The key event since the last newsletter has been the announcement of the results of the UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

This exercise involved a panel of UK academics within the field evaluating three key elements of our research: up to four publications by each member of the department from the period 2001–2007; the department’s research environment – judged by its numbers of PhD students, research grants and its general research culture (its seminars, collaborations within and outside UCL and so on); and the general esteem in which members of the department are held due to their impact on the profession and the policy world.

For each of these three elements we were graded on a scale going from 4 (‘Quality that is world leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour’) and 3 (‘Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which nonetheless falls short of the highest standards of excellence’) to 2 (‘Quality that is recognised internationally’), 1 (Quality that is recognised nationally’) and
0, with the total score being a weighted average involving 75% for publications, 20% for research environment and 5% for esteem.

The first time we had entered as a department, we did spectacularly well. In terms of our average grade across all three elements we came 6th out of the 57 departments submitted, just after Oxford (4th) and the LSE (5th) (Essex and Sheffield were joint 1st, followed by Aberystwyth as 3rd).

90% of our research was judged of international quality (grades 4-2), and in terms of the percentage of our research judged as 4 (20%) and 3 (45%) we came 3rd among all UK departments (after Essex and Sheffield and above Oxford and the LSE). For such a young department this is a tremendous achievement and a tremendous testimony to the efforts and excellence of all my colleagues – administrative and academic staff. We are now definitely seen by our rivals as the ‘new kids on the block’.

Although the warm glow given by such an endorsement by one’s peers is of course priceless in its way, it remains to be seen what this will mean in terms of government funding, which is essential for our continuing to operate as a world class institution. At the time of writing, the news is not that encouraging. Research funding for Politics has received a massive cut, with government support for Politics decreasing by 11.3% since 2001 despite the number of academics submitted in this area increasing by 18%. Obviously, the financial downturn in the world economy meant that we were not exactly expecting largesse but such a cut is somewhat discouraging.

Fortunately, new initiatives in teaching and research – many detailed elsewhere in this newsletter, will hopefully enable us to meet the challenges posed by the squeeze on finances. We are continuing to add to our Masters programmes. As we announced in the last Newsletter, following the success of the new Global Governance and Ethics MSc, we will be introducing as of next year a new MSc in Security Studies. We are also in advanced negotiations with New York University (NYU) for a joint degree programme in Public Administration. We have also received welcome news of success in the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) competition to award a ‘block grant’ of Masters and PhD studentships, receiving three MA and four PhD studentships over the next five years for our programmes in Legal and Political Theory and Human Rights.

Although the department is focussed on graduate teaching, we have steadily developed a growing undergraduate programme for visiting students – mainly from the United States - and UCL undergraduates enrolled on other degree programmes. We now mount some ten courses, many taught by our own PhD students. UCL has long run a successful programme in European Social and Political Studies (ESPS) based in the Arts and Humanities faculty. From next year, an expanded version of our affiliate programme will form the core of a ‘Politics pathway’ within the ESPS degree and we are about to advertise for a joint Political Science-ESPS Lecturer who will have the task of overseeing it. This is a very exciting new initiative, which establishes the department at the heart of UCL’s activities and enables us to grow.

Meanwhile, we have also been able to replace Dr Markus Kornprobst with a new Lecturer, Dr Rodwan M Abouharb, who joins us from Louisiana State University (LSU), where he is currently an Assistant Professor.

Finally, the research activities of colleagues continue to prosper. Basak Cali’s work on the authority and legitimacy of the European Human Rights Court moves on apace as she interviews leading figures from government and the judiciary in the UK, Turkey, Germany and Bulgaria to assess the impact of ECHR judgements on domestic legal systems. Robert Hazell’s on-going work on Freedom of Information has received new funding from the Leverhulme Trust with a grant of £77,927 over two years for a project on ‘Freedom of Information and Parliament: The Sword and the Shield’.

I look forward to reporting more on these and the many other projects currently in the pipeline from other colleagues in our next newsletter.
In this sixty second interview we quiz Dr Colin Provost, Lecturer in Public Policy and MSc Public Policy Programme Director.

**Dr Colin Provost**
Lecturer in Public Policy and MSc Public Policy Programme Director

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**What is your name?**
Colin Provost

**When did you join UCL?**
January 2007

**What are your responsibilities in the Department?**
I teach Law and Regulation, Public Management: Theories and Innovations and co-teach Theories and Actors of the Policy Process. I’m also Director of the MSc in Public Policy.

**What do you particularly like and dislike about your job?**
I really like all of my colleagues. The department is very friendly and collegial and we have the best administrative staff as well. They make our jobs as academic staff so much easier. I also really enjoy how much I learn from my students, given their diverse backgrounds. I intensely dislike second marking but this is a UK institution, not only a feature of UCL.

