This was another vibrant term at the School of Public Policy with a great mixture of events; public talks, seminars, academic round-tables and student-led events, as well as career events and events organised by our societies, IPPR and IPAS.

Our Policy and Practice talks hosted some interesting speakers, such as Michael Jacobs analysing the international agreement on climate change and energy policy, Professor Peter Trubowitz discussing the topical issue of the US presidential elections and its impact on US politics and policy, Albert Weale on the state of NHS, a great panel about the making of a European President, Professor Swen Steinmo on a comparative analysis about tax avoidance and more. We also welcomed back one of our first Executive MPA Alumni, Aram Barra, now working for Transform Drug Policy Foundation, giving a talk about the next steps in global drug policy reform, ahead of the UN’s General Assembly session.

A much-discussed issue for the next few months will be the EU referendum and the Department will be active on that front. Joining the Constitution Unit and the EU Institute, there will be a special seminar series on the UK’s continued membership of the European Union. These events will gather senior academics and practitioners to examine the constitutional consequences that a Brexit would have for the UK, the EU and other EU member states.

Another highlight was Nick Danziger, one of the world’s most renowned photojournalists, giving us stories from his work documenting the lives of people living in some of the poorest countries of the world. GGI has also hosted some great speakers, such as Daniel Franklin, Executive Director of The Economist newspaper, Professor Halvard Buhaug, Professor Saskia Sassen and more. Furthermore, the Department has been active with research seminars, as well as the always engaging Religious and Political Theory and Legal and Political Theory seminars.

Happy spring to everyone and best wishes for the exams and thesis writing.

Professor David Coen
The Head of the Department of Political Science and Director of the School of Public Policy
In this sixty second interview we quiz Dr Alan Renwick, Deputy Director of the Constitution Unit.

What is your name?
Alan Renwick

When did you join UCL?
September 2015

What are your responsibilities in the Department?
I am the Deputy Director of the Constitution Unit, which means I am involved in planning the Unit’s agenda of research on political institutions and in promoting its engagement with a wide range of policymakers and influencers. I also teach the British Politics undergraduate module and I am coordinating the School’s work to extend its real-world ‘impact’ in preparation for the next REF.

What do you particularly like and dislike about your job?
SPP has a wonderful community: working with fantastic students, great colleagues and the exceptional range of practitioners of politics and public administration with whom we have strong relationships is a real privilege. My only regret is that there are insufficient hours in the day to take full advantage of all the opportunities that are available.

What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?
Getting on both BBC Radio 4 and Sky News on my first day in post was fun!

Most inspirational person that you have met whilst at UCL?
It would be unfair to single out any individuals: I have been inspired by many colleagues and students in all sorts of different ways. That’s one of the great things about being at UCL.

Favourite location in UCL?
The centre of Gordon Square, which is a wonderful oasis of calm.

What would your ideal afternoon/evening in London include?
Afternoon tea with great friends at Brown’s Hotel in Mayfair, followed by a trip to the opera – something by Handel would be very nice or maybe a new opera that makes me think afresh.

What is your favourite book?
Hmm – I don’t really like the idea of ‘favourites’. My favourite thing about books is that they give all sorts of different kinds of stimulation so picking one out would miss the point. Most recently, I enjoyed The Silver Darlings, by Neil Gunn. It’s set in the area I grew up in so I have known about it for a very long time but it’s pretty long and I had never got round to reading it. It was evocative of a world that is very familiar to me but also distant, now that I have been living in southern England for over two decades.

What are your hobbies?
My ideal day in London pretty much sums it up! Going to concerts and plays with friends and getting around so far as humanly possible, by foot.

If you had not gone into academic administration, what would you be doing now?
I have no idea!

If you could implement one policy in the world today, what would it be?
As we all know as students of public policy, if you can change only one policy, the best thing to do is to fix the system of policy-making so that it will produce the best outputs on everything else. That, of course, is easier said than done. None of the institutional innovations we like to suggest in the Constitution Unit will deliver their full benefits unless citizens are engaged with politics. So the first step is to improve the teaching of politics in schools so that citizens have the knowledge and the critical skills to engage effectively.
SPP POST-GRADUATE MENTORING SCHEME

Helen Elliot, Programmes Manager (Admissions) & PhD Administrator, writes:

In 2014, the Department took part in an initiative funded through HEFCE to offer a small number of Graduate Bursary awards with the intention of attracting under-represented groups to postgraduate taught education.

A condition of these awards was to provide an in-house mentoring scheme for current and prospective students with the aim of providing a point of contact for informal questions and advice from a peer rather than a representative of the Department.

The provision of a mentoring programme in the Department had been considered before but the introduction of the awards led to its formalisation and although the scheme concentrated on only four programmes to begin with, it was soon expanded to include all of our Masters.

Paolo Morini has been instrumental in the implementation of the scheme and describes one student’s experience and recalls some of the events held by the mentors’ team.

On a Mission to Empower Students: Chronicles from the SPP Mentoring Programme

It was 2014, I had just started working as a student mentor in the Department when I met Rosa, a new student and one of my future new mentees. Rosa is a mature student, she has a three year old child, very severe dyslexia and a lot of interesting critical opinions on how the public economics models we teach to our students make little sense when used to explain events in the real world.

Rosa, challenged by the programme, had met me early on in October to discuss her struggle in balancing her personal life with her degree commitments.

What’s a mentor to do to support Rosa at this time? A mentor is not a teacher who can devise learning strategies to facilitate reading and writing or a psychological/wellbeing counsellor who can suggest therapies or medication to alleviate stress. We exist in connection to these figures with whom we work to address these points but we are also called to do a bit more as agents on a mission to empower our students.

