Head of the Department of Political Science and Director of the School of Public Policy welcomes you to the final edition of the Tavistock Times for 2009–10.

This is my last Director’s message for the Tavistock Times. The past five years have been exciting and exhausting, hugely fulfilling and occasionally horribly frustrating and nerve-wracking. However, there can be no doubting that we have achieved our objective of building a world class department over this period. We have more staff, more programmes, many more students and more research and other money. We have also done spectacularly well in both the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and the Internal Quality Review (which assesses teaching).

Things were very different back in 2005. The School was carrying a large deficit rather than enjoying an even larger surplus and had done rather poorly in the 2001 RAE, prompting a major rethink of its strategy of which my appointment and the creation of a department of political science were a part.

Professor Richard Bellamy
Head of the Department of Political Science and Director of the School of Public Policy

Welcome to the final edition of TAVISTOCK TIMES for 2009–2010
With the departure of the Jill Dando Institute and the Health Policy Centre from the School of Public Policy, only the Constitution Unit and the new fledging department remained. These comprised just 10 permanent academic staff –two of those only recently appointed and 6 administrative staff, many part-time. Robert Hazell and I were the only Professors, with all but Cecile Laborde and David Coen (both Senior Lecturers) a lecturer and in their first job.

Now we have 16 academic staff and with this year’s 4 appointments, will have doubled in size to 20 by the end of my tenure. There are currently 5 Professors and a Reader, soon to be joined by a new Professor of International Relations. The administrative staff has also grown to 8, with an increase in those working full time. If one factors in that we have also replaced 3 academic and 3 administrative staff who left over this period, as well as appointing some 25 teaching fellows and research staff, it is small wonder that at times I have felt as if I am permanently recruiting or sitting on appraisal and promotion boards.

Student numbers have also grown. We have entered undergraduate teaching for the first time and now run 11 affiliate courses – basically an entire undergraduate programme – as well as coordinating a politics pathway within the European Social and Political Studies BA (ESPS) employing many of these same courses. We have also seen our first 5 PhD students graduate, with a number of others shortly to submit and doctoral numbers likewise rise from below 10 to getting on for 30. Meanwhile, our Masters programmes have increased by two and the numbers of students taking them more than doubled.

Students from these programmes have been as successful as the department as a whole. We now have students working at major universities and governmental and non-governmental organisations across the world, from Oxford and the Cabinet Office in the UK, to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, the European Commission, Amnesty International and the UN.

In sum, we have gone in a relatively short time from possessing the basic building blocks for a small department to having the staff, structures and students of a large department, that has quickly established itself as among the most vibrant and innovative places to work and study not just in the UK but in Europe. That this has been accomplished while not losing the collegiality, enthusiasm and friendliness that marked us as a department in the pioneering days pre-2005 is a true triumph. I am deeply grateful to all my past and present colleagues as well as to the School’s students for their tremendous efforts in this regard. You can all feel a great deal of satisfaction at what you have achieved.

Running a department these days is a little like managing a small enterprise, given that we have an income of over £5 million, some 50 permanent and temporary staff, 400 or more students of different kinds and a large and expensive building and research and teaching infrastructure. I am especially grateful to Sally Welham and particularly Nicky Henson for their administrative support over this period as the School’s executive administrators and to David Coen as my Deputy – though many others have also gone beyond the call of duty in their various efforts and many kindnesses on my behalf during this time – for all of which I am truly thankful.

Since the beginning of March I have had the opportunity to begin to wind down and devote myself to the scholarly work we are all here to foster in the privileged environment of the Centre of Advanced Studies in Oslo. It has proved a real haven. Basak Cali described this magnificent institution in the last Newsletter (we have both been here at different times as part of the same research project). Spending an extended period in another country always offers a wonderful opportunity to gain insights into its social and political culture and indirectly into one’s own. I think the paradoxes I (at least) have encountered, could be summed up in the title of the spoof article I find myself regularly drafting in my imagination entitled ‘Skiing Alone: The Paradoxes of Norwegian Social Capital’. I am greatly looking forward to my remaining few months here, albeit with regular visits back to the department and hope to return refreshed and comparatively unburdened next academic year.

It remains for me to wish my successor David Coen the very best of luck and every success for the future. I am confident that the next five years will prove as stimulating and successful as the last.
In this sixty second interview we quiz Professor Richard Bellamy, Head of the Department of Political Science and Director of the School of Public Policy.

**What is your name?**
Richard Bellamy

**When did you join UCL?**
1 September 2005

**What are your responsibilities in the Department?**
Head of Department and Director of the School of Public Policy (until August).

**What do you particularly like and dislike about your job?**
Research, writing and discussing and pursuing ideas and projects with colleagues have always been what has driven me and were my main reasons for becoming an academic. I also enjoy teaching and being forced to place my research in a broader context and communicate it in an accessible and more applied way.

I confess, though, that I find marking invariably a chore since standard essays rarely tell you much that is new, though dissertations are different and are generally enjoyable to read because they often do. Like most academics, I dislike humdrum bureaucratic tasks – form filling and the like. Managing other people also has to ups and downs, since for every nice thing you can do for your colleagues there is something less agreeable that you must oblige them to do for one reason or another.

