CONTENTS

Director’s Message 2
60 Second Interview 3
Dimitrios Kranitiotis 3
SPP Alumni Launch 4
The true (bloody) cost 5
Clinton global initiative 5
Political turbulence 6
Policy and practice seminar series at UCL SPP 6
UCL Q-Step centre launch 7
Engaging, educational and enjoyable 8
IPAS 8
A panel discussion – dealing with the refugee crisis in Europe and Britain 9
‘Giving time’: academics and practitioners debate and discuss strategies for volunteer recruitment 10
News from the UCL constitution unit 11
Photography exhibition inspires critical thinking for IDPP students 14
PhD programme news 15
News from the RAPT Centre 16
IT update 18
2014/15 Dissertation prizes 19
New staff 23
Past students – where are they now? 24
It has been an important year for our School, as we welcomed students from two new programmes – our new BSc in Philosophy, Politics and Economics and our new MPA in Public Administration and Management. We are also welcoming our second cohort of Executive MPA students this January, coming straight from their first term at NYU Wagner so as ever, it is exciting and changing times at the School of Public Policy.

Change also continues at the faculty and administration level with new people joining. A special welcome should go to our new Departmental Manager, Hannah Umar, who joined our team in November. We should also give a big welcome to our new lecturers who start this term; Dr Alexandra Hartman, who is joining us from Yale, who will be our new lecturer in Qualitative Research Methods and Dr Lucy Barnes, joining us from Kent University, who will be our new lecturer in Comparative Politics.

The Policy in Practice series has continued to attract great speakers and large audiences and there is more to come this term with Michael Jacobs talking on COP21 and Jack Straw talking about Foreign Policy and Iran. We also had our Q-Step Centre launch event in October with a fun talk from Joe Twyman from YouGov showing how data analysis can be the best job in the world and a great panel of data experts showing its applications in the real world. The Global Governance Institute has also been active in terms of high profile public events, with US Deputy Chief of Mission, Ms Elisabeth Dibble and Baroness Ashton talking on Foreign Policy. The Constitution Unit also continues to be publically visible in the press with Professor Meg Russell commenting on the House of Lords and Tax credit issues and Dr Alan Renwick discussing issues around referendums and more recently the creation of the Yorkshire Citizen Assembly.

The Department has also celebrated its 10th birthday with a party in November and we took this opportunity to award our first Departmental Teaching prizes.

Congratulations should go to Colin Provost for receiving the award for permanent staff, to Cathy Elliott for teaching fellows and to Paolo Morini for PGTAs. It really is amazing how far the Department has grown in the last 10 years and I look forward to the next 10 years with real interest and excitement at what we can all achieve together.

Professor David Coen

The Head of the Department of Political Science and Director of the School of Public Policy welcomes you to the second edition of Tavistock Times for 2015-16.
60 SECOND INTERVIEW

In this sixty second interview we quiz Dimitrios Kraniotis, PA to the Head of the Department and Administrative Officer.

What is your name?
Dimitrios Kraniotis

When did you join UCL?
I joined UCL and the Department of Political Science in August of 2013.

What are your responsibilities in the Department?
I am the Personal Assistant to the Head of the Department, David Coen and at the same time I manage the events, marketing and communications of the Department. I also deal with student societies, safety/environmental policies and more.

What do you particularly like and dislike about your job?
I don’t dislike anything and I promise, I am not being diplomatic for the sake of the newsletter now!

What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?
I like seeing full lecture theatres for our public events; increased attendance and wider public engagement for the School and UCL in general. We have taken big steps over the last three years.

Most inspirational person that you have met whilst at UCL?
I have met many inspirational people, especially speakers of the Policy and Practice events. One of them was Srđa Popović. He is a Serbian political activist and he was a leader of the student movement Otpor! that helped topple Serbian dictator Slobodan Milošević. After briefly pursuing a political career in Serbia, in 2003 he established the Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies and has been its executive director since. He has worked with pro-democracy activists from more than 50 countries, promoting the use of non-violent resistance in achieving political and social goals.