What Rosa needed in her time of stress was help from teachers, psychological and disability services but also an ally and someone who could empathise with what she was experiencing, someone who she could talk to with honesty, without having to negotiate structures of power or fear a lack of understanding. What she needed to realise was that she already had in herself all she needed to successfully complete her degree, with a little help from UCL and her friends. Our delicate mission as mentors is to help her and many other students in the past two years, to go through that journey to self-empowerment.

For Rosa that entailed meeting with me regularly, a great deal of joint fights to simplify her life as a student and to ease up her workload and as she would tell me later in the year, a lot of talking with other students who were part of the mentoring programme and were facing similar challenges. They were feeling stronger together; I, on the other hand, was thinking of how all my very complicated plans for supporting her had not been as effective as buying some crisps and biscuits and inviting them all over for a tea and a chat on an afternoon in November. Now Rosa is thinking of doing a PhD and writes often to update me on those in last year’s mentoring programme. I’m still a very big fan of all of them and of how far they’ve come.

When March came along we learned with Helen Elliot that HEFCE, the original funder of the mentoring programme would not renew the project for the following academic year.

Disappointed but not deterred, we decided to carry on offering our little
form of help to all students at SPP and are now in the second year of the project with a new team and a wider membership, we are very lucky to experience an incredible success for our work.

In parallel with the one-to-one times and small group meetings, we keep on offering to students from last year, we started organising a series of events to let students know each other and get a few extra hours of skills training.

We started with a walk around Bloomsbury in October, through to two sold out workshops to discuss strategies and techniques for good academic writing, to our most recent sold out roundtable on dissertations, in which we were joined by our brilliant alumni to ease out a few reasons for anxiety and inspire this year’s cohorts to do amazing things with their research time in the summer term.

We are still planning a few events in the months to come, including a panel to discuss diversity in political science and a few summer get-togethers for international students who choose to remain in London.

It’s a collection of little light touches to the student experience but we know, from talking with them, how much they like sharing this time together. We are glad and lucky to get to share it with them, as there is no bigger pleasure than seeing students unlock their potential and enjoy their time with us at UCL.

My thanks go to the students from whom we have learned so much in the past year and a half, to Javier, Will and John-Paul, the first mentors team, to Orly and Sara for joining the team this year and for being so enthusiastically engaged with student wellbeing. To Helen Elliot and the Department, thanks for the human, administrative and financial support to the project. My hope is that we will continue to see mentors at SPP in the many years to come and that in our small way, we can continue to empower our students to reach better and better goals in their lives.

\[1\] Fictional name to protect the identity of the student.

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CIVIL SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND ANTI-CORRUPTION:

New BA-DFID Funded Research Project at SPP

Dr Christian Schuster and Professor Jan Meyer Sahling (Nottingham) have been awarded a £400,000 grant by the British Academy and UK Department for International Development (DFID) Anti-Corruption Evidence Partnership to conduct research in 2016-17 on the effectiveness of distinct civil service designs in curbing corruption and improving bureaucratic performance in the developing world.

The research comprises survey experiments and interviews with public servants in central governments of eight developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. It will shed new light on questions which are central to managing personnel well in developing countries – for instance: do higher salaries reduce or enhance corruption? Which types of recruitment procedures attract both high-performing and ethical candidates? Does the granting of job stability reduce or enhance corruption?

To-date, robust evidence on these questions is largely lacking. This has, in part, contributed to a poor civil service reform track record. A World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) analysis in 2008, for instance, suggested that the Bank’s annual $422m lending for civil service and administrative reform in the developing world had no measurable impact. The research project seeks to provide evidence which improves civil service reform designs – and thus their track record. It is developed and disseminated in close collaboration with DFID, its country offices and partners in the developing world.
UK SUPREME COURT VISIT

Dr Colin Provost, MSc Public Policy Programme Director, writes:

When the MSc in Public Policy students and I showed up at the UK Supreme Court on the morning of February 17, we found ourselves surrounded by television cameras, news reporters and experts on the role of the Court in our judicial system. The Court’s justices that morning had handed down a ruling, stating that for 30 years, something called the “Joint Enterprise Law” had been misinterpreted.

The Joint Enterprise Law had been used for decades to prosecute gang members who did not directly commit violent crimes but may have played a peripheral role and been able to foresee the outcome. The judges ruled that being able to ‘foresee’ the violent crime was not a sufficient test and as a result, hundreds of prisoners may now have grounds for appeal.

This episode, which we witnessed firsthand, serves as a reminder of the Court’s power even if it cannot formally strike down acts of Parliament, due to parliamentary sovereignty and in fact can only strike down acts of improperly delegated authority by Parliament. During our visit to the Court, our somewhat eccentric tour guide, glossed over some details of the Court’s functions but provided key examples of other ways in which the Court has made a difference.

For example, it was the arbiter of last resort when it upheld a damages ruling against Christian B&B owners that had refused to serve a gay couple in 2008. The Court makes similar rulings every year, which have the potential to profoundly affect the existing body of civil rights law within the UK.

The Court has existed in its current form only since 2009, as a result of the Constitutional Reform Act of 2005. Previously, the UK’s highest court for conflict resolution was the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords, which existed within Parliament until 2009. The Law Lords only served as judicial arbiters but because their institutional home was within the House of Lords, a conflict of interest was often perceived by ordinary people, even if there was little evidence that such a conflict ever really existed. The 2005 legislation did not bless the new Court with many substantive new powers but it did give it a new name as well as a new building in which to operate, safely outside the home of Parliament.

