outside of the city. I am a rather bad gardener but like gardening when I can get to it.

If you had not gone into academia what would you be doing now?
I had internships as journalist during university and I had initially started out studying to be an international journalist but had to change track due to a hand injury that limits how much I can type in a short time. I am able to pace myself more in academia but a part of me still envies journalists.

If you could implement one policy in the world today, what would it be?
Ending unnecessary deaths via hunger or war would have to be at the top of the list but soon after would be an end to human trafficking.
GENEVA STUDY TRIP

Dr Başak Çali, Senior Lecturer in Human Rights, writes:

Thirteen students from the MA in Human Rights attended the fourth United Nations study trip to Geneva, organised by Dr Başak Çali and Dr Natalia Szablewska, in May 2011. This year’s trip coincided with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The UPR allows for the review of the human rights situation in each and every country in the world by other states through asking questions and making recommendations.

This year students had a chance to sit in the UPR sessions of Greece and the adoption of the report against Latvia in the main United Nations conference room. The UCL group heard frank accounts about the United Kingdom’s engagement with the UN human rights machinery from the British deputy ambassador to United Nations, Philip Tissot and Graham Clough, the Head of the UK’s Human Rights Team of the United Kingdom’s Mission in Geneva. The pair also gave the group a first-hand account of how Libya’s membership to the Human Rights Council was suspended through a British-led process in the midst of reports of serious human rights violations on 1 March 2011.

The Human Rights Advisor to the Maldives Mission, Mr Marc Limon, gave the group major insights to the change in the attitudes towards UN Human Rights Council in the work of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the rise in the number OIC states that are moving from a discourse of non-intervention to a discourse of human rights-based criticism of fellow OIC states. Mr Alan Kikuchi-White’s, the Chairperson of the NGO Working Group on the Rights of the Child, gave his account of how soft law is made in the United Nations and why NGOs make the effort to advocate for soft law standards even though such standards are not legally binding.

This year’s students were particularly lucky as the NGO Welcome Centre at the UN generously offered free copies of key human rights documents to students – leading to major savings compared to the books on sale the UN bookshop (and more money to buy Swiss chocolate)!

The study trip ended with the now ‘traditional’ photo shoot in Place des Nations alongside the avenue of flags and the “Broken Chair” - the famous three-legged giant chair designed by Swiss sculptor Daniel Bersetthat stands to remind all visitors to the UN’s European headquarters that landmines still kill between 15,000 and 20,000 people per year throughout the world.
IPAS INVITES YOU TO ‘TEA WITH THE AMBASSADOR’

Dylan White, MSc International Public Policy 2010-11 writes:

Each year, the International and Public Affairs Society (IPAS) stage a series of social and academic events for the students of SPP.

This year, events included wine and champagne tastings, parties for Halloween, winter holidays, Valentine’s Day and St Patrick’s Day, among many other socials and mixers. In March 2011, we arranged a screening of the film ‘The End of Poverty’, which involved a Q&A session with John Hilary, Director of the anti-poverty charity ‘War on Want’. The year was capped by a phenomenal ‘Night at Monte Carlo’ summer ball at Hungerford House on the Victoria Embankment.

However, IPAS is not all about revelry; the society also provides a forum for students to explore their academic and professional interests. In past years, IPAS committees have invited prominent activists and charity workers to address students. This year, we decided to take a different tack and invite elite diplomatic staff to come in and speak to students about current global affairs – the ‘Tea with the Ambassador’ series was born.

From February to June 2011, we hosted the high representatives of five nations in the SPP Council Room: Mexico, India, Germany, Brazil and Canada. Each visit lasted one hour and began with a 20–30 minute address, followed by a Q&A period. The sessions were strictly size-limited to 10–15 students, in order to facilitate an intimate atmosphere and open dialogue.

The small size of the sessions meant that the Q&As were often spirited. Indian Political Minister Chinthapally Rajasekhar fielded tough questions about corruption; Canadian High Commissioner James Wright attempted to explain why Canada appears to be the most hawkish member of the G8 on Israel-Palestine; and Brazilian Ambassador Roberto Jaguaribe suggested that Western criticism of Brazilian environmental damage was supremely hypocritical. German Ambassador Georg Boomgaarden not only faced students’ concerns on Germany’s financial role in the faltering EU, he also had to explain his nation’s abstention on UNSC 1973, which authorised military force to protect civilians in Libya. For his part, Mexican Ambassador Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza discussed Mexico’s economic strength, while candidly acknowledging multiple flaws in its justice and security sectors.