However, I do like institution building and promoting the sort of lively research environment that I believe academia should be about and that provides the space needed to get the best out of staff and students. I also feel strongly that first rate research and research-led teaching offers the best deal for the public who fund us by producing the knowledge base and skills that a well functioning developed economy and society require.

**What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?**
The hope is always what I am currently writing. I tend to go through a sort of cycle when writing whereby I hope (or at least fondly imagine) that what I am working on will be brilliant or at least my best effort so far. Then, once completed, self-criticism sets in and I decide its awful - but that’s the spur to start all over again and begin writing something new. It would be hard to carry on if you felt all your greatest achievements lay in the past.

That said, I am proud of the collective achievement of both the academic and administrative staff and our students in the tremendous success of UCL’s Department of Political Science and for making it such a vibrant, enjoyable and friendly place to research, teach and study.

**Most inspirational person that you have met whilst at UCL?**
Jeremy Bentham

**Favourite location around UCL?**
In summer, sitting on the grass by the cafe in Gordon Square. In winter (so long as the heating is working), sitting at my desk looking out over Tavistock Square.

**What would your ideal afternoon/evening in London include?**
Ever since I was a teenager I’ve loved walking over one of the bridges to the south bank on a summer’s evening, having a drink at the BFI and going to a concert or a play. That I can now walk from the department strikes me as truly ideal.

Cont…
What is your favourite book?

Hard to say – there are so many – and is it fiction, politics or philosophy? – and tends to change.

There are books that influenced me hugely as a student, such as Pocock’s, *The Machiavellian Moment*; MacIntrye’s *After Virtue* or Raz’s, *The Morality of Freedom* – which I have not touched for a decade or more – just as there are novelists and poets, Hesse somewhat embarrassingly comes to mind, that I similarly adored once but no longer – though the discovery of the staying power of much classic children’s fiction has been one of the great delights of fatherhood.

However, if re-reading is the test, then Weber’s *Politics as a Vocation* must be the classic work on politics I re-read with profit and pleasure most frequently, while – though its not perhaps my favourite in many ways – I always read Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* to (and now with) my daughter every Christmas.

What are your hobbies?

Well apart from the usual of eating good food, drinking fine wines, going out to concerts, plays and general cavorting, I love playing and listening to live music, wild swimming and rambling, going to festivals, reading novels and poetry, sailing and canal boats, gardening – am looking forward to my roof garden when I move my office – cooking and – on the sport side – skiing, cycling and most recently, doing half-marathons – though the latter sometimes feels like too much hard work to be a leisure activity but I love running along the Thames tow path so am grateful to those colleagues who got me into this crazy past time.

If you had not gone into academia what would you be doing now?

Well the dream scenario would have been to be a musician and writer of a Nick Drake, Richard Thompson or Robyn Hitchcock kind, though my efforts in this direction suggest it was probably best to stay with the day job, as indeed does the fate of the first to which predictable lack of success might have driven me.

More realistically, I did a lot of community volunteering at school and university, mainly with children with behavioural problems and I did think seriously of doing educational psychology at one stage. Again, probably a lucky break as a year teaching full time in what was then called a List D school on a council estate near Glasgow was not something I think I would still have wanted to be doing 30 years later – though I gained a lot from the experience. I really feel very fortunate that I do something I enjoy and am reasonably good at.

If you could implement one policy in the world today, what would it be?

Again, so many but not to be controversial for once (ie suggesting the abolition of the new UK Supreme Court), I would go for the introduction of STV for European and national elections – almost the only part of the standard constitutional reform agenda I agree with – on the grounds that it enhances rather than curtails democracy, though perhaps it remains the least likely to happen (possibly some connection?).
ARE WE GLOBAL CITIZENS?

Dr David Hudson, MSc International Public Policy Programme Director, highlights the work of the NGO, Invisible Children:

We recently hosted a film showing, followed by some talks and an audience discussion, around the notion of global citizenship at the Bloomsbury Theatre.

It was an extraordinarily popular event. An impressive audience of 300-plus people turned up on the night to watch a film by the NGO Invisible Children and listen to three speakers from the Department discuss the film in the context of global citizenship. The speakers were Dr Alex Braithwaite, Dr Avia Pasternak and Dr Jennifer Hudson. We also had two representatives from Invisible Children, Ami Anderson and Lizzy Chenery who helped to introduce the film and the work of Invisible Children.

Invisible Children is a non-profit organisation which—based on the documentary shot in 2003—has turned into a worldwide campaign to highlight the plight of children in Uganda’s long-running civil war. The original documentary is an amazing and moving film highlighting the untold story of how the violence impacts on children in Northern Uganda.

The film was originally made for and shown to the filmmakers’ friends and family but they passed it on to their friends and so on until it was eventually picked up by the likes of CNN. This film came to be watched by over 5 million people and inspired a combined awareness-raising, educational, fundraising and sponsorship campaign to help rebuild the war-torn communities in Uganda. It is the way in which the campaign has been organised through society’s grassroots, through the word of mouth and the high uptake among young people that makes it so interesting and powerful.

As such, the film and campaign is much more than just about Uganda. It provides a wonderful example of highlighting neglected and unknown distant problems, the responsibilities that we might have to act and the possibilities of social change. The idea of the event was to take the work of Invisible Children and the plight of child soldiers in Uganda and ask how we have global responsibilities and obligations to others less fortunate than ourselves?
What does being an active and informed global citizen mean?