The tour of the Court took us into another room known as the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which contains an elongated table with a number of national flags, unrecognisable to the students and myself. In addition to being the highest court in the UK, the UK Supreme Court is also the arbiter of last resort for a number of commonwealth nations. Countries, such as Jamaica and the Bahamas willingly delegate their judicial authority to the UK Supreme Court so that it can hear cases from those and many other nations. This raises questions of why other nations would delegate their judicial authority but it also raises questions about what the justices must do differently from when they are interpreting UK law. For example, in 2015 the Court announced that it would hear a death penalty case from Trinidad and Tobago, a policy issue that it does not arise within the context of the UK or European Union. Such roles illustrate that, in addition to its role in the UK and the EU as well, the UK Supreme Court will continue to have a global influence on law and policy for decades to come.
UK PARLIAMENT VISIT

Jonathan Hyman, UCL Affiliate Political Science and International Relations student, 2015–16, writes:

The new ‘British Parliamentary Studies’ undergraduate module is run by Professor Meg Russell in collaboration with the Westminster parliamentary authorities. On April 9, my classmates and I, along with some other UCL students, were given the unique opportunity to spend the day at Parliament – a day filled with select committee hearings, talks from MPs and much more.

Upon arrival, we were taken to watch the Treasury Select Committee as it questioned and scrutinised Dame Clara Furse before her re-appointment to the Bank of England’s Financial Policy Committee. Following this, we were escorted from the modern Portcullis House through the underground tunnel that connects it to the historic Westminster Palace where we were to meet with Charlie Elphicke MP in the beautiful River Room. The room, only available under the Lord Speaker’s consent, was the epitome of posh design from its breath-taking view of the Thames to the walls adorned with large oil paintings.

Our time with Mr Elphicke, the MP from Dover, involved a pleasantly frank discussion of both the role of a whip and the effort required of an MP to balance their time in Westminster with constituency work. We then met with Mr Joey Topping, Private Secretary to the Convenor of the independent Crossbench Peers and were taught about the group’s unique organisation in the Lords in the absence of a whip or collective party line.

After somewhat sadly leaving the River Room’s elegance, we walked through the palace to a committee meeting room to hear from the ever-eloquent Jacob Rees-Mogg MP. He fielded our questions on the select committee process and explained how the MPs manage the committee workload with the clerks’ assistance. Along with the talk from Charlie Elphicke, the time with the MPs was pleasantly candid and both were more than willing to answer tough questions without the political front that one would expect from prominent politicians.

For the last session of the day, we were graced with a talk from Anne Marie Griffiths, the clerk of the Petitions Committee. Following the widely-covered debate concerning Donald Trump’s ability to enter the UK, the Petitions Committee has gained considerable attention as of late. Ms Griffiths explained this and the rise in political activity from citizens as a result of the relatively new ePetition process. After this meeting, we were taken downstairs and set free to observe the House of Commons and the House of Lords from the ‘Strangers’ Galleries’. Unfortunately, we missed the vote on Sunday trading laws, which led to a very unusual government defeat in the Commons, by about fifteen minutes.

The day gave a unique insight into how Parliament truly works. Aside from the animated exchanges at Prime Minister’s Questions, there is much more done within Westminster and many more people assisting MPs and Lords in their work. From select committees to ePetitions, what we learned was wide-ranging and fascinating. While I’d like to say I saw it all, I know that when talking about an institution as tried-and-true as Parliament, I would be lying.
**PPE UPDATE**

Dr Tim Hicks, BSc PPE Programme Director, writes:

My last update on the new PPE programme for the Tavistock Times was long on promise but short on particulars. As I wrote, we were yet to actually meet our first cohort of students. This time, you don’t have to just take my word for things, the successes of our first years already speak for themselves.

In the first week of the first term, all incoming students studying economics were split into groups of five or six and told to meet at a location in London that is of ‘economic interest’. Their task was then to produce a three minute video that connects their assigned location to a topic from the core Economics module. This is the ‘First Year Challenge’ and given the disciplinary context, it is naturally a competitive endeavour. I’m delighted to say that an all PPE group – in the form of Vivek Shah, Rachel Darby, Pawel Kaminski, Jason Lam, Jenni Macneill, Flora Böwing and Elliott Christensen – has been named as joint winner for a video on the economics and financing of terrorism.

Success breeds success, it seems. Representing the UCL Economist’s Society, Amin Oueslati, Elliott Christensen and Leise participated in a debate competition against the Oxford Economics Society and LSE Business & Finance Group. Arguing for the proposition that “The next working generation will be poorer than the current working generation” (against LSE) and opposing the proposition that “India will be the next economic powerhouse” (against Oxford), judges from the Institute of Economic Affairs, the Adam Smith Institute and the Bank of England, awarded overall victory to the Amin, Elliott and Leise. Just months into the new programme and PPE@UCL has already beaten Oxford (and LSE).

Finally and in keeping with our aim of producing graduates who will go out and make a positive difference in the world, we’ve already had a PPE student do exactly that. As part of the UCL IDEAS Society, Vivek Shah travelled to China for a week this term to teach English to middle and high school students in an under-resourced school in Sichuan province. It’s one of those few moments when it feels good to have a student miss your class. More importantly, it’s clear that Vivek found the experience to be extremely rewarding and I’m quite sure that his own students did, too.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM IPPR INTERVIEWS

Alexandra Heaven, 2015–16 Student President of the Department’s International Public Policy Review, writes:

This year we have been lucky enough to interview some fascinating experts from a range of fields. Here are a few notable quotes from those interviews.

You can find the full interviews on our blog at: http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ippr/

“So I try to explain as much as I can what I’m doing, why I’m doing it, the uses of the picture etc. but if I’m totally honest, however much you explain, how can someone who doesn’t have access to electricity fully understand the implications of an image on the internet.”

Nick Danziger
Award winning photojournalist and documentary maker

“Outstanding politicians have said to me over dinner when I want them to change their policy. They say “fine, run a campaign, make it absolutely unavoidable in the public eye that I have to pay attention to this. Then I can do something”. So the louder you get and the more noise you make and be careful about the kind of noise you make, the more reason you give to a decent politician, who wants to make change, to say “look I have to do something because there are 1000 people dressed up as sheep running down the street” or whatever.”