It’s a rare and enriching experience to be able to discuss foreign policy with its key officers and of course, it wouldn’t have been ‘Tea with the Ambassador’ without a spot of tea and some chocolate fingers. By all accounts, students went away with a bit more in their stomachs and their minds.

Dylan White, MSc in International Public Policy 2010-11, served as IPAS president from 2010-2011.
I was, to my great pleasure, awarded a three-year research funding by the Economic Social Research Council in 2008 to study the perceptions of the legitimacy and the authority of the European Court of Human Rights amongst domestic elites. The goal of this research was to understand the relationship between domestic institutions – be they parliaments and domestic courts – and supranational judicial bodies, in this case, the European Court of Human Rights in particular.

Back in 2008, three years seemed a long time in which to design a project, collect the original data and to analyse the empirical findings and their theoretical implications. Now, at the end of the time, I am baffled by the speed in which years passed by but I’m appreciative of how rewarding it has been – in particular, in terms of doing on the ground empirical research in six countries and carrying out 141 elite interviews and gaining experience as a research leader.

Along the way, there are two elements that stand out in particular. First, the fact that I have been blessed with three outstanding research assistants. I travelled, interviewed and discussed the findings with Alice Wyss, Anne Koch and Nicola Bruch – and the project became all the better for it.

The second is the interviewees themselves. I met interesting people in interesting places. I am grateful and lucky for the fact that important and busy people in the UK, Turkey, Germany, Ireland, Bulgaria and Strasbourg made themselves available to talk to me about how they understood their relationship with the European Court of Human Rights and its judgments. These interviews, in their sum, have led to an original set of comparative and cross-sectional data on the domestic elite perceptions of the European Court of Human Rights. These elites we interviewed were government and opposition politicians, apex court judges and human rights lawyers.

The research project has brought about some key empirical findings concerning the perceptions of the European Court of Human Rights amongst politicians, judges and lawyers in Europe. It has also contributed to the methodological approaches to the empirical analysis of international law by showing how qualitative analysis of the perceptions of key actors and their accounts of legitimacy, reasons for compliance and reasons for litigation can enrich existing approaches.

The research project has also been particularly timely. It has had important practical relevance in the United Kingdom, during the debates in Parliament about whether elected politicians should respect the violation findings of the European Court of Human Rights concerning prisoners’ right to vote. The debate centred, to some extent, on the basis of the legitimacy of the European Court of Human Rights and its judgments – and our research findings have been referred to and quoted extensively by the UK Parliament Briefing Paper on the Court: www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05949
Four central findings have emerged from the study:

Firstly, despite the controversy that surrounds unpopular and politically costly judgments from the European Court of Human Rights, this institution enjoys a presumption of legitimacy in the eyes of domestic politicians, judges and lawyers. That is, domestic actors find the kinds of activities that this Court performs as supplementing domestic democratic and judicial institutions. Furthermore, there is strong support for the argument that the European Court of Human Rights is an important force in the convergence of common standards and gives each state a legitimate basis to criticise and encourage other states to protect and promote human rights.

Secondly, the processes of compliance with the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights are best understood as a battle of conflicting motivations (domestic, strategic, international and normative) that political actors hold. In this battle strong domestic rule of law democracies struggle as much as fragile democracies with weaker rule of law protections but for different reasons. Whilst compliance in the former is more likely to be impeded by the trust vested in domestic judicial and political institutions, in the latter the objections based on alternative value-systems are more prevalent. The European Court of Human Rights is a supranational institution that succeeds domestically to the extent that it overcomes majoritarian democratic and nationalist objections in domestic institutional settings. The importance domestic actors place on alternative normative values such as the protection of human rights internationally and the principle to respect international obligations as part of their domestic identities play a decisive role in countering these forces.

Thirdly, domestic judges in Europe are in the process of developing a subtle doctrine, which aims to reconcile the values of integrity, predictability and stability of domestic law with the presumption of deference that should be accorded to human rights law. This doctrine has important implications for embedding a long-standing human rights culture in judicial and domestic institutions.