How does globalisation affect our knowledge of distant others?

Can young people directly engage with and take action on international conflicts and humanitarian issues?

And how does an effective global campaign work?

To this end our three speakers tackled different aspects of these questions based on their research expertise. Dr Braithwaite discussed the security situation in Uganda and raised the puzzle of why the Great Lakes region of Africa, as perhaps one of the least secure places in the world, had been the focus of so little attention and action by the international community. This was followed by Dr Pasternak who set out two different answers to the question of whether we have a moral duty to help stop the suffering of distant others. Finally, Dr Hudson discussed at length the evidence to which individuals think and act as national or global citizens.

To watch the talks, follow this link: http://vimeo.com/9346093
HUMAN RIGHTS STUDY GROUP
TRIP TO GENEVA

The second MA Human Rights study trip to the United Nations in Geneva took place on 16–17 February 2010. Dr Başak Çali arranged for students to meet Peter Gooderham, British Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and the Counsellor of the Maldives Mission to the UN, Marc Limon, the British Foreign Office’s senior human rights expert, Bob Last, the Geneva Representative of SOS Children’s Villages International, Alan Kikuchi-White and Anita Goh, Advocacy officer of Child Rights Network. This time the visit was during the Universal Periodic Review – the process that provides the opportunity for each State to report on what actions it has taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and peers to scrutinize these reports.

MA Human Rights student Eliza Ward gives her view of the day:

We first watched from the gallery as Egypt was presented with its UPR, with a number of member states offering their recommendations. Excitement came when Iran was up to accept its UPR. It accepted some of the recommendations but rejected several others – including that offered by the UK, on the basis of ‘accusatory behaviour’ and ‘poisonous language’. In its fight-back Iran suggested that while torture is not legalised in Iran, it has been in the US since September 11th 2001. The UK’s comments on Iran’s ripostes were quickly followed by France, the US and Austria; all citing each other’s statements; sparking discussions about the influence of external politics in the UPR and the potential of an ensuing effect on the neutrality of the UPR.

After lunch we met with Anita Goh from the Childs Rights Network. Anita spoke to us about the positives and the negatives of the UPR; namely that without the UPR there would not be such a stringent and thorough system of monitoring states’ human rights records and that issues can be isolated and taken up at a national level. She also highlighted its shortcomings such as the fact that diplomats were not used to criticising other states and therefore found problems identifying the faults with their own systems. Anita painted a generally good picture of the Review but noted that it was unlikely to produce overwhelmingly positive results due to the fact that it is not binding and states accept recommendations purely on a voluntary basis.

We then met two representatives from the UK’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva – Ambassador Peter Gooderham and
Bob Last, the Foreign Office's senior human rights expert. Ambassador Gooderham was candid enough to answer the rather difficult questions that we put to him about his opinions on the inner workings of the UPR and the UK's role in the system. Ambassador Gooderham obviously believed that the UPR benefited every state under the theory that "we've all got something to learn". The issues with the system that he outlined to us included that there was a problem with time where each state is given only three hours for the review and that there were too many recommendations to be meaningful.

After meeting with UCL MA in Human Rights Alumnus Johannes Icking who explained his experiences as in intern at the UN in Geneva (and who importantly outlined how he went about getting his internship) our long and eventful day ended with a visit to the iconic row of flags representing each member state at the Palais des Nations and a look at the The Broken Chair by Swiss artist Daniel Berset, an impressive 12 metre high wooden chair, which stands at the end of the row of flags and symbolises opposition to the use of land mines and cluster bombs in warfare.

Many thanks to Bašak Çali for organising this study trip and Alice Wyss who accompanied us to London from Geneva. It provided us with an invaluable opportunity to have an introduction to the fascinating mechanisms of the UN.

SPP AT EU STUDIES FAIR IN BRUSSELS

On Saturday, 13 February the School of Public Policy attended the 2010 EU Studies Fair, organised by the Brussels-based newspaper European Voice and featuring 60 higher education institutions and their graduate courses in EU and international studies. The event attracted more than 700 students from across Europe and the world. A highlight was the visit to UCL's stall by the European Commissioner for Education, Androulla Vassiliou—here with the Department’s executive administrator Nicola Henson.
ENFOLD is a multidisciplinary, five year modelling project funded by the UK Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC: £2.9 million FEC) spanning seven UCL departments. It will develop new forms of complexity science to address the most difficult of human problems: those involving global change where there is no organised constituency and whose agencies are largely regarded as being ineffective.

ENFOLD addresses problems arising from the fact that that global systems tend to be treated in isolation from one another. Their characteristically unexpected dynamics are thus due to the aspects of coupling and integration between them that are all too often ignored.

To demonstrate these dynamics and develop appropriate policy responses, ENFOLD will study four related global systems: trade, migration, security and development aid. Integrated and coupled models will be developed, whose dynamics can be described in the language of complexity theory, including chaos, turbulence, bifurcations, catastrophes and phase transition. The programme will apply spatial interaction models to trade and migration; reaction diffusion to conflicts and terrorism; and network models to international trade, migration and crime. These models will be extended to incorporate new events, such as the emergence of new entities, including countries, coupling them together in diverse ways.