**What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?**
As Dr Christine Reh answered to the very same question, I’ll leave that for others to decide!

**Most inspirational person that you have met whilst at UCL?**
Dr Andrew Whitford, Department of Public Administration, University of Georgia.

**Favourite location around UCL?**
On a sunny day, Tavistock Square; on a rainy day, my office.

**What would your ideal afternoon/evening in London include?**
A walk through Hyde Park or St James Park, a tour of the used book stores around Bloomsbury and Holborn, a pub or two and a walk across Waterloo Bridge.

**What is your favourite book?**
Tie between *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller and *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail* by Hunter S. Thompson.

**What are your hobbies?**
Running, walking my dog, excessive political news consumption, travelling (especially through Europe).

**If you had not gone into academia what would you be doing now?**
I would either be working happily as a high-school teacher or miserably as an attorney.

**If you could implement one policy in the world today, what would it be?**
Universal health care coverage in the United States...however, this is very complex so I will settle just for enforcing the subpoena to get Karl Rove to testify before Congress.
ESRC FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr Basak Cali updates the Tavistock Times on the ongoing study of the judicial legitimacy and authority of the European Court of Human Rights.

Dr Basak Cali and Alice Wyss’s ESRC-funded research into the perception of the European Court of Human Rights in domestic legal and political settings has entered its second year in the same manner as the first – in full swing. Basak and Alice have been busy travelling to conduct interviews in Munich, Stuttgart, Berlin and Sofia and are about to head for Dublin and Strasbourg in the coming months. They’ve also been on the road to conferences, invited talks and workshops in Exeter, Paris, Gothenburg and closer to home, SOAS London.

Data collection for qualitative research is a very labour-intensive process. Alice has spent days phoning, emailing and faxing in order to secure and schedule meetings with some of the busiest people in their respective countries – government ministers, litigating lawyers and high court judges. To date, over 70 legal and political elites across four countries have co-operated with the project. As far as qualitative research goes, this is on a very large scale - indeed, the first of its kind to look into the perceptions of international courts.

Of course, it’s not just all been about the travelling. The first comprehensive single-country analysis will be presented at the Political Studies Association conference at Manchester University in April 2009. This paper on ‘The United Kingdom and the European Court of Human Rights: An elite perception analysis’ discusses why British elites support the European Court of Human Rights, how they perceive the influence of the court on their domain of activities and the different types of compliance that emerge in the UK when the Court condemns it with a human rights violation. The paper draws from original data collected during the fieldwork in the UK between May and December 2008. In addition, the European Human Rights Law Review has published an article from the project and Basak and Alice have produced an SPP Working Paper.

The project has launched its own website where information on methodology, conferences and papers can be accessed. It also makes use of Google Maps to show where Basak and Alice’s travels on the project have taken them.

The website can be accessed at http://ecthrproject.wordpress.com

With the project running until January 2011, we hope to have more updates on the findings and the data analysis for future editions of the TAVISTOCK TIMES.

Basak Cali, Lecturer in Human Rights and Alice Wyss, Research Assistant in Plovdiv, Bulgaria
As another series of Thursday evening seminars draws to a close, this is a great opportunity to reflect upon the eclectic group of scholars that have visited SPP these past six months and the theories, messages and findings they brought with them. Two themes have surfaced repeatedly through the course of the series; these have encouraged us (1) as citizens to reflect upon our participatory practices, and (2) as researchers of political affairs to better detail and react to the realities around us.

The series’ inaugural lecture was delivered by Justine Lacroix (Universite Libre de Bruxelles, Oct 9th), who offered a liberal defence of compulsory voting; noting that in her native Belgium this has dramatically increased options available to voters and levels of participation in elections, even though failure to turn out carries little in the way of punitive penalties. In a continuation of the theme of participation in politics, Colin Hay (University of Sheffield, Nov 27th) implored us to reverse a common argument that blames participant apathy for the cynical politics available to consumers. He argued, instead, that it appears that we have fallen out of love with politics in this country because politicians have failed to provide a brand of politics worth consuming.

Offering a slightly different spin to account for the same empirical puzzle, Andrew Russell (University of Manchester, Feb 26th) suggested that apparent voter apathy—especially among the young—can be explained by a lack of socialisation into politics. Along with the audience, he debated the potential for compulsory voting, a lower voting age and a re-branding of politics to fill this participatory gap.

The second theme of the series centred upon a series of more practical suggestions for the analyst of political matters. Todd Landman (University of Essex, Oct 23rd), for instance, brought welcome clarity to the complicated and controversial task of measuring human rights. He detailed a comprehensive and robust framework for defining, measuring and monitoring human rights and their violations across cultures and political systems.