Favourite location in UCL?
The little outdoors café in Gordon Square during the summer; the heater next to my desk during the winter.

What would your ideal afternoon/evening in London include?
A (preferably) European movie in Curzon Cinema and a drink in Soho afterwards.

What is your favourite book?
I don't have one favourite book but at this moment mainly books of Irvin Yalom, Milan Kundera and Jorge Bucay.

What are your hobbies?
London is my hobby – I love walking around (especially in Covent Garden,) cinema, theatre, concerts and lots of restaurants.

If you had not gone into academic administration, what would you be doing now?
It would definitely have to do with events but maybe something more ‘artistic’, such as organising concerts or festivals.

If you could implement one policy in the world today, what would it be?
Teaching psychology and mindfulness in schools – so we can finally raise kids who are not only intelligent but also emotionally intelligent.
SPP ALUMNI LAUNCH

Melanie Garson (Alumni Tutor) and Simon Stanier (Alumni Administrator) write:

The MA and MSc results from the 2014/15 academic year have now been released and we offer our congratulations to our new graduates and wish you all the best in your future as SPP alumni.

In celebration of 10 years of SPP we have launched a new Alumni Programme with the aim of creating an active alumni community that will maintain our connections with past students and enable our alumni to continue to benefit from all that SPP has to offer, even after graduation.

In order to maintain our ongoing personal connections with our alumni, we are planning to host a number of exciting alumni events. The first of these will be a seminar led by a guest speaker, which will allow alumni to hear from a key figure as well as meeting with other alumni and academic staff from the Department of Political Science. We hope that this will be of interest to alumni and that we can continue to run events such as these to keep in touch with alumni and continue to provide support through our leading academics and our connections in politics and industry.

Alumni are also welcome to join us at the weekly Policy & Practice Seminars, which feature talks from high profile policy makers, practitioners and academics. The schedule for this term is available on the departmental website. We encourage our alumni to come along to continue their learning and contribute to departmental activities.

As many of our graduates seek to integrate their learning into their professional careers, we will be linking our Alumni Programme with our Careers Programme, allowing alumni to take advantage of the valuable careers resources we offer our students. Alumni will be invited to attend departmental careers events aimed at helping you get the most out of your UCL degree. We are always excited to welcome back many of our alumni who already immersed in their career track to participate in panels sharing their knowledge and advice on their particular sector with both students and alumni.

As part of the new Alumni Programme we will be launching a mentoring initiative through which we hope to connect alumni in key sectors with students and other alumni interested in following a similar path. Through creating networks of experience in a more personalised way, we hope to create resources to support our alumni as your careers develop. If you are interested in taking part in this, please keep an eye on your e-mails for more information.

Even if you are not able to attend events in the Department, there are still ways that you can stay in touch with us. The Department of Political Science communicates with students and alumni through a variety of social media and we are looking to provide a social media service especially for SPP alumni in the future. If you are not already following our social media services, you can find our pages on the departmental website. We are also planning a range of exciting initiatives aimed at opportunities for continued social contact and updates from your former classmates.

In order to ensure that we are creating an Alumni Programme that is really going to address your needs now that you have graduated, we have sent you an e-mail requesting that you fill in a short survey on what you would like us to do and how you would be interested in engaging with us. We encourage you to complete this survey so that we can tailor our programme to best support you. We would also be delighted to hear from you with any suggestions or questions about the Alumni Programme, so please don’t hesitate to contact one of the team and be part of the process.

We look forward to welcoming you back to the Department in the near future.
THE TRUE (BLOODY) COST

Morgan Mohr, Department of Political Science Affiliate Student 2015-16 writes:

In a characteristically generous move, Dr Cathy Elliott hosted a screening of The True Cost for her International Development and Public Policy class on Wednesday. The film exposes the dark underbelly of the fast fashion industry, and forces the viewer to confront the gory realities that stem from globalised capitalism.