A generic framework will ultimately be developed for a coupled global dynamics spanning many spatial and temporal scales, pertaining to different systems whose behaviours can be both quantitatively and qualitatively simulated.

Models will be developed which incorporate all these ideas into a global intelligence system to inform global policy makers about future events. Several UK government departments as well as global businesses are partners in this project.

The project is led by Sir Alan Wilson at the UCL Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA). Dr Alex Braithwaite is one of the co-investigators and will lead the security strand of the project, working closely in conjunction with Dr Shane Johnson in the Department of Security & Crime Science. Together, they will shortly be advertising funded positions for a 3-year PhD Studentship and a 5-year post-doctoral Research Assistant.

For more details: www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/news/newsStory.asp?ID=216
I will be spending the next academic year at Princeton’s Institute of Advanced Studies. The Institute for Advanced Study (I.A.S.) is an independent private institution founded in 1930 by philanthropists Louis Bamberger and his sister Caroline Bamberger Fuld and established through the vision of founding Director Abraham Flexner. Past Faculty have included Albert Einstein, who remained at the Institute until his death in 1955 and distinguished scientists and scholars such as Kurt Gödel, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Erwin Panofsky, Homer A. Thompson, John von Neumann, George Kennan and Hermann Wey. The Institute is a community of scholars focused on intellectual inquiry, free from teaching and other university obligations.

Each year, the permanent Faculty of 29 eminent academics awards fellowships to some 190 visiting Members, from about one hundred universities and research institutions throughout the world. I will be a Member of the School of Social Science, along with twenty other international visiting scholars, the majority of whom will be researching on the theme selected by the School for the 2010–11 academic year, ‘Secularism’, from within their own disciplinary perspectives.

During my time at the Institute, I am planning to write a new book of political philosophy, provisionally entitled In Defence of Secularism. I interpret secularism, not as a comprehensively anti-religious doctrine but rather, as a political doctrine of official agnosticism of the state towards the truth of religion. I argue that a secular state, because it neither denies nor affirms theistic (nor atheistic) views, is the only one that can be justified to all citizens, given the fact that they profoundly disagree about the good. Critics have retorted that secularism cannot be neutral towards religion in the relevant sense and more generally, that the secular state cannot avoid being biased against religion.

In my book, I plan to address this criticism head-on by clarifying the nature, justification and implications of the secularism-as-official-agnosticism thesis. In the process, I will engage with a number of contentious issues such as: What is special about religion? Do religious beliefs deserve special treatment in law and why? Are religious arguments illegitimate in democratic public debate? Is secularism compatible with the symbolic establishment of religion by the state? What kind of citizens does the secular state require and what kind of education should it promote? Is freedom of conscience the central value of the secular state and what does its protection entail? And is secularism only valid for countries with Judeo-Christian – or more broadly, monotheistic – traditions?
It is a propitious time to research ideas of secularism in the U.S.A. While the country has a long-established tradition of ‘non-establishment’ and separation of church and state, civil society has remained more religious than in most of Europe and religious themes and claims have become prominent in the public sphere.

Easy slogans ‘for’ or ‘against’ secularism are clearly not enough – and I look forward to the prospect of sharing thoughts and perspectives about the philosophy of secularism with lawyers, historians, literary and other experts, who will contribute to the School’s seminar next year.

I will be going to the Institute with my family (my partner, also a UCL academic, has also been elected as a member) and our children are excited at the prospect of living in a deer park (on the Institute’s own grounds) and finding out ‘which language people speak in Aremica (sic)’.

**HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT VISIT**

Dr Mark Bennister, Teaching Fellow in British Politics, reports on the recent visit:

On Tuesday 9 February 2010, a group of SPP students embarked on a visit to Parliament, organised by Teaching Fellow Dr Mark Bennister. The students were a mix of undergraduates studying the British Constitution and postgraduates studying Parliaments and Parties. The group spent a morning touring the Palace of Westminster and then met with Michael Foster MP for a lively question and answer session.

Special thanks go to Masters student and parliamentary researcher, Juan Leahy, who hosted the trip and led the tour. The group visited both the Commons and Lords chambers and also went through the voting lobbies. It was a particularly interesting trip, one that we hope to repeat next year.
Dr Jennifer Hudson, MPhil/PhD Programme Director reports:

Welcome!

The Department would like to welcome the following students who have just joined the programme:

Volkan Gul (Supervised by Professor Albert Weale)
Kwanhu Lee (Supervised by Professor Albert Weale)
Nicholas Martin (Supervised by Professor Albert Weale)
Dimitri Ponomarjovs (Supervised by Dr Alex Braithwaite)

AWARDS

The Department extends its warmest congratulations to Laura Valentini (PhD, Political Theory 2008) who has recently been awarded the Sir Ernest Barker Prize for Best Dissertation in Political Theory by the UK Political Studies Association (PSA). Dr Valentini is Junior Research Fellow in Politics, The Queen's College, Oxford. She is currently spending a year at Princeton's University Center for Human Values as a post-doctoral research associate where she plans to complete a book manuscript tentatively titled Justice in a Globalized World: A Unified Framework.