Finally, human rights lawyers – sometimes characterised as anti-democratic actors who aim to get things through the Strasbourg back-door – are better conceived as democratic actors who are engaged in the politics of recognition and participation of vulnerable groups given that supranational judgments they help produce – like the rest of international law – cannot lead to real outcomes without being fed back to domestic politics and law.

The research project has led to academic research publications, reports and practical guides for NGOs. We also arranged workshops in London and Strasbourg to discuss the findings.

A full list and updates on the research output can be accessed on the project website:

[www.echrproject.wordpress.com](http://www.echrproject.wordpress.com)

and the ESRC website:

Nicola Bruch
Research Assistant, Department of Political Science

I joined the European Court of Human Rights project team in August 2010 as a researcher. The variety of work was exciting and challenging: in any one day I might be updating the project website, booking hotel rooms or flights and analysing qualitative data.

Focusing predominantly on domestic apex court judges, I examined their views about when they should and should not follow the jurisprudence of the ECtHR and also the factors that contributed or detracted from the legitimacy and authority of the ECtHR. This involved analysing interview transcripts, developing coding schemes to organise understanding of the interviewees’ thought processes. I also co-authored a forthcoming article with Başak analysing the approach of Irish domestic apex court judges.

I also worked on promoting understanding of the Council of Europe’s implementation processes following the handing down of judgment by the ECtHR. Victims, NGOs and lawyers strive to achieve favourable judgment but implementation does not always follow (a topical example being the UK’s failure to grant prisoners the right to vote).

Başak and I have finalised a handbook for NGOs to improve knowledge of the implementation mechanisms and provide guidance on their participation in that process so they can apply pressure for lasting change using court judgments. We hope the handbook will provide a useful resource to NGOs across Europe. It is very rewarding to know that this work has the potential to make a real impact in this way.

The highlight of my time working on the project was visiting the ECtHR itself, to present the research findings on perceptions of the legitimacy of the court. There was genuine interest in the research and the findings, which was very satisfying after all the hard work. It was also wonderful simply to visit the ECtHR and physically see where the judgments I’ve read over the years come from.

There were many opportunities to expand my knowledge and skills, including how to use Nvivo effectively to assist in qualitative analysis – vital for the project and a very useful transferable skill to add to my CV! Working collaboratively with Başak and Anne was a wonderfully enriching experience.

My plans for the future include co-authoring two publications arising from the project and hopefully beginning a PhD. I am interested in the extent of knowledge within bureaucracies regarding human rights analysis and the extent to which this produces public policy that respects human rights.
Anne Koch

Research Assistant, Department of Political Science

Joining the European Court of Human Rights project half way through – after the main parameters of the project had been set, most of the data had been collected and the analysis process was well underway – constituted both a challenge and a greatly rewarding experience. Basak and my Berlin-based PhD supervisor Markus Jachtenfuchs were very supportive of my plan to work on the project while continuing to pursue my dissertation on the governance of return migration part time. Looking back at these thirteen months I am not surprised that the ECtHR project soon took over – what else to expect of a job that entailed conference presentations in Colombia and Armenia, required me to write for both academic and policy-oriented audiences and allowed me conduct interviews with country ambassadors from across the Council of Europe member states in Strasbourg?

Working on the project brought home some very basic lessons about social scientific research that had previously remained rather abstract. Most importantly, it taught me that a set body of data can offer any number of insights depending on the research question with which it is approached. Based on the same set of interviews, we analyzed domestic decision-makers’ motivations to comply (or obstruct compliance) with ECtHR judgments, developed a typology of understandings of legitimacy and studied obstacles to the implementation of judgments. The project further showed me how rewarding it can be to go back to familiar data with new theoretical concepts in mind and how valuable it is to discuss research strategies, analytical schemes and tentative results in a team.

One of the most important aspects of the ECtHR project, it seems to me, has been its success in outreach beyond the world of academia. Basak ensured that insights were shared and exchanges facilitated with NGOs as well as with the policy-making community at the Council of Europe and elsewhere. After finishing my PhD I would like to stay in research. What I hope to take away from this project is a commitment to research that is both critical and engaged. Basak and Nicola have helped me along a great deal in this endeavour.
NEWS FROM THE CONSTITUTION UNIT

The Constitution Unit is the largest research centre within the School of Public Policy. It is the UK’s leading centre for the study of constitutional reform.