The story is familiar to those who have ever embarked on a shopping trip: the fashion industry has changed. No longer do we gratefully offer our socks to darning grandmothers or take our shoes to get repaired or solely rely on back-to-school shopping for the year. Our consumption of clothing has reached a new level, in which stores like Forever21 and Topshop fill our insatiable hunger for cheap new styles by restocking almost every day. The low prices of our clothing are critical, enabling us to constantly rebuild our closets and feel good about hunting down bargains. But these dirt-cheap garments come at a price not shouldered by those in the West.

Most of us shuddered at the news of the Rana Plaza factory collapse. But True Cost forces viewers to gaze into the eyes of a woman who lost her legs as the roof came tumbling down. We come to know and love a Bangladeshi woman who still stands as the president of her union despite the beatings she has endured; she caresses her daughter and tells us that the only way she can endure leaving her child in the village is a determination to improve her education and future prospects. The sharp clean lines of free trade and low labour costs blur as we watch the violent struggle between workers and the police or their employers, their defiant faces breaking in pain as they are struck again and again and again—or just shot, point-blank. I will not forget the recording of a man bleeding to death, his body broken open and sinking in a huge sea of red.

Near the end of the film, the union leader verbalises what we have been thinking the whole time: the cost of our clothing lies in the blood and lives of these humans who exist at the edge of our imaginations. As the screen fades, the two worlds are strikingly juxtaposed: as Northerners lust and fight over Black Friday deals, the South toils over sewing machines in cracking buildings, their daughters sometimes laying close by.

CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE

Professor David Coen, Director of UCL School of Public Policy and Global Governance Institute, met President Bill Clinton at the Clinton Global Initiative commitment announcement to celebrate the creation of the Pentland Scholarship for students from the global south to study on the UCL School of Public Policy/NYU Wagner Executive MPA in Global Public Policy and Management Master programme.

The Global EMPA programme is intended to equip talented professionals, who have at least seven years of management-related experience, to develop their analytical skills and managerial competence so that they are able to provide public policy leadership in conditions of contemporary governance. The Pentland Scholarship represents a unique partnership which enables talented young professionals from the Global South to take advantage of this innovative one year programme.
POLITICAL TURBULENCE

Professor Peter John, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, writes:

On 24 November 2015, Political Turbulence: How Social Media Shape Collective Action, with Helen Margetts, Peter John, Scott Hale and Taha Yasseri, was published by Princeton University Press.

The book asks what is the effect of the greater use of social media on politics. The answer is in the title: turbulence. As people spend increasing proportions of their daily lives using social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, the reduced costs of involving sometimes millions of people gives rise to huge mobilisations—even revolutions. Drawing on large-scale data generated from the Internet and real-world events, this book shows how mobilisations that succeed are unpredictable, unstable, yet often unsustainable. Further information can be found on the book’s website at politicalturbulence.org

POLICY AND PRACTICE SEMINAR SERIES AT UCL SPP

The SPP Policy and Practice Seminar Series includes presentations and talks by high-profile policy-makers, practitioners and academics. They take place on Thursdays between 5.30pm and 7pm during term time and they are public events – all the students and general public are welcome to attend.

Many distinguished practitioners and academics visited our Department to speak for our series for the first term of this academic year.

Martin Bailey, Christopher Bickerton and Peter Luff on the EU Referendum campaigning, Steve Richards on Jeremy Corbyn, Joe Twyman on Data Analysis (Q-Step Centre Launch), Daniel Drezner and John Gieve on Global Economic Governance, Jesse Scott on the UN Climate Conference, Sarah Ludford, David Goodhart, Sarah Fine and Alex Betts on the Refugee Crisis, Scilla Elworthy on Corporate Responsibility and Mary Honeyball MEP on the EU Referendum.

However, there is more to come; some of the highlights for the second term will be Jack Straw on Iran, Peter Trubowitz on the US Foreign Policy after the Elections, Swen Steinmo, JP Macintosh and many more.

You can stay updated with all the SPP events by following our Twitter @uclspp or visiting our website www.ucl.ac.uk/spp
In October 2015, the UCL Q-Step Centre welcomed its first cohort of students on three new degree programmes: Geography with Quantitative Methods, Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) and Population Health. We are delighted to announce the addition of a fourth new degree programme in Social Science with Quantitative methods starting in September 2016.