Moving away from the complexities of measuring observable outcomes, Ned Lebow (Dartmouth College/LSE, Oct 30th) captivated the audience with his alternative histories of the Garden of Eden, Mozart’s political clout and the precursors of the Great War. The use of such “counterfactuals” ought to, he insisted, form a more consistent part of the empirical evidence we, as analysts, bring to bear when answering research questions about political outcomes. Two further talks, from Wyn Bowen (King’s College London, Dec 4th) and Laure-Helene Piron (DFID, Jan 22nd) encouraged us to turn our attention to refining traditional approaches to the study of military deterrence and transitional justice, respectively, as a means of countering terrorism (in the case of the former) and protecting marginalised minorities in underdeveloped communities (in the case of the latter).

The SPP Seminar Series will return in October 2009.
NEW PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
MSc GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

We are pleased to announce the newly appointed Programme Director for the MSc Global Governance and Ethics programme, Dr Rodwan Abouharb:

Dr Rodwan Abouharb is presently an Assistant Professor at Louisiana State University having received his PhD in 2005 from Binghamton University. His research examines how domestic and international processes change the civility of relations between a government and its citizens. More specifically, he investigates how existing domestic economic and political change, international economic integration and the types of international governance regimes, affect the likelihood of civil war, repression or the promotion of economic development. His individual and collaborative work, cross-national in nature, is conducted within the framework of behavioural political science.

He has co-authored work with David Cingranelli examining the determinants and consequences of World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programmes including a Cambridge University Press book entitled Structural Adjustment and Human Rights which examines the impact of these programs on government respect for a variety of human rights. Two book chapters have also been published which examine when countries enter into these programmes with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

In the “Human Rights Peace” he examines, in collaboration with David Sobek, how respect for human rights at home reduces the probability of international conflict and was published in the Journal of Politics. Other research, co-authored with Anessa Kimball, seeks to reframe our understanding of economic development. The authors argue that traditional measures such as GDP per capita do not reflect how broad swathes of society fare under government policies. In comparison to GDP per capita, infant mortality rates much better reflect how government policies benefit the broader sections of the population. They generated an infant mortality data-set for all countries from 1816–2002 published in the Journal of Peace Research.

Currently, Dr Abouharb is working on a number of projects including a solo book manuscript examining the impact of economic liberalisation on civil conflict. He is also collaborating on projects examining the impact of international regimes on government respect for economic and social rights, the effects of de-facto judicial independence on government respect for physical integrity rights and the effect of trade liberalisation on strikes within the United States, post World War II.

Rod Abouharb looks forward to joining UCL’s Department of Political Science in September 2009.
MODELLING THE ‘PARLIAMENT OF MAN’?: THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL POLICY SIMULATION

Dr David Hudson, Director MSc International Public Policy, writes:

Each year we stage a United Nations (UN) policy simulation as part of the core module for the MSc International Public Policy. The policy simulation has been running for some five years now and tends to be one of the highlights of the year. This year was no different. On the 3rd December 2008, over sixty participants—for the most part looking every inch the international diplomat—filed into the School of Public Policy’s Council Room to spend the next six hours trying to negotiate and agree on the wording for a declaration on the ongoing events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) late last year, i.e. the violence between rebel and Government forces in that country’s Eastern province of Kivu.

We tend to base the policy simulation on a UN Security Council meeting where participants have to prepare and then vote on a draft resolution. Deciding the issue on which to base the simulation each year tends to be relatively straightforward for us: we just look at what’s happening in the world around November time and plump for the crisis which is looming largest. In the past we have had the situation in Darfur; Iranian non-compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); North Korea’s proclaimed nuclear test and the political and human rights situation in Myanmar.

Some three weeks before the actual meeting students are assigned to a country—one of the current fifteen members of the UN Security Council—and have to work together in groups of four or five, each person with an appointed role, e.g. the country’s Permanent Representative, Head of State and so forth. It can be very instructive and interesting—for all concerned—to see people deal with roles they wouldn’t necessarily take on naturally but it’s always brilliant to see how well people respond and perform during the simulation.

After being informed of the purpose of the meeting and their roles, participants are given three weeks to prepare for the actual day. Good preparation involves (1) learning about the political situation due to be debated, (2) individuals familiarising themselves with their delegation’s position as well as likely voting patterns and diplomatic partners and (3) learning the protocols of drafting a resolution, caucusing and UN voting.

“This simulation is one of the rare opportunities for one to combine the theoretical knowledge with the possibility of putting it into practice in a situation where timing and ability to handle pressure are of utmost importance.”