Professor Robert Hazell, Dr Meg Russell and Dr Ben Worthy all teach courses within SPP and act as supervisors for students’ dissertations. They are currently leading research projects on coalition government, parliament and freedom of information. The Unit recruits interns to assist in its research projects, including SPP graduates. SPP students are welcome to attend the Unit’s monthly seminars.

Full details of the Constitution Unit’s activities can be found at: www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit
 HOW COALITION GOVERNMENT WORKS: THE CONSTITUTION UNIT INVESTIGATES

Dr Ben Yong, Research Associate reports:

The Constitution Unit has been carrying out a year-long project on how the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition works, funded by the Nuffield Foundation. With the support of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Sir Gus O’Donnell we have been interviewing parliamentarians, ministers, their advisers, civil servants and stakeholder organisations. We have conducted 120 interviews so far, with further interviews to come in the summer. We aim to write a book to be published in 2012. In early June 2011, we published an interim report, Inside Story: How Coalition Government Works, laying out our initial findings on the coalition.

We found that at the level of the executive, finding a balance between unity and distinctiveness has the key problem for coalition government. The current coalition has successfully ensured unity and stability but struggles to allow the two parties to express their distinctiveness. Formal cabinet government has been revived: Cabinet and cabinet committees now meet regularly but these are mostly forums for dealing with interdepartmental issues rather than specifically coalition issues.

Instead, the main forums for reaching agreement between coalition partners are informal. Coalition issues are often dealt with before they reach the formal machinery of government. This informality of coalition decision making is based on high levels of trust between the leadership of the two parties. Trust and the importance of compatible personalities are essential for coalition government. However, this informality has one drawback: it means that the Lib Dems are often unable to demonstrate their influence in government.

Some informal machinery has surprisingly not been effective in coalition brokerage—in particular, the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office, special advisers and Liberal Democrat junior ministers.

At the level of the legislature, flexibility within the executive is not always matched by flexibility in parliament. Compromise hammered out in government has led to excessive rigidity when policies are introduced into Parliament. More generally, the informality and relatively close relationships in the executive are not matched by similar relationships within Parliament. In both houses, the coalition is tolerated rather than embraced.

Coalition governments often lead to a divide between the frontbench and backbench. Rebellions in this parliament are historically at record highs. In anticipation of this, the parliamentary parties have begun to modify their backbench committees to prevent the divide between frontbench and backbench widening.

In the first year, it is the Lib Dems who appear to have struggled the most in being part of a coalition. They are still reeling from the loss of their state funding, given only to opposition parties. This has led to the loss of many of their staff. It may help explain their under-powered performance, particularly with the media. But we end by asking if the Lib Dems also made a strategic mistake: by going for breadth over depth, the Lib Dems have spread themselves too thinly. Given the numbers they have, what can they realistically do which will have an impact with the public? They need to prioritise.

Inside Story: How Coalition Government Works can be found on the Constitution Unit webpage, here: www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/research/coalition-government/interim-report.pdf
Dr Meghan Benton

Research Associate in the Constitution Unit writes:

I was a student in the School of Public Policy from 2004–5 (MA LPT) and 2006–10 (PhD Political Science). My PhD, on the rights of non-citizens, was supervised by Professor Cecile Laborde and Professor Richard Bellamy. I passed my viva in August 2010.

The big idea I developed in my thesis was that the exit costs of leaving a country – that is, how difficult it would be for someone to leave either because they have ties (family, employment etc) there or because of the opportunities available elsewhere – affect the strength of the moral entitlements of migrants in their state of residence. So it is sometimes acceptable for short-term residents who have viable opportunities elsewhere to lack voting rights or certain socioeconomic benefits. But once someone has lived in a country for long enough to have developed social networks or if their exit costs are high for any other reason (like fear of persecution, dismal opportunities in their home country or specialist health needs that are only being met in their state of residence) they are entitled to the same rights as citizens.

I published a paper ‘The Tyranny of the Enfranchised Majority: the Accountability of States to their Non-Citizen Population’ in Res Publica last year, which looked at non-citizens and constitutional rights. I am currently developing two further chapters from my PhD into papers for publication.