Scilla Elworthy
three times nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, the founder of the Oxford Research Group, Peace Direct and the Bee School and author.

(On BREXIT) “We are a country which has traditionally engaged and we would be the poorer in all kinds of way – cultural, economic, diplomatic. We are the international country by par excellence, a member of the Security Council, we have the Commonwealth network. We are at the overlap of so many networks so to think of the UK of cutting itself off as cutting itself off from the world by cutting itself off from its immediate neighbours. I mean, you can leave the EU but you can never leave Europe so we are destined to be here geographically.”

Baroness Sarah Ludford
Member of the House of Lords
NEWS FROM THE UCL CONSTITUTION UNIT

Seminar series on Brexit: Its Constitutional Consequences for Britain and Europe

As the UK prepares to vote on 23 June in the referendum on membership of the European Union, the Constitution Unit has teamed up with the UCL European Institute to run a series of events. This special seminar series will focus on the constitutional consequences that Brexit would have for the UK, for the EU and for other EU member states.

The seminars bring together leading practitioners and academics from the UK and around Europe to debate the issues. They are generously supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) through its UK in a Changing Europe project. The series will conclude with a major debate on all aspects of the Brexit question.

Following each seminar, we will publish online a briefing paper that summarises the issues and a video providing a snapshot of the discussions. The Constitution Unit blog will also feature regular posts focusing on the constitutional implications of Brexit over the next few months.

Seminars take place on Thursdays from 6pm to 7.30pm in Anatomy G29 J Z Young LT, except for the final debate which will be held at Logan Hall, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Confirmed speakers</th>
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<td>21 April</td>
<td>Brexit: Its Consequences for Whitehall and Westminster</td>
<td>Sir Simon Fraser, former Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Professor Hussein Kassim, University of East Anglia Lord Lisvane, former Clerk of the House of Commons</td>
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<td>5 May</td>
<td>Brexit: Its Consequences for the EU’s Political System</td>
<td>Professor Simon Hix, LSE</td>
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<td>19 May</td>
<td>Brexit: Its Consequences for Devolution and the Union</td>
<td>Jim Gallagher, former Director General, Devolution Strategy, Cabinet Office Professor Sionaidh Douglas-Scott, QMUL Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan, University of Ulster Dr Rachel Minto, Cardiff University</td>
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<td>2 June</td>
<td>Brexit: Its Consequences for Other Member States</td>
<td>Professor Brigid Laffan, European University Institute, Florence Agata Gosteńska-Jakubowska, Centre for European Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 June</td>
<td>The UCL EU Referendum Debate: To Remain or to Leave?</td>
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For more information and to register to attend please visit the Constitution Unit website.

Unit in the news: What happens after a vote to leave the EU?

The Unit’s Alan Renwick appeared in the media in February, following Boris Johnson’s declaration that he intended to support the leave campaign during the EU referendum. Johnson’s article in the Daily Telegraph on 22 February explaining his position suggested that a leave vote could allow the UK to negotiate better terms, implying the possibility of a second referendum in which he would recommend a vote to stay in. In a blog post published in January, Dr Renwick had argued that Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, the procedure under which Brexit negotiations would take place and political realities mean that a vote to leave would be a vote to leave.

On the day that Johnson’s article appeared, Dr Renwick was interviewed on BBC Radio Four’s The World at One and the BBC News Channel. The following day he had his own article in the Daily Telegraph and was quoted in The Times. A further blog post was also published on the Constitution Unit blog, arguing that in practice the use of Article 50 would be unavoidable after a leave vote.
Select committee appearances on the Strathclyde review and the Lords

Meg Russell has given evidence to two select committees on the Strathclyde review into secondary legislation and the relationship between the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The review, published in December, was commissioned by the government in response to the Lords defeat over its plans to cut tax credits last autumn. On 19 January Professor Russell appeared before the Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) and on 9 February she was questioned by the Lords Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee.

Professor Russell argued that the controversy over the Lords’ powers risks deflecting attention from the more urgent problem of the Prime Minister’s completely unrestricted powers to appoint to the chamber. On the specific issue of secondary legislation she suggested that, of three options set out by Strathclyde, the most viable would be a non-statutory solution based on political agreement, perhaps via a resolution setting out restrictions on how the Lords should exercise its powers.

Reaction to the Strathclyde Review from Professor Russell, the Hansard Society and Lord Norton of Louth can be read on the Constitution Unit blog.

Government amend Wales Bill following Unit report

The government has announced changes to its proposed Wales Bill, following a critical joint report from the Constitution Unit and the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University. The report, published in February and titled Challenge and Opportunity: The Draft Wales Bill 2015, argued that some elements of the draft bill would represent ‘a step backwards in Wales’s constitutional journey’ and that the bill would not be able to deliver a durable and lasting devolution settlement. You can read more about the report and the changes announced by the Welsh Secretary, Stephen Crabb, on the Constitution Unit blog.


by Alan Renwick and Jean-Benoit Pilet

Oxford University Press has published a new book by Dr Alan Renwick, Deputy Director of the Constitution Unit and Professor Jean-Benoit Pilet, Head of the Centre for the Study of Politics at the Université libre de Bruxelles.

The book – Faces on the Ballot: The Personalization of Electoral Systems in Europe – takes the study of electoral systems into new territory. Attention has traditionally focused on the degree to which electoral systems are proportional or majoritarian – how far they spread power across parties or concentrate it in the hands of a few. As voters disengage from parties, however, we need to attend also to electoral system personalisation: how far voters can influence not just how many seats each party wins but also who fills those seats. The book offers the most detailed examination to date of this issue.