Q-Step is a £20m project designed to promote a step-change in training in data analysis for social science undergraduates in the UK and is funded by the Nuffield Foundation, ESRC and Hefce. UCL Q-Step is one of 15 new centres across the UK and offers specialist undergraduate degree programmes that equip students with the research and data analytic skills sought after by today’s employers.

More than 240 attendees were welcomed by UCL President and Provost, Professor Michael Arthur and treated to an educational and entertaining keynote by YouGov’s Joe Twyman, Head of Social and Political Research. Joe’s talk addressed the failure of the polls to capture Conservative support in the run up to the 2015 general election and efforts to understand what went wrong.

The keynote was followed by a roundtable chaired by Teresa Williams, Director of Social Research and Policy at the Nuffield Foundation, featuring a brilliant group of panelists showing how they use data in their work to inform strategy, decision-making and public policy.

Panelists included:
- Helena Bengtsson
  Editor for Data Projects, The Guardian
- Daniel Hulme
  CEO, Satalia
- Evie Ploumpidi
  Director of Strategy, Accenture
- Giulio Quaggiotto
  Senior Programme Manager, Nesta
- Penny Young
  Librarian and Director General of Information Services, House of Commons

UCL Q-Step Centre degree programmes engage with the big policy challenges facing social scientists today: climate change, obesity, security, migration and inequality. Using real-world data we investigate causes, consequences and solutions and predict the development of these issues in the future. Our core modules are taught by researchers from different disciplines including geography, political science, epidemiology, sociology and economics and informed by leaders in business and industry, government and the third sectors. Data analytic skills are in high demand but short supply. The UCL Q-Step degree programmes provide students with advanced and highly transferable skills in research design, data analysis, statistical computing and visualisation, giving them a competitive advantage whether they choose to go on to postgraduate study or seek employment in the public, private and third sectors.

Follow us on Twitter @UCLQStep or visit us at www.ucl.ac.uk/q-step
ENGAGING, EDUCATIONAL AND ENJOYABLE

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

IPPR’s moto for 2015–16 is ‘Engaging, Educational and Enjoyable’. Our view, which may be slightly selfish, is that social learning is both more effective and more fun. In December 2015, we kicked off our events calendar with a film showing of Frame by Frame, a documentary about the rebuilding of a culture of photography in post-Taliban Afghanistan.

In keeping with our motto, the discussion section of the event took place in a pub, where attendees were treated to stimulating ideas about political representation, culture and gender from our guest speakers Paul Lowe (Photojournalism, UAL) and Alice Elliot (Anthropology, UCL).

This year we are continuing the theme of social learning with a monthly Policy in the Pub event, in collaboration with IPPR that invites a topic expert to share a beer with the Department’s students while discussing the issue at hand.

January’s topic is about Israel/Palestine settlements and February’s is about the Iran Nuclear deal.

More details about these events are available on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ucl.ippr

The main stay of the IPPR calendar is the annual School of Public Policy student run journal. This year we have open themes so we encourage you to contribute your pieces – assessed or not – on whatever takes your interest.

More information about contributing to the journal can be found at our website: www.ucl.ac.uk/ippr

As always we have new content up all the time on our blog opinion pieces, event summaries and international policy updates – check it out at: http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ippr

Have an educational, engaging and enjoyable year!

IPAS

Stuart Slingsby, 2015–16 Student President of IPAS, International and Public Affairs Society writes:

As the society for socials and fundraising, IPAS want to create an SPP community so everyone can get the most out of their time at UCL. We have kicked off the first term with pub nights and bake sales but this is only the start.

We will be working with IPPR to create the ‘Policy in the Pub’ series which we hope will be a monthly event. This will be a more informal version of the SPP talks where students have a chance to engage in informal and open discussion with topic experts and other students…plus there will be beer!