Towards the end of my PhD, I began working part-time at the Constitution Unit and I am now a full-time Research Associate in the parliament team. I have contributed to work on the House of Lords, parliamentary committees and the legislative process.

I have just finished a project with Dr Meg Russell on the influence of House of Commons select committees. This looked at the impact of recommendations made by seven committees over the 13 years of Labour government and involved over 50 interviews with government and parliamentary insiders.

We found that select committees have more influence than was previously thought, in that around a third of substantive recommendations are ultimately implemented by government but it is always difficult to tell if something happened because the committee was calling for it or for some other reason.

The research concluded that the main forms of select committee influence are likely to be less visible and measurable, such as where government anticipates what something would look like if it was to be scrutinised by the select committee and modifies policy accordingly.

We have just started a new project on the impact of parliament on legislation, which traces a set of case study bills (from both pre- and post-coalition government) through the two houses of parliament to see how legislation is amended in response to non-government actors’ concerns. I am also applying for funding for a project looking at how MPs in the UK Parliament represent people who cannot vote, i.e. prisoners and migrants, through their constituency and policy work.
NETWORKING IN BRUSSELS

Sophia Greeley, MSc European Public Policy 2010-11, reports on the recent SPP visit to Brussels:

Following an early rise for the Eurostar, students from the MSc European and International Public Policy programmes along with students from the Centre for European Studies arrived in Brussels on a bright morning in June 2011 for their study trip. This trip has become an annual event and is kindly sponsored by the European Commission. The aim of the trip was to provide students with the opportunity to meet people who work within the European sector in Brussels and to learn what life there is all about.

On arrival at Gare du Midi, we were greeted by Dr Christine Reh, who had travelled the previous day with the first group of students. A total of forty students participated on the trip over two days and were accompanied by Nicola Chelotti and Selina Uddin.

We made our way to the European Parliament, where we were greeted by Alexandros Karides, who works for the Parliament’s Visitors’ Service. Alexandros talked to us about the workings of the European Parliament and was impressed by our knowledge of how it operated! He then took us to visit the Plenary of the European Parliament and explained how the translation services work. We enjoyed lunch in the Parliament canteen, which we had almost to ourselves as Parliament was in session in Strasbourg at the time.

The afternoon started with a tour of the European Quarter before we made our way to the offices of Bouygues where we were to receive our afternoon speakers. Giles Dickson from Alstom, a French energy company, gave us a lively introduction into the lobbying process in Brussels and how to exert influence effectively. Giles elaborated on the strategy utilised for the revised directive on the European Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), which was of great interest to us as we had tried to develop our own strategies for this in a seminar earlier in the year.

Our second speaker was Kay Shaefer from the Directorate-General for Development. He introduced us to the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and in particular, one instrument known as the African Peace Facility (APF). This instrument is to support African Union’s (AU) African Peace and Security Architecture, which was established to respond to the peace and security challenges on the continent. The APF provides funding to support the operations of the African Peace and Security Architecture, through capacity building and peace support operations. It is a complex instrument which has been supporting the AU in its peace operations since 2004.

Our final speaker, Anja Fielder, was from the European External Action Service (EEAS). Anja gave an exciting insight to the EEAS, which was established following the Lisbon Treaty. She elaborated on the operations of the EEAS and also its current challenges, highlighting the example of the current intervention in Libya and the divergent views around the European table.

There was plenty of energy and discussion throughout the day,
with students keen to take away as much information as possible about life in the European Union. These discussions later moved to a more informal setting in Place Luxembourg where we had the chance to quiz former SPP students now working in Brussels about their current jobs, how they got their positions and what the nightlife was like in Brussels. Some students chose to stay overnight in Brussels and see for themselves!

The trip provided us with a wonderful chance to gain a taste of Brussels and hear from insiders on life at the EU. Following months of study dedicated to understanding the EU, it was a most enjoyable way to culminate our learning.

Thank you to Christine for coordinating a great trip!

European Parliament
Dr Slava Mikhaylov, MPhil/PhD Programme Director reports:

Accepted Publications

Chiara Cordelli has an article ‘How Privatization Threatens the Private’ accepted by the Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy (CRISPP).