Commenting on the PhD thesis the judges said:

"The thesis explores the question of 'global justice' by challenging the validity of the two main approaches to the topic. Both 'cosmopolitans' and 'social liberals', it is claimed, are so entrenched in their existing positions that they find it impossible to confront the theoretical and practical difficulties inherent in their arguments. In an attempt to break the deadlock, Valentini proceeds to develop her own approach to global justice – the coercion view – which steers a middle course between the two standard alternatives and is consistent with the Kantian/deontological foundations of Rawlsian liberalism. With exemplary clarity and rigour, she demonstrates that principles of justice can be coherently extended from the domestic to the global arena, without assuming that all cases of world poverty will generate duties of justice for rich societies. In its originality, its theoretical subtlety, and its masterful analysis of the existing literature, the thesis undoubtedly constitutes an impressive contribution to a philosophical debate of great importance".

Dr Valentini is the first UCL student to win such award.

Publications

Cordelli, C., 'Private Groups Acting Publicly: The Limits of Religious Associations’ Right to Exclude' in Hagiwara Y. ed., Democracy and Governance for Civil Society, (Fuko: Tokyo, March 2010);

EMPLOYMENT

Congratulations are in order for Katerina Mantouvalou, who has been hired by GBK, a leading independent multi-discipline consultancy for public policy providing services to the European Commission, World Bank and UN agencies. Katerina will join the European Social Policy team of the company and specialise in equal opportunities and employment issues in Europe.
CONFERENCES

Cordelli, C. 2010. ‘How Privatization Threatens the Private’ at the Princeton Graduate Conference in Political Theory, 9–10 April 2010, held by the Department of Politics and the Center for Human Values, Princeton University, NJ.


MEDIA


PROFILE

David Karp,
Current PhD student,
Department of Political Science

His thesis provides a normative and conceptual analysis of the policy argument—currently being advanced at UN, EU and national levels of governance—that transnational companies should be assigned a special category of human rights responsibilities.

David’s research has been published in leading IR and political theory journals such as International Theory, Review of International Studies and Contemporary Political Theory and he has been invited to peer-review articles for some of these and other journals.

He has presented research at several major national and international political studies conferences, including the BISA Annual Conference (Cambridge), the ISA Annual Convention (San Francisco), the Brazilian International Relations Association Joint Conference (Rio de Janeiro) and the ECPR General Conference (Potsdam). He has also presented research at smaller specialist conferences and workshops including Thinking Without Borders (St Andrews) and the CRIPT/BISA workshop series (London and Aberystwyth).

He is now looking forward to the next steps of beginning an academic career, whether through a Lectureship or a postdoctoral research programme and hopes that – with his thesis out of the way – his research can begin to make an even greater impact on academic and non-academic communities.

He was a Teaching Assistant for the Political Science Department at UCL in the 2006–7 academic year and since September 2007, he has been a part-time Teaching Fellow at the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy (CISD), SOAS.

David has recently submitted his thesis titled ‘Human Rights Responsibility and Transnational Corporations: An International Political Theory Analysis’.
CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD LUCK!

The Department is sad to say Goodbye to Alice Wyss, Research Assistant and former MA Human Rights student. Alice writes:

Leaving any job provides an excuse for introspection and in this case I have Basak and Helen to thank for the extra nudge in that direction! Looking back at my time at SPP I was quite surprised to realise just how large a role it has played in shaping my goals, interests and future career.

From starting out as a student on the Human Rights MA to my return as a research assistant, I’ve been lucky enough to have the space to develop my research skills, as well as to develop an awareness of where my academic interests lie.

In particular, working on the ESRC project on the legitimacy and authority of supranational human rights courts has allowed me to deepen and broaden my knowledge of human rights in Europe and the workings of international bodies designed to help protect them.

An incredible highlight of the project had been travelling across Europe to interview people directly engaged in the field of human rights, from lawyers and NGO workers, to judges and politicians. The characters have been diverse, the views often conflicting and sometimes challenging but each one left an impression. The same might be said of some of the conferences I attended!

However, after a combined total of a little over three years my time at the department has come to an end. I will be moving to a new post as a researcher for the EU team at Amnesty International, where I will be conducting research on human rights in the UK, Scandinavia and the Netherlands. Though I am looking forward to the challenges this new role will bring, I will miss both the department and in particular the people who make it what it is.
The Constitution Unit is an independent research institute situated within the School of Public Policy. The Constitution Unit is the UK’s leading centre for the study of constitutional change and has a long track record of conducting high-quality research and influencing policy debates through publications and events.

The Unit is led by its director, Professor Robert Hazell, who conducts research on a wide variety of constitutional topics and comprises another two teams responsible for conducting research on parliament and freedom of information. The Unit also frequently recruits interns to assist in its research projects, including many SPP graduates. Robert Hazell, Meg Russell and Ben Worthy all teach courses within SPP and act as supervisors for students’ dissertations in relevant areas. SPP students can get involved in the Unit’s research through their public seminars and conferences which are attended by practitioners and policy makers. The Unit has extensive networks for all aspects of constitutional research.