Aleksandr Popov
MA Legal and Political Theory

“My interviewer was so intrigued by the policy simulation exercise that we spent most of the interview discussing it. Afterwards he said he’d have to put me through to the next round because we didn’t have a chance to cover anything else!”

Christina Christou
MSc International Public Policy
protocol. Some delegations also see fit to use this preparation period to circulate working papers to form the basis of a draft resolution and/or to build their diplomatic ties with other delegations. Finally, a couple of days before the simulation is due to begin, we freeze any real world developments to allow the participants to concentrate on the simulation rather than the news.

The day itself is composed of a mixture of formal sessions with speeches, open debates and the all important caucusing sessions used to negotiate and work on the resolution. After the formal opening statements delegates got down to the business of trying to persuade others of the wisdom of their own position. The usual alliances were evident. The key tension which emerged was between the US, who wanted oversight and the Russian delegation, who balked at what they saw as US interference/imperialism. Perhaps inevitably, debate revolved around the mandate, size and composition of the MONUC force.

It was eventually decided that the South African delegation — as a regional power and consensus player in the debates — should take the lead in drafting the resolution.

We usually schedule the simulation to finish by 7.30pm but routinely run up against and beyond the deadline as a final deal is thrashed out.

Eventually — after some necessary pressure on the part of the Security Council President — a draft resolution was finally tabled for voting following some seriously intense bargaining in a muggy and fractious side-room. The time pressures and tiredness probably served to unpick the deal. That, along with French principles/intransigence (depending on who you spoke to), meant that the draft resolution was vetoed and three weeks of preparation and nearly six hours of debating and bargaining had come to naught. Plus ça change.

“Viewing the world through the eyes of the Indonesian Foreign Minister and encountering strong nationalistic feelings attached to a country in which I had never resided was a dramatically different and rewarding experience.”

Zachary Zimmerman
MSc International Public Policy

NEW GENDER AND POLITICS COURSES

This academic year (2008–09) the department launched a new module in Gender and Politics, available to undergraduate students. Next year (2009–10) this will be supplemented with a similar course available as an option on our Masters programmes. The course gives a broad overview of a range of topics in politics and gender. It starts with some introductory theory, then looks at questions largely in the domestic political arena (but from a comparative rather than exclusively British perspective), such as achieving women's representation in parliaments, the rights and wrongs of 'quotas' and how gender affects voting behaviour. The second half of the course has a more international flavour, looking at gender and human rights, gender and international development and gender and armed conflict. The course has proved popular with undergraduate students this year, who have been involved in some lively class debates. We look forward to extending this to Masters students in 2009–10.
PESSIMISTIC IN ANALYSIS, OPTIMISTIC IN ACTION: THE HUMAN RIGHTS STUDY GROUP TRIP TO THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA.

Philippa McMahon, MA Human Rights student writes:

As dawn rose fresh and rosy fingered over London City Airport one early Thursday morning in March, our over excitement in anticipation of the Human Rights study trip to Geneva for the United Nations Human Rights Council 10th Session became evident as our taxi pulled up to the terminal at 4.30am, over an hour before the airport opened. Undeterred and caffeine fuelled, our enthusiasm was further tested as our Swiss flight sat on the runway delayed due to adverse weather conditions over Switzerland, however our spirits held strong and with a soft landing and quick sprint to the bus stop, we arrived at the UN Headquarters in good time.

We were welcomed to the UN with an impressively bureaucratic queuing, form filling, photo-taking, pass printing procedure but eventually, with our newly printed personalised UN souvenirs around our necks, we made our way to the public gallery in time to hear responses to High Commissioner Navi Pillay's first annual report. Having seen many UNHRC debates broadcasted on the internet, it was inspiring to see and hear the global debate in full swing and I was delighted to discover that 'humour' had not been another prohibited item to be left at the entrance.

Throughout the day Dr Basak Cali had lined up a number of informal meetings so we might listen and engage with the real day-to-day workings of the UN.
We met with Alan Kikuchi-White, the Geneva Representative for SOS-Kinderdorf International, who talked to us about his experiences as an NGO representative, his hopes and opinions about the Universal Periodic Review and how he came to work for SOS-Kinderdorf International.

Finally we met with four interns from across the spectrum of UN departments. Hearing their perspective on how to get an internship but also how to utilise your placement will be invaluable in the coming months.

With a parting revival and hive of mass photo taking, although slight disdain as the book-shop closed five minutes early, we made our soggy-way back to the airport. As we spent our final Swiss Francs on chocolate and... well more chocolate, our trip came to the unusual end of bumping into three weary looking Top Gear presenters who took the same flight as us back to London (not in first class I did note).