Nick Martin has a paper ‘Liberal Neutrality and Charitable Purposes’ accepted in Political Studies.

Conference Presentations

Chiara Cordelli presented a paper entitled ‘Social Justice and Charitable Giving’ at the Graduate Conference in Political Theory, at Warwick University on 02 July 2011.

Susan Fuchs presented a paper at the UACES Student Forum Conference, which was held at the University of Surrey over 30 June-1 July 2011. The title of the paper was Negotiations in the European Union: Who Wins When, and Why?

Ivo Veiga presented papers at the European Political Science Association Annual General Conference in Dublin, June 2011 and at the ECPR General Conference in Reykjavik, August 2011. Ivo is also scheduled to present papers at the American Political Science Association Annual Conference (Seattle, September 2011).
Successful defense

Dr Raluca Soreanu

Congratulations to Raluca Soreanu, who passed her PhD examination without corrections on 18 July 2011. Her external examiners were Professor Stephen Frosh from the Department of Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck College London and Dr Raia Prokhovnik of the Politics and International Studies Department at the Open University. Raluca’s examiners complimented her on the quality of the research and particularly her performance in the viva, in which she excelled.

Raluca’s thesis, entitled ‘A Theory of Outlaw Emotions: Post-Heroic Creativities and Disciplinary Change in International Relations’, brings together sociology, psychoanalysis and feminist theories to build an account of how emotions such as rage, anger, embarrassment and humiliation are central to disciplinary change within International Relations.

The thesis was based on a series of biographic interviews with leading US and European International Relations scholars which detailed links between, on the one hand, creativity in their intellectual lives and their part in fomenting disciplinary change and on the other, the role of different emotional experiences and episodes – both positive and negative – had in shaping their academic work. Raluca’s contribution is to firmly place the often-overlooked sociology of emotions into understandings of disciplinary change. Raluca plans to build on this work in her postdoctoral research looking at the relationship between social suffering, creativity and collective process in new social movements in Europe.

Raluca’s supervisors were Dr David Hudson, Professor Markus Kornprobst (Vienna School of International Studies) and Dr Jennifer van Heerde-Hudson. During her time at UCL Raluca also held positions as Teaching Fellow at UCL, a Research Fellow at the Institute for Public Knowledge, New York University and a Visiting Scholar at the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University. She holds an MA in International Relations and European Studies from Central European University in Budapest, Hungary (2006); an MA in Cultural Studies from Lund University, Sweden (2005); a BA in Sociology (2005) and a BA in Political Science (2005) from ‘Babes-Bolyai’ University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Dr Chiara Cordelli


Sample publications whilst a PhD Candidate:

(forthcoming). ‘The Institutional Division of Labor and the Egalitarian Obligations of Nonprofits.’ Journal of Political Philosophy


Dr Julio Montero

Julio Montero successfully passed his PhD viva exam in July 2011. Julio published three articles in peer reviewed journals whilst a PhD candidate and now is permanent Researcher of the National Research Council of Argentina, Lecturer at Buenos Aires University and a Researcher of the Centre for Philosophical Research of Argentina (CIF).
European Monetary Union and Governance

Report by Susan Fuchs and Alexander Katsaitis
Research Degree Students in UCL Department of Political Science

2nd Discussion Group

Building on the material of its first inter-disciplinary meeting held in March the forum on the European Monetary Union (EMU) and governance held its second discussion group in June 2011.

The meeting focused on two main aspects;
i) the democratic deficit;
ii) fiscal policy.

In addition, the forum launched an ongoing online debate on the subject. Here is a summary of the meeting’s conclusions.

Democratic Deficit

There was widespread agreement that the ECB should not lose its independence, as political wrangling over monetary policy would be highly detrimental to the stability of the Eurozone. The point was also noted that this would represent a big step backwards, as a broad trend over the past few decades has been increasing central bank independence. However, the ECB could be made more accountable to democratic institutions, such as the European Parliament. The EP must already approve key ECB decisions, such as the appointment of the President and this relationship could be extended to include, for example, monthly briefings by the ECB President to the EP. The point was made that it is not only the ECB that would stand to benefit from increased accountability but EU institutions in general. Finally, the general conclusion reached was that the answer to the democratic deficit is ultimately further integration, though the question remains open as to whether there is political will or public support for deeper or wider integration at this point.