Full details of the Constitution Unit’s activities can be found at: www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit

A few recent highlights are discussed below:

Parliament agrees reforms based on Constitution Unit research

As reported in the last issue of the newsletter, research by Dr Meg Russell of the Constitution Unit was very influential on the report last November of the Select Committee on the Reform of the House of Commons, chaired by Tony Wright. On March 04 2010 these proposals were voted upon and agreed by the House of Commons. They should therefore be in place from immediately after the general election. One element is changes to the way in which members and chairs of select committees (which scrutinise government policy) are chosen.

Currently these members are appointed, with significant input from party whips. In future they will be elected, with committee chairs elected by the whole House. This will enhance the profile, independence and hence hopefully influence of these committees. Another key reform is the creation of a “Backbench Business Committee”, which will have responsibility for scheduling business in the House of Commons chamber. Currently these scheduling decisions are largely taken by the government. From the next parliament there will be regular time set aside for debate on “backbench business” and decisions on how to use this time will be made by the new committee, made up of elected backbenchers. This move again loosens the government’s grip on parliament, giving more responsibility to its members.

It is highly unusual for reforms of this kind to be so clearly traceable to academic research but the proposal for a Backbench Business Committee was the central recommendation of a Constitution Unit report by Dr Russell published in 2007 and had not previously been made by others. The recommendation was informed by comparative research on parliaments elsewhere and picked up enthusiastically by some parliamentarians including Tony Wright. Meg Russell was subsequently an adviser to the committee which he chaired and which made the formal recommendation. The effect of the reforms remains to be seen in the next parliament (and would be an interesting topic for future research!) but it has been suggested by some commentators that this could prove to be the most important package of parliamentary reform for over 30 years.
Conservative Agenda for Constitutional Reform

In February 2010, the Constitution Unit published a report by Professor Robert Hazell on the Conservative agenda for constitutional reform. The headline items are the Conservative plans to reduce the size of Parliament, introduce a British bill of rights, legislate to require referendums on future EU Treaties, reaffirm the supremacy of Parliament in a Sovereignty Bill and introduce English votes on English laws.

"I was surprised to find how bold their plans are", Robert Hazell said. "David Cameron’s plans are much bigger than perhaps even he realises. No one has pulled the Conservatives’ constitutional agenda together and viewed the elements as a whole before. I also worked hard on how their plans might be implemented, talking to the policy experts in Whitehall as well as all the lead Conservative spokesmen".

"People tend to think of Conservative policy as a single whole, a manifesto to be implemented once in government but some policies are better thought through than others and which policies get implemented depends crucially on which Ministers are put in charge: how committed they are to the policy and how competent”.

Robert’s tests for early signs that Cameron means business on reform include:

• Reducing the shadow cabinet of 30 to a real Cabinet of 20.

• Merging the three territorial Secretaries of State, for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland into one, now that justice powers are being devolved to Northern Ireland.

• Reducing the number of Ministers, to match the Conservative commitment to reduce the size of the House of Commons by 10 per cent.

• Restoring collective Cabinet government with a strengthened Ministerial Code and new Cabinet Manual.

Will Britain have a hung Parliament and Minority Government?

In December 2009, the Constitution Unit published Making Minority Government Work, anticipating a possible hung Parliament after the next election. As the polls narrowed, Robert Hazell and the other authors of the report (Akash Paun, Mark Chalmers and Ben Yong) have been in strong demand on TV and radio explaining what will happen if no party wins an overall majority after the election.

They have also been active behind the scenes helping Whitehall and Westminster prepare for a hung Parliament: something Britain has not seen since the 1970s. Robert Hazell briefed the Cabinet Secretary Sir Gus O’Donnell and in February 2010 gave evidence to the Commons Justice Committee on the report’s main proposals. Gus O’Donnell followed and announced his acceptance of the report’s central recommendations, to codify the constitutional conventions on government formation and dissolution and incorporate them in a new Cabinet Manual.

The Constitution web pages on Minority Government and hung Parliaments are at:

The Constitution Unit has had a busy winter hosting a number of high profile events both as part of our Public Seminar Series and Government Information Policy. The Unit has been pleased to host seminars with Dr Tony Wright (MP and Chair of the Committee on Reform of the House of Commons) in November 2009 discussing the report ‘Rebuilding the House’, which concludes that urgent changes are needed to make the House a more responsive and effective institution.

In February 2010, Professor Robert Hazell, Director of the Constitution Unit, delivered a seminar to launch his report on the Conservative agenda for constitutional change. The remaining seminars for the first half of 2010 are ‘How to Ensure More Effective Transitions of Government’, with Peter Riddell (Senior Fellow at the Institute for Government and Chief Political Commentator, The Times), and ‘Pre-Appointment Scrutiny Hearings in the UK’, with Peter Waller and Mark Chalmers (The Constitution Unit).

More details at: www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/events/2010/seminars/index.htm

Full details of the Constitution Unit’s activities can be found at: www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit
NEW STAFF

The Department would like to welcome the following new staff:

Dr Sarabajaya Kumar

Sarabajaya Kumar joined the Department in January 2010 as a Teaching Fellow in Voluntary Sector Policy. Sarabajaya is also an Associate Fellow of the Institute for Science, Innovation and Society at the University of Oxford, where she is currently researching ‘Social Capital in UK Public Policy’ for the ‘Social Capital and Competitiveness: New Perspectives Project’.