Upon reflection what struck me most prolifically throughout our day in Geneva was that the UN is not the rooms, corridors and beige seventies interior of the buildings but the people and more importantly the personalities. From the lobbyists to the translators, interns to national representatives, it is the relationships and willingness (or unwillingness) to cooperate and interact that is what gives the UN its resonating atmosphere of solidarity and hope.

Despite being over the prescribed word limit, I cannot finish this brief summary of our fantastic day in Geneva without offering sincere thanks to Basak, without who the day would not have been possible. Thankyou!

Alan Kikuchi-White, the Geneva Representative for SOS-Kinderdorf International talks to Dr Basak Cali and MA Human Rights students.
REDESIGN OF THE DEPARTMENTAL WEBSITE

Update on the redesign of the new departmental website:

The current Department of Political Science website, www.ucl.ac.uk/spp is undergoing extensive redesign in 2009. The new site will feature enhanced accessibility and usability features as well as focusing more on raising the Department’s profile, activities and programmes.

The departmental web survey ended in January 2009 with a good response from staff, students and external users from nine different countries. A majority of users visited the site at least once a week with the home page, staff pages and intranet being the most popular. Participants indicated that they would like to see a more stimulating and simplified layout, detailed staff profiles, a FAQs page and a student experiences section. Users also suggested that the new site could include a blog, discussion forum for staff/PhD students and videos of key staff and seminars.

At present, Stephen Thompson, the Departmental Web/IT Administrator, is experimenting with various designs and it is hoped that this is completed by the end of March - it is anticipated that the new site will be live by September 2009. Development news will be posted on the Staff intranet starting in April and staff will be able to see the site as it is being built and will be able to give continuous feedback.

PhD PROGRAMME NEWS

Dr Jennifer van Heerde, MPhil/PhD Programme Director reports that:

With over 30 active MPhil/PhD students, the programme continues to grow and is going from strength-to-strength as evidenced by the large number of students publishing their work in quality outlets, engaging with policymakers, presenting at conferences and gaining valuable teaching experience. We are proud to acknowledge the following work.

Awards

Chiara Cordelli has been awarded a Library of Congress Fellowship, from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), deferred to September–December 2009.

Harald Heubaum has been named Research Fellow at the Global Governance Initiative, a joint research initiative of twelve European research institutions.

Publications


Conference papers


The Department would like to welcome Katherine Reyes and Francisco Marques, our newest MPhil/PhD students.

Katherine Reyes has worked in conflict resolution for over seven years. She has served with the peacekeeping missions of the United Nations in Sudan and Burundi and in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Katherine’s work in Darfur has concentrated mainly on the political dynamics of camps of displaced persons. She holds a MSc in Comparative Politics from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a Bachelors degree in Journalism and Political Science from Carleton University in Canada. Katherine’s research is on political violence in camps of displaced persons. Her supervisors are Dr Alex Braithwaite and Dr David Hudson.

Francisco Marques has worked in Brazilian public sector over five years, first in the field of intelligence and then, for the last three years, in the Ministry of Agriculture, where he was directly involved in public policy implementation and evaluation. He has previously worked in different institutes dedicated to the research of Brazilian contemporary in history and political institutions. He holds a Bachelors degree in History and a MSc in Political Science, both from Fluminense Federal University, in Rio de Janeiro. Francisco’s research is on Rio’s local politics, parliamentary behaviour, electoral connection and executive-legislative relations. His supervisors are Dr Jennifer van Heerde and Dr Meg Russell.
Two current MA Human Rights students, Gabi Sibley and Natalie Tomlinson, report to the Tavistock Times about the activities of the student led UCL Student Human Rights Programme.

The UCL Student Human Rights Programme is just at the beginning of its exciting life. It was set up just over a year ago by UCL Law students who saw the potential of student participation within the human rights field. The programme is led by students for students who are advised by human rights academics and professionals. The UCLSHRP’s aim is to foster a vibrant human rights culture in UCL and also across wider communities through initiating awareness, instigating debate and inspiring action. Events are set up to raise awareness of human rights issues and to stimulate debate. Some of the events we enjoyed attending were ‘Legal vs Political Protection of Human Rights Panel’, ‘Asylum Seekers’ Rights’ and ‘Human Rights in Zimbabwe’ plus many more which were well attended and gave us all much to reflect upon. Not only have we attended events but we are currently organising an event for 30 April 2009 on ‘Terrorism lists, Self-determination and Human Rights’ in which the key speaker will be Professor Bill Bowring from Birkbeck University, all welcome!

We are involved in current research projects and also organisational aspects such as events and day to day running of the programme. As MA Human Rights students we both saw the potential to expand this mainly Law based programme to hold a more multi-disciplinary outlook on human rights standards. This ties in with the direction that the founders intended.