Fiscal Policy

In the short term, the possibility of an orderly default was raised, though this carries with it risks of contagion with regard to Ireland and Portugal most immediately and potentially bigger economies as well. The point was also made that it is in the interests of Member States to bail out Greece; European banks have exposure to Greek banks and would not be isolated from the effects of a default. With regard to the long term, the only real solution to the problems facing the Eurozone is further convergence of member state fiscal policies. For this to take place, there needs to be a great deal of political will amongst leaders to bring their public onboard, which would require demonstrating the positive aspects of Europe, a trend increasingly lacking in the popular sphere across the EU right now. As a means of increasing citizens’ positive identification with Europe, the possibility was raised of intensifying cooperation in areas like health care that can bring directly noticeable benefits to Europeans. However, we arrive back at the issue of political will, and it is very questionable whether there is any appetite right now for such an undertaking.

The forum will be holding further events over the coming months and would be happy to notify those of you interested in attending, once the details are set.

For a the full summary of the meeting please visit http://formyouropinion.com/category/world/europe/summary-2nd-discussion-group-european-monetary-union-and-governance

For further information please visit http://www.ucl.ac.uk/european-institute/post_doc_forum/emu
NEW STAFF

The Department would like to welcome the following new staff:

Professor Peter John

Peter John is Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, starting in September 2011. He was previously the Hallsworth Chair of Governance at the University of Manchester, where he co-directed the Institute of Political and Economic Governance. He is known for his books on public policy, such as Analysing Public Policy (2nd edition due in 2012) and Making Policy Work (2011).

He has been working on two large projects. The first is on policy agendas in the UK for which he and his collaborators have collected data on what topics the UK government has concentrated on since 1911: see www.policyagendas.org.uk. He is using this data for two books: one is with Tony Bertelli (USC) on policy investment, a study of how governments approach risk when selecting policies; the other is with Will Jennings and Shaun Bevan, which is on policy agendas in British politics.

His second project uses experiments to study civic participation in public policy, with the aim of finding out what governments and other public agencies can do to encourage citizens to carry out acts of collective benefit. This work is coming together in a book with Bloomsbury Academic, Nudge, Nudge, Think, Think: Using Experiments to Change Civic Behaviour, published in August 2011.

He is planning to carry out more experiments testing how the provision of social information can influence citizen behaviour.

You can see his papers on http://ssrn.com/author=1313371 and follow him on Twitter: @peterjohn10

Professor Neil Mitchell

Before joining UCL in September 2011, Neil Mitchell was a professor of politics at the University of Aberdeen. Prior to Aberdeen, he taught at the University of New Mexico and served as chair of the department for eight years. He is the author of Agents of Atrocity (2004) and other books and scholarly articles.

His current research is on accountability for human rights violations. With Professor Sabine Carey at the University of Mannheim and with support from the ESRC (Accountability and Government Militias RES-062-23-0363) and the Centre for the Study of Civil War (CSCW) at the International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), he is building a new global database on pro-government militias.

His latest book, Democracy’s Blameless Leaders (NYU Press, expected February 2012) asks what can we expect from a political leader in a country like Britain or the United States when its soldiers kill civilians or mistreat prisoners? After Abu Ghraib or Bloody Sunday what happens next? Do we own up and adhere to democratic norms or do we attempt to evade accountability? The book argues that accountability is a very severe test for political leaders, despite the democratic folklore of the buck stopping with them. While all involved seek to evade blame, the gravitational theory of accountability describes why the leader passes blame for abuse and atrocities to the lowest plausible level – to the fall guy.

The book provides an analysis of why these events occur, why leaders behave as they do and what can be done about it. Do we need better leaders, better institutions or a better electoral audience?
I am a political philosopher working on international ethics, democratic theory, and methodology in normative theorizing. After spending three years as a postdoc in Oxford and Princeton, I am very pleased to come back to UCL, my graduate Alma Mater. I had a wonderful time as a Master’s and PhD student in the Department and I almost cannot believe I’ll soon be at SPP again, this time as a faculty member. I am very much looking forward to engaging with students and colleagues at UCL and to post-seminar excursions to ‘The Marquis’. Before my arrival at UCL (January 2012), I’ll spend a few months visiting the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, in Uppsala, Sweden. Assuming I’ll survive the Swedish winter, see you all soon!