We also want to get people socialising that doesn’t just include alcohol and so we are proposing a ‘New Years Resolution’ in which people can get together to play sport and do some exercise. An end of term football competition between the courses may also be on the cards so keep a look out. IPAS is raising money for Save the Children this year and we have had some really successful and delicious bake sales which we hope to have more of. As well as this we hope to raise money for Save the Children through our New Year’s Resolution, perhaps by having an SPP fun run.

Please like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/uclipas/?fref=ts to keep up to date with all of our social and fundraising events. If anyone wants to get involved with either fundraising or events or has any ideas just let us know by messaging the IPAS Facebook page or dropping me an email at: stuart.slingsby.15@ucl.ac.uk

It’s not all about work, let’s have some fun!
A PANEL DISCUSSION – DEALING WITH THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN EUROPE AND BRITAIN

Dr Avia Pasternak, Lecturer in Global Ethics and MSc Global Governance and Ethics Programme Director writes:

On 26 November 2015, the Policy and Practice Seminar Series, together with the Global Governance Institute, hosted a high-profile panel debate on the refugee crisis in Europe and Britain. This crisis is by now widely considered to be the most severe humanitarian crises Europe has known since the Second World War. Since the summer of 2015 hundreds of thousands of men, women and children have applied for asylum in Europe, many of whom are escaping the war in Syria. Thousands more have died on their way to Europe; and there are millions of refugees huddled in camps around the Middle East.

This crisis raises a host of political and normative questions: How much can the rich countries of the world be expected to do in order to resolve this crisis? What counts as a ‘fair distribution’ of the burden between them? Are refugee quotas the way forward in resolving the crisis? If so, how should such quotas be determined?

To answer these questions we invited four world experts on migration and asylum: Professor Alex Betts from the University of Oxford, the Director of the Refugees Studies Centre at the University of Oxford; Baroness Sarah Ludford, the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary spokesman on Europe and a member of the Lords Select EU Justice sub-committee; David Goodhart, a prominent figure in public debate in the UK and the Director of the think tank Demos; and Dr Sarah Fine, a lecturer in philosophy at Kings College London, and a leading scholar on the ethics of migration. The panel was chaired by Dr Avia Pasternak from the School of Public Policy.

The four panellists offered a wide spectrum of opinions and perspectives on Europe’s response to the refugee crisis. While some were highly critical of Europe’s current response on both ethical and practical grounds, others questioned whether more could be done. The event attracted a large audience, who challenged the panellists with insightful questions. You can find a blog entry on the debate, by GGE student Rebecca Ellis on the Global Governance Institute website www.ucl.ac.uk/global-governance/commentaries
‘GIVING TIME’: ACADEMICS AND PRACTITIONERS DEBATE AND DISCUSS STRATEGIES FOR VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Professor Peter John reports:

50 Practitioners and 10 academics came together at a learning event in Birmingham on 19 November 2015 to reflect on research findings from the ESRC funded ‘Giving Time’ project (2013–2015) and to exchange ideas on ways to recruit and support volunteers.

The research investigated whether social information – in the form of email endorsements from celebrities, politicians and peers; personalised feedback about individual volunteering hours compared to others; and information and training nudges - could increase volunteering for a variety causes, encourage more candidates to stand as parish councillors and engage people in doing ‘citizen social science’. The methods included randomised controlled trials, qualitative research and surveys.

Honest and engaging debate took place about the challenges and principles of co-designed research and conducting large scale experiments in real world settings. Practitioners from local authorities, the voluntary sector and student volunteering organisations shared their own ideas and experiences about volunteering recruitment and retention and gave feedback on things they would do as a result of the day. Participants shared powerful examples of the benefits that volunteering brings to individuals and communities, what it means to individuals to be involved in volunteering, the contribution it makes to the economy, to wellbeing and to health. Innovative ways of involving citizens in decision making as well as in citizen social science were highlighted.

A snippet of the day can be found on storify: https://storify.com/BenYMLee/giving-time-can-volunteers-be-nudged

Key messages from the day included:

- Much volunteering is driven by personal motivations and commitment to particular causes; gaining valuable experience and making social contacts were also important.