We participate in this programme as we believe in the need to spread a human rights culture and disperse of prejudices that this subject may hold. We participate as we believe in human rights standards and in the power of students within the active engagement of this subject.

Considering that it is such a young organisation the impact it has had already has been quite astounding. We have worked closely with well known organisations such as The Howard League for Penal Reform, Guantanamo Bay Campaign, Campaign Against Criminalising Communities and more recently we were part of The Convention on Modern Liberty.

If anyone is interested in getting involved in any one of the activities that UCLSHRP undertakes such as its review, bulletin, events team or research please do not hesitate to get in touch via the website:

www.uclshrp.com

Natalie Tomlinson and Gabi Sibley
MA Human Rights students 2008-09
MOOT COURT EXERCISE FOR MA HUMAN RIGHTS

Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia, MA Human Rights Programme Director writes:

Students on the MA Human Rights had an opportunity to engage in research on human rights issues at a new level through the new MA Human Rights moot court exercise.

This exercise culminated in the moot court (a court room simulation where different teams of students take up the roles of applicant, responding government and various amicus curiae briefs, before the grand chamber of the European Court of Human Rights) which took place on Thursday 26 March 09.

The case discussed is one currently being filed by Binman and Partners Solicitors at the ECHR on behalf of three Sikh boys who have been expelled from a French school of wearing the Keski (a small turban traditionally worn by Sikh boys to hold their long hair). The Conseil d’Etat, France’s court of last resort, had ruled that this restriction on dress was in line with France’s laws because permitting ostentatious items of religious clothing in public arenas (like schools) would undermine France’s fundamental governing principle of secularism.

The moot court teams provided legal analyses and arguments bearing on the court’s adjudication of this matter at the moot where they were interrogated on their position by the ‘judges’ (a role played by members of staff from the MA Human Rights). The exercise attracted wide attention, including Binman and Partners themselves as well as a Sikh NGO sponsoring the case, both of which expressed interest in attending on the day.

UCL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTE MOVES AHEAD WITH DONATIONS

The new institute for human rights, which is being set up in a joint venture between staff from the School of Public Policy and staff from Laws, has received the promise of a considerable donation from an outside philanthropic source towards its launch event and symposia. This event will take place in the third week of October on the subject of Corporate Social Responsibility and Human Rights, with high profile speakers, a panel discussion and drinks reception to follow. The initial launch will also be followed up by a series of symposia on important human rights issues. The Institute web site is due to go up and live within the next few months in preparation for the launch event.
DR SHERRELL STROSCHEIN SOLVES A MYSTERY FOR THE TAVISTOCK TIMES!

Why is Dr Stroschein always going to Eastern Europe?

For the past two years, she has been working on a database project to collect digital photos of newspaper articles in Romania and Slovakia. The photos document the daily evolution of politics during the first democratic decade of the 1990s.

The project began as a means to fill in factual information in her book manuscript, Contention and Coexistence: Ethnic Struggle and Democratization in Eastern Europe, while on a British Academy grant. The book examines how minority ethnic Hungarians used contentious politics to push for minority-friendly policies in spite of their small numbers in Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. However, the photo project soon took on a life of its own, as it became clear she could produce a public database of these articles in order to address a number of research questions.

The articles are from Slovak and Hungarian newspapers in Slovakia and Romanian and Hungarian newspapers in Romania – daily newspapers over 10 years. Given the vast amount of material, she will likely apply for a grant to hire assistance to catalogue it all, following the last trips to finish the project this year.

Why would one do this? Here are a few examples of the research debates and questions driving the project.

One empirically-focused angle regards the role of the European Union in causing political change in the 1990s in Romania and Slovakia. The article collection documents each country’s interactions with the EU and NATO during this decade, in addition to ethnic politics. A great deal of research has suggested that these external actors played a strong role in political reform in these countries. However, much of that research is based on accounts from those institutions, as well as reports from within those countries that were produced for Western consumption, often in West European languages. Although an examination of domestic newspaper sources in Romanian, Slovak and Hungarian reveals a far stronger role for domestic actors, including local elites, in these changes. In another surprise, where international actors did seem to play a role, the importance of NATO is outlined far more in local accounts than that of the EU. The sources one uses will affect the answers one gets to research questions and it is hoped this project might provide a domestic corrective.

There is also a methods angle. The project provides insight on the incremental evolution of politics, an important issue for scholars using a historical institutionalist approach to the study of politics. While such an approach emphasizes incremental change, its practice in research is hindered by the fact that information is rarely available in day-by-day format – the format for this project.