The degree of personalisation has become controversial in many countries. In Great Britain, for example, there is widespread unhappiness with the ‘closed-list’ system used for elections to the European Parliament. Campaigners for electoral reform at Westminster also complain that first past the post denies ordinary voters the chance to choose among alternative candidates from the same party.

The book identifies a widespread shift towards more personalised electoral systems in Europe over the past quarter century. It explores the processes underpinning this shift and the degree to which the reforms adopted have affected politics more widely. It finds that personalising reforms have generally been enacted in response to voters’ disaffection with politics but there is little evidence that any of the changes passed to date have had any effect in countering that disaffection.


Click here to order online and use the code AAFLY7 for a 30 per cent discount.
PhD PROGRAMME NEWS

Dr Lauge Poulsen, MPhil/PhD Programme Director reports:

From a perpetrator’s perspective

The research article ‘From a perpetrator’s perspective: International election observers and post-election violence’ by Hannah Smidt, PhD Candidate at the School of Public Policy, got published in the topic-ranking Journal of Peace Research. Her article examines the differential impact of international election monitoring on governments and opposition groups in post-election periods in Africa. She argues and empirically shows that foreign election observers can deter governments from using force after non-fraudulent elections but may incite opposition groups to use post-election violence to make their grievances heard to an international audience.

Observers’ effect is different after fraudulent elections: Their exposure of fraud decreases opposition groups’ need for using violent protest but makes governments less cautious about using forceful repression because they have already lost their international credentials.

For example, international election observers may not work as deterrent against repression after the fraudulent 2016 Ugandan election, while observers’ rather lenient evaluation of Nigeria’s 2011 elections may have contributed to rioting by opposition groups. These results do not question the usefulness of election observers but prompt them to keep a watchful eye on adverse effects.

Hannah would like to thank Dr Kristin Bakke, Professor Neil Mitchell, Dr Julian Wucherpfennig, Dr Janina Beiser, Philipp Broniecki, Dr Niheer Dasandi and the participants of the School of Public Policy Conflict and Change Group for their insightful comments and suggestions.

Philipp Schroeder co-authored a chapter with Berthold Rittberger in the Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism, which was published in early February this year. The chapter can be found here: https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-oxford-handbook-of-comparative-regionalism-9780199682300?cc=gb&lang=en&


Christiane Bjerglund Andersen was accepted to the Oxford Spring School in Advanced Research Methods in April and the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR), at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, in July.

Christiane Bjerglund Andersen published an article on the Indian Prime Minister’s rhetorical dilemmas on the domestic and international stages in Danish national newspaper Politiken, 22 December 2015.

Christiane Bjerglund Andersen was invited to the European Council on Foreign Relation’s ‘Young Asia Forum’ roundtable group.

Jenny Brown presented a paper entitled What’s Wrong with Marital Establishment?: Do Religious and Marital Establishment Share Relevant Wrong-Making Features? at the Warwick Graduate Conference in Legal and Political Theory on 13th February 2016.
NEWS FROM THE RAPT CENTRE

This is already the 5th and final year of Cécile Laborde’s ERC-funded research project on Religion and Political Theory, which will come to an end in December 2016. For its final year, the RAPT Centre has organised and is planning several events focusing on some of its key research themes, including the concept of religion in the law, the place of religious reasons in public justification, the idea of equal recognition and the place of religion in the structure of liberal political philosophy.

Past events

The RAPT Centre, organised in January 2016, a 2-day international conference on Religion and Public Justification. 15 political philosophers presented papers and Professor Daniel Statman (University of Haifa) gave the keynote lecture on Religious Arguments in the Public Sphere: A View from Israel.

In February 2016, we invited legal experts to discuss the challenges of religious discrimination: Lucy Vickers (Oxford Bookes University), Emmanuelle Bribosia (ULB), Isabelle Rorive (ULB), Ronan McCrea (UCL), David Perfect (Equality and Human Rights Commission), Scot Peterson (University of Oxford) and Iain McLean (University of Oxford).

In April 2016, we held a workshop on Alan Patten’s, Equal Recognition. Discussants included: Alan Patten (Princeton University), Dario Castiglione (University of Exeter), Chiara Cordelli (University of Chicago), Will Kymlicka (Queen’s University), Cécile Laborde (UCL), Anne Phillips (LSE), Jonathan Seglow (Royal Holloway). The workshop was co-organised with the University of Exeter.

Forthcoming RAPT events

12 May 2016, 5:00pm-7:00pm, SPP Council Room – RAPT Lecture by Professor Julian Rivers (University of Bristol) on Combatting Religious Extremism: exploring the limits of state action.

9 June 2016, 10:00am-6:00pm, SPP Council Room – Workshop on Cécile Laborde’s manuscript, Liberalism’s Religion. Discussants include: Cécile Laborde (UCL), Paul Bou-Habib (University of Essex), Jean L. Cohen (Columbia University), Peter Jones (Newcastle University), Sune Laegaard (Roskilde University), Daniel Sabbagh (Sciences Po), Jeffrey Howard (UCL), Aurélie Bardon (UCL). Liberalism’s Religion is under contract with Harvard University Press (publication expected in 2017). RAPT Events are open to all.

Philip Abrams Prize

The RAPT Centre is happy to announce that Lois Lee’s book, Recognizing the Nonreligious: Reimagining the Secular (Oxford University Press, 2015), has been shortlisted for the Philip Abrams Prize, which is awarded to the best first and sole-authored book within the discipline of sociology. Congratulations Lois!