Sarabajaya has post graduate degrees – an MSc and PhD – in Public Policy and Management from the University of Aston and an undergraduate degree – BA (Hons) – in Sociology and Religion from Goldsmiths’ College, University of London. Between 2000 and 2007, she held a Lectureship in Social Policy, Voluntary Sector and Civil Society and was Programme Director of an MSc at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

In 2007 she moved to the University of Oxford, where she held a Senior Research Fellowship at the Said Business School’s Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship until 2009. During this period, she was also the series editor and editor for the LSE’s Centre for Civil Society Voluntary Sector Working Paper Series - funded by the Charities Aid Foundation and served as an Advisor to the Home Office as a member of the Governance Strategy Group - set up to advise and oversee the development of an integrated Governance Strategy for the Third Sector.

Sarabajaya’s research interests relate to: Accountability, Participation, Social Capital, Social Exclusion, Governance, State-Third Sector Relations, Public-Private Partnerships, Third Sector Organisations and Organisational Theory. Her methodological interests are: qualitative research methodology, action research and grounded theory. Sarabajaya’s doctoral research considered inter-organisational accountability relationships between government, the voluntary sector and users of contracted out health and welfare services.

Sarabajaya served as a Trustee for a social justice charity for five years, and is currently a Governor of an inner-city, community, secondary, state school, and a member of several Advisory Committees, including a social enterprise ‘Future First’, the Institute of Volunteering Research and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Prior to academe, Sarabajaya worked as a volunteer co-worker with Mother Teresa in Calcutta and with lay health workers in West Bengal, India. She was also the founder worker for a community organisation working on public health issues in the East End of London and managed four ‘partnerships’ between the charitable voluntary sector, local government and the NHS in the London Borough of Haringey.

Dr Chris Boyle, Teaching Fellow

Chris Boyle took an MA at York University, Toronto and received his doctorate in Politics and International Relations from the University of Sussex. He has taught graduate courses in international political economy at London Metropolitan University and UCL. Also he teaches
at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

His research interests include: the politics of nationalism and economic development; historical sociology and the contemporary international system; institutions of global governance; the history of modern economic thought; and social theories of capitalism. Chris lives in London with his wife and two sons.

Dr Daniel Stevens, Teaching Fellow

Daniel Stevens joined the Department in February 2010 as a teaching fellow, supervising dissertations within the MSc International Public Policy. He has a PhD in Development Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies and a MSc and BSc in Government from the London School of Economics.

His research centres around the concept of civil society and his doctoral research focused on how international development actors understand and then ‘build’ civil society in developing contexts, using the case study of Uzbekistan. Subsequently he spent five years in that country as Head of Research and Consultancy at Westminster International University in Tashkent, where he helped develop its research and postgraduate provision.

At the same time he worked closely with international aid agencies, particularly the United Nations, in planning and evaluating development programmes.

Currently he is Head of Research at the Institute of Volunteering Research, where he is focusing on the role of volunteering in international perspective and he is also a Research Associate at the Centre for Contemporary Central Asia and the Caucasus at the School of Oriental and African Studies where he has been looking at issues of forced child labour in the region.

Dr Virginie Grzelczyk, Teaching Fellow

Dr Virginie Grzelczyk studied at the University of Maryland, United States, for her Ph.D., M.A., Government and Politics, University of Maryland, United States M.A., Diplomacy and Security, Ewha University, Republic of Korea B.A., English Language, Literature and Translation, Université de Franche-Comté, France.

I am a specialist in international relations and focus most of my research on security efforts regarding how the international community and especially European countries have, are and should be dealing with dangerous actors such as proliferating, terrorist, rogue or isolated states. In parallel, I am also working on analyzing the role of family dictatorships including the Kim family in North Korea and their succession patterns.

Prior to joining UCL and my position (Tutor in Politics) at the University of Surrey, I taught in the field of international politics, Asian politics and international security at George Washington University, the University of Maryland and Lafayette College while in the United States, as well as at Victoria University while in New Zealand.
I was a policy manager at the charity Cancer Research UK when I started my MSc and moved to Head of Policy during the course. Towards the end and for a while after my MSc I was seconded to the Department of Health to work on a new cancer strategy for England. Doing the masters helped confirm to me that while I enjoyed the lobbying and campaigning side of my job what really motivated me was policy research and analysis. In March last year, I moved to become a Senior Fellow in policy at The King’s Fund, an influential health policy research institute. It’s a fantastic place to work, and my job now involves managing a programme of policy research on the quality of health care, advising policymakers and critiquing and commenting on policy.

Recently I’ve been holding focus groups about the local accountability of the NHS, researching and writing sections of a review of Labour’s record on health since 1997, studying the quality of diagnosis and referral in general practice and working with the Department of Health on their policy agenda on patient-centred care.

For the few years while studying for my Masters in International Public Policy, I was moonlighting as a public relations manager working with energy and environment companies from the private sector. Since completing the course with SPP in September 2009, I have found a new role combining my knack for spin with my newfound knowledge of UK and European policy making.

Working for a public relations firm’s public sector division, I am now part of a team that communicates government policy to the masses, using the print media, television, word of mouth and of course, the internet. We run public interest campaigns for the Departments of: Health; Children, Schools and Families; Innovation, Universities and Skills and Energy and Climate Change.