Finally, the project sheds light on narrative accounts of similar events from different perspectives; an angle for constructivists. For example, in the city of Targu Mures, Romania, in 1990, a riot broke out between Romanians and Hungarians on the town’s main square. The local Romanian and Hungarian newspapers document the same events but told through vastly different perspectives. What and who caused the riot? What was the ethnicity of those who died in the riot? How much did the central government do to stop the events?

Each of these questions has different answers in the Romanian and Hungarian accounts, which sheds light on how narrative accounts structure and are structured by identity in ethnic politics.
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 selection of progress reports follows:

Rabiah Mumtaz
MSc European Public Policy, 2007–08

Having already completed an undergraduate degree in Law at UCL, I joined the School of Public Policy in September 2007 to pursue my Masters in European Public Policy. During my postgraduate study I worked for the Change Institute, a think-tank that specialises in assisting public, private and non-governmental institutions develop cross-cultural understanding.

During my time at SPP I applied for the Civil Service Fast Stream graduate scheme and after a long but successful application process, I finally joined the Ministry of Justice in November 2008. The Fast Stream is an accelerated development programme, whereby a series of intensive job placements are offered to graduates with a view to preparing them for a senior position in the civil service. It’s a fast-paced and engaging programme and allows those involved to have a stake in shaping the future of governance in the UK.

My first posting has been in the Legal Policy team - a newly-created section of the Ministry, where our (somewhat ambitious) objective is to create better law by encouraging departments across Whitehall to make legislation which is both evidence-based and more sensitive to resource issues. Legislating, I’ve quickly learned, is a costly business! We pursue these goals because we firmly believe that better law makes for a stronger democracy, increased citizen engagement and (when managed carefully) greater value for the taxpayer.

Overall, it has been an exciting six months, during which I have had the opportunity to meet with ministers, write briefings and speeches for the House of Lords and work first-hand on a bill. It has been a rather steep learning curve, where I have had to take responsibility for decisions that may have wide-ranging implications but ultimately it has proven an experience that has been immensely satisfying and bodes well for the years ahead.

Mark Rusling
MSc Public Policy, 2003–04

My time since leaving the School of Public Policy has been varied, to say the least! Before joining the School, I had accepted a training contract at Linklaters, the City law firm. I did my time (mostly) dutifully but my heart was never in it. I left on the day I qualified and took up a role as Campaigns and Education Officer at the United Nations Association, a small NGO promoting the UN within the UK. I lead on their parliamentary and education work, sometimes even putting into action some of the things we covered at SPP!

Throughout this time, I have been active in Labour politics - I worked part-time for Linda Perham MP during my Masters - and I volunteered on the Obama campaign in Ohio in 2008. My friends tell me that I have swapped the world’s second-most hated profession (lawyer) for the most-hated (politician)!

If I have, it’s a well-worn path. In 2007-8, I was Chair of the Young Fabians, the under-31s section of the Fabian Society and am currently preparing to stand in Waltham Forest during the 2010 London council elections.

I have never once regretted my time at UCL. The course has allowed me better to understand political decision-making and hopefully, in due course, to take better political decisions.

Meghan Benton
MA Legal and Political Theory, 2004-05
PhD Political Science, 2006 – present

I’m a third year PhD student researching the rights of resident non-citizens but I’ve been a part of the School of Public Policy in one way or other for over four
years now – starting with a Masters in Legal and Political Theory in 2004–5. I also work part-time as a research assistant in the Constitution Unit.

The Masters was a fantastic year – from challenging debates with course mates in seminars and at the pub afterwards to the intellectual autonomy of the dissertation at the end of it. It led me to a job at the Institute of Public Policy Research and I enjoyed understanding and contributing to policy debates from the standpoint of principles of justice and fairness. However, I missed academic study so much that, no sooner had I started, I was filling in my application for a PhD.

During the first two years of my PhD I continued to work part-time as a research assistant at IPPR – mainly contributing to the Strategic Research Team’s workstream on children and young people. Whilst I was there I wrote an article on students and suicide and co-authored a book and chapter on education.

I’m enjoying my PhD, although it has its ups and downs and quirky challenges (staying motivated in the face of facebook, loneliness, drinking too much coffee etc.) and I hope to finish in around a year. In the meantime, I’m presenting at a conference in York in May and aiming to submit a paper for publication this summer.

I joined the Constitution Unit in November 2008 where I am working on the House of Lords and the policy impact of parliament.

I would recommend SPP to anyone thinking of doing a Masters or PhD. The fact that it is a designated graduate school means it is orientated to the specific teaching and research needs of graduate students and it is staffed by world-class academics. It’s a friendly, stimulating place to be a part of – with exciting events, great people and good social events – which is why I’m still here!