If you want to be updated with news concerning RAPT events and publications, please email Aurélie (a.bardon@ucl.ac.uk) to be added to the RAPT mailing list.
Good progress is being made on the new Political Science website, which is due for launch at the end of March/early April. As well as moving to a new domain, www.ucl.ac.uk/political-science, the new site will utilise the new Silva Indigo templates which provide multi-device support, from smart screen to desktop. Improvements are also being applied to programme information pages and promoting the Department’s research activities.

Nearly all Department websites have been moved to the new UCL Indigo moment management system. Work will soon begin on migrating www.ucl.ac.uk/socialvalues and once that is done all sites will have completed the migration.

ISD will be installing Lecturecast in our Council Room. Lecturecast is an automated system for recording lectures and subsequently making them available via the web. The system captures all material that is sent to the room’s projector from any connected device (e.g. PowerPoint slides from an attached laptop, hand written notes or objects held under a visualiser), audio is captured from the room’s microphone system via a lapel microphone and video of the presentation area (i.e. the lecturer or presenter) is captured via a small fixed position camera.

Audio-visual display facilities will be installed in the Seminar Room and B.05 in 31 Tavistock Square. We hope to have done this over the Easter holidays.

A digital signage screen has been installed in the Department’s Reception. The content will be managed by Dimitrios Kraniotis and will publish notices to students and details of up and coming events.
2014/15 DISSERTATION PRIZES

All Master’s students within the Department of Political Science are required to complete a 10,000 word dissertation as part of their degree. This is an integral part of the degree and gives students the opportunity to use the wide range of skills that they have developed during their studies to complete an original piece of research that demonstrates that they have mastered and can make a contribution to their field of study.

The 2014/15 ‘Best Dissertation’ Prize Winners and their titles were:

**MA Human Rights**
Rachel Fox
*What challenges do homeless women in England experience in seeking freedom from gender-based violence?*

**MA Legal and Political Theory**
Chaka Laguerre
*Epistemic Injustice: Interactive spaces between silences testimonies and hermeneutical silences*

**MSc Democracy and Comparative Politics**
Francis Andrews
*Mobilising “ordinary” people to violence: What mechanisms facilitated interethnic violence in western Myanmar in June 2012?*

**MSc European Public Policy**
Laetitia Labaute
*Public support for foreign development aid in times of economic crisis.*

**MSc Global Governance and Ethics**
Niki Karakaris
*Contestation and collaboration in the international food security debate regarding GMOs. A regime analysis of the WTO and the FAO.*

**MSc International Public Policy and Departmental Prize**
Dominik Schafflützel
*INGOs’ effects in discussions about human rights: a quantitative assessment of the spiral model.*

**MSc Public Policy**
Anastasia Ushakova
*Can we identify vulnerable energy customers in the UK using smart meter data?*

**MSc Security Studies**
Baptiste Costa-Marini
*Organised crime as a cause of fragmentation: the case of Mali.*

In the January edition of the newsletter, we included abstracts from some of our prize winning students. We have one final abstract to introduce from Niki Karakaris:

**Niki Karakaris**
**MSc Global Governance and Ethics student, 2014-15:**

**Contestation and collaboration in the international food security debate regarding GMOs. A regime analysis of the WTO and the FAO.**

The paper argues that relations between the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) follow patterns that are consonant with the concept of contested multilateralism (Morse and Keohane, 2014). It contends that the regimes interact in a way that both contest and collaborate. The paper focuses on how the WTO and the FAO handled the introduction of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) into the food security discourse and how GMOs can serve to demonstrate a trend to contestation and collaboration between the two regimes.

Rather than there being one direct source of contestation in the GMO debate, the paper looks at various sources of indirect contestation between the regimes which are rooted in mission, rule, practice and reputation.

The WTO and the FAO use these sources of contestation to transform them into collaborative strategies and actions which complement their individual, overall policy goals. These are rooted within their distinct issue areas.

An analysis of policy documents like the Comprehensive Framework of Action (CFA) shows that the regimes have interacted in a way that aims to create shared knowledge and governance effects with regards to GMO policies. The paper poses a Contestation-Collaboration-Nexus as a way to describe how the trade related interests of the WTO have the potential to contest indirectly with the humanitarian interests of the FAO, especially with regards to GMOs.

The consequences of collaboration manifest in an emphasis on trade liberalisation and scientific research as a solution to food insecurity. The political, structural and ethical implications of GMOs in the food security discourse are also addressed.
NEW STAFF

The Department would like to welcome the following new staff:

Dr Filippo Costa Buranelli
Teaching Fellow

I am Teaching Fellow in the Department of Political Science at UCL and in the Department of War Studies at King’s College London.

I hold a BA Cum Laude in International Sciences and European Institutions from the University of Milan, with a semester spent as visiting student at the Institute of International Relations, Warsaw University. I received my MSc (with Distinction) in International Relations Theory from the LSE. My dissertation, awarded the Fred Halliday Prize for the best dissertation in the field of International Relations Theory and short-listed for the Northedge Prize by Millennium: Journal of International Studies, offered a critique to Kenneth Waltz’s works and illustrated the variety of hierarchic configurations in contemporary world politics. I also hold a PhD in International Relations, awarded by the Department of War Studies, King’s College London. My thesis dealt with processes of regionalisation in Central Asia and the incorporation of global norms in the region.

In 2015 I was awarded the English School Award for the Outstanding Paper presented by a Junior Scholar at the International Studies Association. My work has been published in Millennium: Journal of International Studies, the Journal of Eurasian Studies and Global Discourse. My research interests are International Relations theory, the politics of the post-Soviet space, the meaning(s) of global norms, international history, international security and global governance/international organisations.

I am also Associate Fellow at the Higher Education Academy, and in 2015 I received the Teaching Excellence Award Nomination by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Public Policy at King’s College London. It is an honour for me to join UCL and SPP!