- Unlike the context of charitable giving of money where social information has been shown to increase donations, in the research conducted it didn’t increase volunteering. In fact, for some groups, social information could be de-motivating.

- Mobilisation should be targeted, with interventions aimed at increasing volunteering tailored to people’s differing motivations for volunteering.

- Volunteers need recognition and reward for what they do; showing people the benefits and outcomes of their volunteering may help increase volunteering. Rewards that signify belonging to a group that has achieved something together can also help.

- Nudges alone might not work for influencing a sustained behaviour like volunteering: structural measures and institutional support need to work alongside nudges.

The research team included Peter John (UCL, PI), Gerry Stoker and Matt Ryan (Southampton University), Oliver James and Alice Moseley (Exeter University) and Liz Richardson (Manchester University). The partners were: National Trust, Student Hubs, Student Volunteering Units in 12 UK universities, Family Mosaic Housing Association and County Associations for Local Councils.
For the past two years, the Parliamentary Candidates UK project has collected data on the social background of candidates standing in the 2015 general election as well as building retrospective dataset for candidates since 1945. Funded by the Leverhulme Trust, the aim of the project is to provide a comprehensive, electronic, publicly available dataset on who is selected and who is elected.

However, the project was always more than just a data collection exercise: fundamentally, it is a project that seeks to know who stands for parliament at Westminster, who gets elected and whether socio-demographic characteristics influence electoral outcomes or career trajectories.

The PCUK project has also allowed us to consider more carefully what should be put in the public domain. What information is necessary to judge whether candidates are qualified? In 2015, YourNextMP.com asked candidates to upload their CVs to their website, ‘a first step in any job application’ but uptake by candidates was partial at best. Is it enough to know about a candidate’s policies? or is it necessary to know more about their background – where they grew up, whether they are local to or live in the constituency they are standing for, where they went to school and university, their job?

More practically, the data help shed light on changes in the composition of the political class overtime. We know the 2015 general election produced two new records in terms of the number of women and black and minority ethnic (BME) MPs elected. In total, 191 women were elected on 7 May, constituting 29 per cent of MPs in Parliament and a measurable increase on the 22 per cent elected in 2010. The increase in the number of women elected is due to greater efforts to increase diversity by the political parties, Labour and the Conservatives in particular. Both parties selected women in roughly a third of seats, however Labour selected 52 per cent women candidates in its ‘target’ or marginal seats, whereas the Conservatives selected significantly fewer, with just 28 per cent women candidates in key seats.

Similar to progress made on increasing the number of women MPs, Parliament now has six per cent or 41 BME MPs, an increase on the 27 elected in 2010. Again there were differences between the parties, with Labour placing 14 per cent BME candidates in key seats compared to the Conservative’s five per cent but this ignores the fact that the Tories selected seven BME candidates in ultra-safe retirement seats, thereby increasing the number of Tory BME MPs from 11 in 2010 to 17 in 2015.

While Parliament has never been more descriptively representative of women or racial/ethnic minorities, there remains more to do to ensure that it bears more resemblance to the British public it is charged with representing. Britain’s political class has been subject to much criticism in recent years. There is no shortage of evidence suggesting the public view Westminster politicians as out of touch, insular and unable to understand the concerns of ordinary people. Knowing who stands for and who is elected to Parliament, may serve to increase the legitimacy of the Commons in the eyes of the public.

Parliamentary Candidates UK is a project led by Dr Jennifer vanHeerde-Hudson (UCL) and Dr Rosie Campbell (Birkbeck).
Do citizens’ assemblies work in practice? Eight lessons from a pilot

There has been growing interest in the idea of staging a ‘people’s’ constitutional convention in the UK over recent years but little home-grown evidence for how one could work in practice. With this in mind, a group of academics recently convened two pilot citizens’ assemblies in Sheffield and Southampton which dealt with questions concerning devolution of powers to their local areas. The Unit’s Dr Alan Renwick, who was involved in running Assembly North in Sheffield, draws out eight lessons from two highly successful weekends.