Monica Arriola  
MSc European Public Policy, 2004-05

Since graduating in 2005, I moved back across the pond and have been working in foreign policy and diplomacy as a Senior Political and Economic Relations officer at the Consulate General of Canada, San Francisco office for the past three years. Studying European Public Policy at SPP, coupled with my private sector energy experience has afforded me the opportunity to specialise in global energy, environment and economic policy. I am currently advising Canada and federal partners on their energy strategy with the U.S. and in particular California’s Low Carbon Fuel Standard and global warming policy. One of my greatest career achievements was spearheading a campaign for California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to go on a trade and policy mission to Canada in 2007.

I live in San Francisco and I would love to hear from my fellow classmates of 2005 and can be reached at: Monica.Arriola@international.gc.ca.


http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/121668190/PDFSTART

Raya Kardasheva  
UCL Teaching Fellow
NEWS FROM THE CONSTITUTION UNIT

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 and comprises a further four full-time researchers and two administrators. The Unit also frequently recruits interns to assist in its research projects, including many SPP graduates. Some Unit staff also teach courses within SPP and act as supervisors for students' dissertations in relevant areas. SPP students are also welcome to attend many of the Constitution Unit's public events and to draw upon the Unit's extensive back catalogue of publications about constitutional reform.

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:

ESRC grant on Freedom of Information and local government

The Constitution Unit has recently won ESRC funding to carry out an in-depth study of the impact of Freedom of Information (FOI) on local authorities, due to start in the summer of 2009. More than half of FOI requests made go to local authorities but very little is known about how FOI has impacted upon local authorities.

This project will seek to answer two questions: to what extent FOI has met its objectives at a local level and how it has impacted upon the new model of local government. In our current study we have identified the objectives of FOI as transparency, accountability, better decision-making, increased public understanding of decision-making, increased participation and increased trust. We will measure to what extent FOI has met these objectives.

We will also seek to examine to what extent FOI has impacted upon the key aspects of the new model of local government; political leadership, accountability, service delivery and partnership working. The study will use interviews with officials and politicians across 15 case study local authorities, analysis of media stories featuring FOI and surveys of both FOI officers across England and FOI requesters.

Unit in the news

Since the last issue of the Tavistock Times, Robert Hazell and Meg Russell have contributed to public debates in the media. Robert Hazell appeared on Radio 4's The World Tonight on 27 January to discuss the Information Tribunal ruling on the Cabinet minutes on Iraq and on Channel 4's Dispatches about Princes William and Harry in February. Meg Russell's media profile was in response to allegations about 'cash for amendments' in the House of Lords. Meg thus appeared on Newsnight on 26 January and the BBC World Service news on 27 January and was quoted in the Guardian and The Economist on 29 January.

Both Robert and Meg appeared in the British Library's 'Taking Liberties' exhibition, which ran until 1 March.
New Books

The Unit has published two new books this spring:

*Church and State in 21st Century Britain. The Future of Church Establishment*, edited by R.M. Morris and published by Palgrave, analyses the present position of establishment and examines the options for change.

*The State of the Nations: Into the third term of devolution in the United Kingdom*, edited by Alan Trench and published by Imprint Academic, is the latest in a series of volumes analysing in detail the development of devolution across the United Kingdom.

Constitution Unit seminars

The Unit has been pleased to host seminars with Sam Younger (former Chair of the Electoral Commission) in November 2008 doing a valedictory dispatch after eight years at the organisation's helm, Oonagh Gay (House of Commons Library) and Barry Winetrobe (Constitution Unit) discussing their new publication on 'constitutional watchdogs' in December 2008 and the Role of the Committee on Standards in Public Life discussed by its Chair, Sir Christopher Kelly, in January 2009. The remaining seminars in the first half of 2009 are ‘Regulating Surveillance’, with Prof Charles Raab (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Benjamin Goold (Somerville College, University of Oxford), Devolution a Decade on, with Sir Alan Beith (Chair, Justice Select Committee) and 'Future Plans for the Electoral Commission' (title tbc) with Jenny Watson, its new Chair, in June.

More details at:
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/events/2009/seminars/index.htm
SUMMER IS ON ITS WAY!

This is the last edition of the TAVISTOCK TIMES for the academic year, 2008–9. The Department would like to take this opportunity to wish students good luck with examination revision and dissertation writing over the summer months. We look forward to seeing you on dissertation submission day on the 1st of September 2009!

FUTURE EDITIONS OF TAVISTOCK TIMES

TAVISTOCK TIMES will be published three times a year with the next edition due to be published in September 2009.

Ideas for future articles should be sent to:
Helen Holt,
h.holt@ucl.ac.uk
before the end of July 2009.

Contributions from past students are especially welcome keeping the Department up to date on their progress since leaving UCL.