Ajay Patel
Staffing and Finance Administrator

I joined the Department in January 2016 as the Staffing and Finance Administrator and can honestly say the first few months have just flown by. I’m really happy to be here and everyone I have come in contact with so far has been great, especially the two people who I share an office with. A special mention to Ben Webb, (who I’ve worked with previously) who has put up with my incessant questions in my first few months. Everyone’s help in settling in has been much appreciated.

I’ve worked at UCL previously in a central services department, (HR) and a predominately research based department (Wolfson & Cancer Institutes) so it’s been interesting to see how an academic department works and differs from those I worked in previously. I’m hoping that my 6.5 years experience within UCL will help in the role I have here in Political Science and also with more specific experiences like the holding of events such as sports day at UCL’s ground in Shenley!!

Away from work I’m a pretty big Arsenal fan, (silver member) and try and go to see games as much as possible at the Emirates Stadium.
CAREERS NETWORKING SERIES

Simon Stanier, Postgraduate Administrator, writes:

In January and February 2016, the School of Public Policy held a series of Careers Networking events, hosted by the Departmental Careers Tutor, Robert Hazell. Students were given the opportunity to hear from SPP Alumni, who have gone on to work in a variety of sectors and to receive valuable advice on how to use their UCL degrees to embark on successful and fulfilling careers.

The Networking Series opened with alumni working in the Charity and Voluntary Sector. We were delighted to welcome back Phillippa Hentsch (Policy Advisor for NHS Providers), Joe Potter (Public Affairs Officer for the British Red Cross), Sam Swift (Research Officer for the Institute for Employment Studies) and Saamah Abdallah (Programme Manager and Senior Researcher for the Centre for Wellbeing) to talk about their experience of working in non-profit organisations. If there is anything that we could take from this session, it is that the most fulfilling careers are not always the best paid and that there is a great deal of satisfaction to be taken from working for a good cause.

Our second event featured former students working in Government and Public Sector roles. Our panel consisted of Thomas Kenny (Policy Advisor for HM Treasury), Bernard Quoroll (Chief Executive for Local Authorities), Lucy Moran (Climate Change Engagement Officer for the Department for Energy and Climate Change) and Mariam El-Azm (Deputy Head of International Outreach for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association). Speaking on an obvious interest for students of Political Science, our panel advised our students on what it is like to have an impact on policy in the UK and the EU.

The third event in the series welcomed alumni working in Business and Private Sector roles. Students heard from Kristian Rasmussen (Manager for KPMG Restructuring), Olivia Robinson (Management Consultant for Oliver Wyman), George McFarlane (Head of Public Services Policy for the Confederation of British Industry), Felicia Kodderitzsch (Management Consulting Analyst for Accenture) and Amir Kabel (Head of Diversity and Inclusion for Green Park). The panel demonstrated to students that Political Science degrees can provide a strong basis for careers in the private sector and that future jobs don’t need to be closely related to a student’s studies to be rewarding.

Our fourth and final networking event took a slightly different shape, as we invited former international students to talk about their experience of working in the UK and EU in a variety of sectors. For this event we welcomed Rebecca Vincent from the USA (Human Rights Activist for Sports for Rights), Kirthika Selvakumar from Singapore (Assistant Research Officer for the Commonwealth Secretariat) and Imad Mesdoua from Algeria (Client Manager for Africa Matters Limited), who had all come from abroad to study in the UK and went on to work here. As well as giving valuable tips on careers in general, our international panel advised students on the visa implications of working in the UK and the various options open to international students who wish to stay here after they complete their degree.

The networking events were received well by students, who engaged with interest when the opportunity was given to pose questions to the panels and discuss matters in detail at the drinks receptions and a number of students attended multiple events to gain a broad experience of careers options. There were several recurring themes in the series; students were advised to be bold in their job applications and not to fear jobs where they don’t tick every box, to be open in their job search and to consider roles which do not totally fit their idea of the ideal job and to use the resources that they have available to them at UCL. All students are able to seek help and advice from the Careers Tutor, Robert Hazell, who has experience of a variety of careers himself.

If you were unable to attend an event and you are interested in hearing what our panels had to say, video recordings of the Careers Networking Series events will soon be available on the Departmental Vimeo account.
PAST STUDENTS
WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

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

Laetitia Labaute
MSc European Public Policy, 2014–15

There are undoubtedly many different aspects I could have oriented my MSc in European Public Policy. I chose to study European policies rather than politics or polity and both my personal interest and previous studies in International and Development Economics naturally led me to focus on the EU’s international development policy. Early on in the academic year I decided to apply for the October Session of the European Commission Blue Book Traineeship. I had no idea how I would manage to get in and where I would end up working, but I got selected by DEVCO, the Directorate General for International Development and Cooperation, which of course made a lot of sense to me. My guess is that my slightly different background in Economics and knowledge of three European languages helped a lot to pass the preselection process and after that being proactive by directly lobbying a few heads of units, has proved to be the best way to succeed.

From elaborating a kind of recommendation in foreign aid in my final dissertation, during these five months I have had the opportunity to size how decisions taken by senior management in the field of development are being implemented and made concrete thanks to the work of DEVCO’s units. Overall this experience on the policy side has been really positive, especially when preparing and attending internal and external meetings, with NGOs, other European institutions or with representatives of all Member States. However, I also became frustrated when discovering that a large part of the work done by policy officers actually consists in managing contracts of various consultants who will carry the analytical and field research to finally guide and produce all DEVCO’s work. In a way, it is important to keep in mind that international development consultants are the real engine on which the European Commission builds its work.