Dr Lisa Vanhala

I am delighted to be joining the Department this autumn, in the first instance as a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship and then as Lecturer in Human Rights.

I spent my undergraduate years at McGill University and Sciences Po, Paris. I then completed my MPhil and DPhil at Oxford in Politics and had a brief post-doctoral stint at the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at LSE. For the last year and a half I have been undertaking research and teaching at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies in Oxford as a British academy Postdoc.

My research interests lie at the nexus of comparative politics, law and sociology. I am interested in how and why social movements use the law in pursuing their policy goals.

My first monograph, Making Rights a Reality? Disability Rights Activists and Legal Mobilization, was published by Cambridge earlier this year. I am currently working on two projects: one exploring how environmental NGOs engage with the law and courts across three European countries and the other exploring trends in climate change litigation around the world.

When not following around activists and their lawyers I spend my time with family and friends, usually consuming good food and wine. I enjoy contemporary fiction and seeing the amazing modern dance that London has to offer. I’m a regular practitioner of yoga and a runner (currently contemplating whether to do a second marathon – the endurance test of research not being enough!).

Dr Laura Valentini

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PAST STUDENTS WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Since the launch of the first Tavistock Times in the summer of 2008, we have been kindly contacted by many past students informing us of their progress since leaving the Department. A progress report follows:

Lucas Fülling

MSc International Public Policy, 2009–10

It’s been pretty much nine months as I started yet another adventure as an intern at the European Commission, just after handing in my dissertation for the MSc in International Public Policy.

Thrilled about the new opportunity, I packed my bags to work at the ‘interinstitutional relations’ unit of DG Energy - the European energy department. Rushing around the European Parliament and the Council; aligning the Commissioner’s briefings to the current political lines; trying to catch the latest political gossip; and attending speeches and banquets the ‘stage’ was clearly not a normal internship.

However, despite Brussels’ grandiose and often entertaining political life, I decided to leave the ‘bubble’ and went back to London to intern at a European civil society network, which eventually turned into a real job. Now I am working with professionals across Europe and beyond and get the chance to travel a lot. Work is fast paced and diverse, ranging from project to event management, from research to communication.

From Brussels to London; from energy politics to civil society. It has been quite a turn but one year at SPP prepared me well!

James Lloyd

MSc Public Policy, 2004–2005

Since leaving SPP I have spent most of my time working for London think-tanks. Unlike a lot of people in this sector, I have no desire to work in politics or public affairs and by remaining firmly non-partisan, I actually spend more of time interacting with Whitehall officials than MPs.

My two main interests have been pensions and social care, in particular, how to fund the long-term care of older people. As a result of my work on this topic, in 2009 I was seconded to the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit to advise on long-term care funding reform while the then government prepared its Green Paper.

Thanks to the research methods training at SPP, I have also developed a sideline in designing research projects using datasets like the British Household Panel Survey. In 2007, I designed some research on trends in household asset accumulation that helped to kick off a debate about intergenerational equity and the enormous housing wealth of the so-called ‘baby-boomer’ generation.

More recently, I’ve been involved in setting up a brand new think-tank called the Strategic Society Centre, which focuses exclusively on the big, strategic challenges confronting society.
Martina Vojtkova

MSc Public Policy, 2009-2010

Shortly after graduating, I started working as a research assistant for the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), whose London office is situated rather improbably right next door to the SPP. 3ie is an exciting new international NGO devoted to increasing development effectiveness through better use of evidence in developing countries. The organisation funds new impact evaluations of development programmes in low and middle income countries and promotes evidence-based policy-making in international development.

Since joining, I have been working in 3ie’s systematic reviews programme, producing in-house research that synthesises evidence on the effectiveness of specific interventions in a rigorous, transparent and unbiased manner. Over the year, I have also worked on summarising and quality assessing existing systematic reviews in international development for the Department for International Development and was offered the position of coordinator of the Campbell Collaboration’s International Development Coordinating Group.

Needless to say, the knowledge and skills acquired during my MSc Public Policy degree have been incredibly useful in my work and they have given me the opportunity to pursue my interests in international development at the professional level. My thanks to all the SPP staff and good luck to all the new and current students.