Currently, I am working on a major education initiative to encourage more teachers to work in underperforming schools. Recently we ran a press event and teacher recruitment drive with Schools Secretary Ed Balls. Other current projects include a public awareness campaign to increase the number of people on the UK’s organ donation register and a targeted advocacy campaign to encourage further education management reforms to help cope with the impending cuts to public spending.

You can see some of our work by visiting:
www.guardian.co.uk/society/video/2010/mar/04/nhs-hepatitis-c
www.talktalk.co.uk/video/21464/news/Little-girl-gives-the-Tin-Man-a-heart/#21464
PROTECTING LIBERTIES IN THE ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE: FIDDLING WHILE ROME BURNS?

Praveen Velu, MA Legal and Political Theory 09–10 student, supports the forthcoming Legal and Political Forum:

A Legal & Political Theory Forum  
Date: 18 May 2010  
Time: 6.30pm  
Venue: UCL Chadwick Lecture Theatre

The question, ‘What is the point of political philosophy?’ is frequently asked and seldom adequately answered. In fact, such is the lack of reflexivity on the part of political philosophers themselves that, as Paul Kelly once observed, anyone making such inquiries is seen as spending time on the theory of tying shoelaces rather than actually going for a walk. All of this has perhaps engendered a view of political philosophy as a fruitless exercise in hair-splitting distinctions and irrelevant trifling when compared to its sister disciplines like public policy and international relations.

The truth however is that political philosophy is always intensely engaged with the conditions of human existence. That is to say, it connects the realm of ideas with the real world of practical affairs in which we must all inevitably live; a view that was perhaps perfectly allegorized by the central figures of Plato and Aristotle in Raphael’s painting, The School of Athens. That is why this year, a group of students from the MA in Legal and Political Theory (LPT) programme has organised a public forum which will bring to bear the critical lens of political philosophy on what is perhaps the most hotbutton issue of our time: climate change. The forum, taking place on 18 May 2010 at UCL’s Chadwick Lecture Theatre, will be entitled Protecting Liberties in the Era of Climate Change: Fiddling while Rome Burns?

The genesis for the idea of this forum came from the Meanings of Liberty methodology course, which every student enrolled in the LPT programme is required to read. Meanings is a rigorous, semester long examination of liberty; one of the cornerstone concepts of political philosophy. The course itself, conducted by Professor Cécile Laborde, takes as its starting point John Stuart Mill’s definitive statement on the subject and proceeds to trace the intellectual development of the concept through the works of thinkers like Marx, Berlin, Rawls and Foucault.

When we speak of liberty, very often we have in mind a kind of freedom that allows us to go about the business of our lives without hindrance from others. This is what political philosophers call negative liberty and typically it is thought of as the freedom from government intervention. There is however another kind of liberty, a positive liberty which may be characterised as the freedom to have the power and resources which enable us to pursue our life’s goals. These include jobs, healthcare and shelter but we might also add access to clean air and water which are taken for granted in the developed world.

A problem like climate change, one that requires collective action, leads these two forms of liberty into conflict. The response to climate change is at least partly predicated on the notion of a duty to preserve the world’s resources, ‘leaving enough and as good’ for future generations. The flipside is that achieving this will necessitate placing greater burdens on the present generation. In Britain for example, a central feature of the government’s climate change policy is the shift to more expensive forms of energy such as offshore wind. In an economy that has already been battered by a financial crisis, this will conceivably put more strain on
productivity as we will have to spend more to meet the same level of demand for energy. This in turn will likely result in an increase in taxation and possibly a net loss of jobs.

It is also not clear that liberal democracy is an ideal political framework for tackling an issue like climate change. The language of rights and liberties in which its discourse is framed makes it difficult to speak of the reciprocal duties which obtain from those rights. Very often, Western governments are unable to take the kinds of radical actions necessary to meet a crisis like this because any appearance of impinging on their citizens’ negative liberties is swiftly punished in the polls. Politicians then are left with little choice other than to preserve some trivial liberties of their citizens, such as the right to continue using cheap but highly pollutive sources of fuel, in order to retain their mandates. They are, as it were, reduced to fiddling while Rome burns all around them.

These are just some of the issues that will be addressed by the four distinguished panellists this year. The panel will comprise firstly Dr Benny Peisner, the Director of the Global Warming Policy Foundation and a prominent sceptic of climate change. Joining him will be Mark Sauven, the Executive Director of Greenpeace UK. Rounding off the panel will be Professor Albert Weale, who has recently joined the Department and is a foremost expert on environmental policy, who has also written extensively on the forms and limits of the liberal state and Professor Jonathan Wolff, who is perhaps one of the UK’s best known public intellectuals. Professor Wolff recently joined with a multi-disciplinary group of academics, including SPP Director Richard Bellamy, to co-author an influential LANCET report on managing the health effects of climate change. The forum will be chaired by Professor Laborde, who is also the Director of the LPT programme. It will follow a Question Time format which will allow SPP students to air their views and challenge the opinions of the experts regardless of whether their predilection is towards philosophy or policy.

Ultimately however, the issues themselves will change but it is hoped that this inaugural Legal and Political Theory forum will be the beginning of an annual tradition that showcases the programme’s commitment to training political philosophers who are engaged with the real world and who walk the talk.