My advice to make the Blue Book traineeship worth it, is first to be coherent about the DG and unit you choose to work for. I do believe the traineeship could become pointless if it neither matches your field of interest nor your work area. Future employers will question and challenge your choice and coherence helps a lot in case you decide to focus on a particular area, at least in the field of development. Second, you’d better be realistic about what the experience really brings and what the opportunities are after these five months… Put simply, you will FOR SURE get a sense of the so-called euro bubble, meet highly skilled, super competitive and open-minded young European people, improve your French and discover if the working methods and environment of the biggest bureaucracy in Europe is your cup of tea. Unfortunately, from the first day at the welcome conference you will be reminded that there are no job opportunities within the institutions after the traineeship, whose aim in the end is just to distil the European spirit back home! With already thousands of people on the reserve list and massive job cuts, passing the EPSO concours is worthless right now. If some trainees do manage to stay a couple of months at the Commission as intérimaire, unfortunately the majority starts another traineeship.

Back in Paris, I directly started working as a consultant economist for a French consulting firm specialised in the economics and management of public services in emerging and developing countries in the areas of water, sanitation, waste, telecommunications and energy. I feel like I am on the right side now! Meanwhile, I got selected for the ODI fellowship in Africa starting fall 2016. Even though it will be difficult to take a decision between these two opportunities in international development, for now I feel confident and happy about what my studies brought me: career choice.
JRS is charged with running the Dzaleka population’s only livelihood programmes, psychosocial services, preschool, primary school, secondary school, adult education and vocational skills trainings and finally my project: the university.

I arrived as the fourth director for HEM Dzaleka, a higher education project that started in 2010 as an experiment in bridging the gap between global universities with the resources to lend and marginalised populations desperate for access to education. Between its founding and the present time of writing, the HEM Dzaleka has provided higher education to 761 refugees and host community members in a variety of academic programmes.

The premier offering is the Diploma in Liberal Studies, a three-year liberal arts curriculum accredited by Regis University, designed by JC:HEM’s team of subject matter experts and delivered to the students entirely online from our learning centre in the refugee camp. Most of our beneficiaries, however, come as students in shorter 6-9 month training courses. When a need is identified in the community – such as a need for community development practitioners, health providers, peace workers, agriculture specialists or special needs educators (to name a few), it is our unique role to find experts within our refugee community, link them with experts from our university network and then develop new experts from the refugee population.

As the Director for Higher Education in a refugee camp I have encountered many profound realisations. Our university is uniquely responsible for serving as the intellectual and innovative hub for a close-knit community of 24,000. We like to say, with reason, that all grassroots development begins in our building. Our alumni are the ones who find and establish lasting solutions for the problems in camp. They serve as teachers, project coordinators, interpreters, counsellor. That role we play within the community gives us an incredible power to transform it but we also like to say that in addition to being the centre of community development, our mission is simply to give brilliant people the chance to be their brilliant selves again.

I have become more familiar each day with the fascinating and tragic handicaps of refugee life and especially, of ‘refugee psychology’. Our community members abandoned all, sometimes after experiencing great trauma, to flee into purgatory. As a refugee, they must wait for 7, 10 or 15 years in conditions of extreme poverty without the right to legal employment, movement or even the choice of their own food rations, until governments finally decide each person’s fate. The sense of helplessness, dependency, and loss of dignity is present in almost every social interaction, creating a type of community unseen in any other context in the world.

Yet our project staff includes doctors, nurses, lawyers and teachers from within the refugee community who eager for the opportunity to serve and contribute what they can towards a future they cannot even envision. In the most inspiring ways, people fight back against the political and mental ropes that bind them.

Our university, too, aims to join that fight. As its Director, I have been given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create and implement programmes with tangible and profound impacts. Luckily, these programmes are based on a strong foundation – the lessons learned from all of my studies in SPP on the psychology of conflict, trauma and social identity.

JRS is one of the core implementing partners of UNHCR in Malawi, with around 170 staff members throughout all of its projects in the city and refugee camp. At the time of my arrival in January, 2015, the refugee camp housed around 20,000 refugees – almost exclusively from the Great Lakes region. By now, that population stands closer to 25,000, as conflict has recently flared in Burundi, continues in the eastern part of DRC and lawlessness still reigns in Rwanda. Furthermore, a freshly resurrected conflict with RENAMO fighters in Mozambique has pushed over 11,000 across the border into southern Malawi during recent months, signalling the potential expansion of our activities and those of our partners.
I pursued my MSc in Public Policy straight after completing my undergraduate degree in Economics and Politics from University of Manchester. I was mainly attracted by the degree of freedom, in terms of module selection, that SPP provided me. Its interdisciplinary nature gave me the opportunity to enrol in modules that I was most interested in and I had the opportunity to meet people from a wide range of background and expertise.

Since graduating, I have been working in the Strategy Unit of the Department for International Development (DFID) under the Graduate Development Scheme. The role has enabled me to work with different teams across the Department and has given me the valuable opportunity to advise on a wide range of policy and corporate issues. One of my main responsibilities is to support the team in providing central coordination for the Department’s Bilateral Aid Review (BAR). The BAR looks at whether we are working in the right country, whether we are focusing on the right sector and whether we are using the right channels to achieve what we want while remaining in line with the UK Aid Strategy.

I also provide Secretariat duties for the Departmental Board, which includes Ministers and Non-Executive Directors, the Executive Management Committee, consisting of Permanent Secretary and Director Generals and the Leadership Group. On top of writing briefings for ministers and responding to Parliamentary Questions, I also had the opportunity to accompany and support the Parliamentary under-Secretary of State to House of Lords short debate. While it can be really intimidating and overwhelming at the beginning, with the majority of the people in the Department being very experienced or highly qualified, you will be surprised how approachable and helpful everyone around you can be!

To summarise, the knowledge and technical skills that I have acquired in my one year at SPP, along with the guidance and support that was provided by our Departmental Careers Tutor then, have definitely brought me a step closer to pursuing a long and meaningful career at the heart of Whitehall.