1. Regular citizens are capable of high-quality deliberation

The members of Assembly North built up great understanding of the issues, carefully weighed the strengths and weaknesses of different options and came to coherent, grounded conclusions. Watching them at work was deeply impressive. I came away reinvigorated in my wish to see democracy function more deeply impressive. I came away reinvigorated in my wish to see democracy function more effectively and refreshed in my view – pending, of course, detailed scrutiny of the evidence – that holding deliberative events such as this could play a major part in achieving that.

2. Quality reflection takes time

The members of Assembly North could consider the issues so well because they had time to build knowledge and ideas. They worked through three distinct phases of discussion over the two weekends: learning about the options; consulting with diverse witnesses; and deliberating intensively before reaching conclusions. Still, having two weekends was a bare minimum – we could have done much more with more time.

3. Small-group discussion is where most of the deepest thinking happens

Assembly North alternated in its work between plenary sessions and discussions in small groups of six or seven members. Some people are happy to speak up in front of forty others, while others are much less comfortable doing that. Working in small groups is vital for helping all voices and perspectives gain an equal hearing.

4. Downtime is essential too

Downtime matters partly because Assembly members need a rest but also because it is intrinsic to good deliberation. Sitting down to dinner together on the first Saturday evening helped the conversations flow much more easily the following morning.

5. Good table facilitators are key

Given the importance of small-group discussions, facilitators are needed on each table to help everyone enter the conversation, encourage members to listen to and reflect upon each other’s points and keep the discussions on target. We were very lucky to have superb facilitators and other helpers – wearing their orange t-shirts, they were rapidly christened the Tango Team. They all developed great rapport with their groups and were crucial to the success of the event.

6. Organisers need to be nimble

We spent hours ahead of each Assembly weekend planning the schedule down to the last five minutes. But when it came to it, our plans often had to change because Assembly members had different ideas about how best to organise things. We were always clear with the members that this was their assembly: we were there just to help them come to a view on the issues in hand.

7. Recruitment must be handled with care

Random recruitment is fundamental to the citizens’ assembly model. Our experiences show the importance of designing this process carefully. In some respects we did well: of the Assembly’s 32 members, 16 were women and 16 men; they had politically diverse views and came from very diverse backgrounds but we could have achieved better balance in terms of age and ethnicity. We also saw a drop off from 45 people who initially signed up to 32 who actually arrived on the first Saturday morning. Experience from citizens’ assemblies in Canada and the Netherlands suggests that the problem of initial drop-off in numbers can be addressed by inviting people first to a pre-meeting where they hear more about the process and the part they can play in it. Once people experience what is possible in a citizens’ assembly, they are generally very keen to take part: of the 32 who attended our first weekend, 31 returned for the second.

8. Assembly members deserve pampering

We asked our members to give up two weekends of their lives debating what most people would think are pretty abstruse matters, with no guarantee that policy-makers will listen seriously to their conclusions. That they engaged with such enthusiasm and seriousness is a huge credit to them. That they engaged with such enthusiasm and seriousness is a huge credit to them. Our budget didn’t allow us to pay them but they still deserved some serious pampering. We booked them into a good hotel, served the best food we could afford, smuggled homemade cookies past the hotel’s health and safety tsars and got a cake for a member who came along on her birthday. All of that helped give recognition to the enormous commitment that every member gave to the project.

The Citizens’ Assemblies project also involves academics from the Universities of Sheffield, Southampton and Westminster and a team from the Electoral Reform Society. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.
Unit in the news: The Lords and tax credits

The Unit’s Professor Meg Russell and Professor Robert Hazell each made a number of appearances in the national media in October 2015 to discuss the constitutional issues surrounding the House of Lords’ vote to block proposed changes to tax credits. Professor Russell appeared on Sky News and The World This Weekend on Sunday 25 October and on Newsnight and The World Tonight in the aftermath of the vote on Monday 27 October. Professor Hazell was on both BBC News and Sky News on 27 October, as well as BBC Radio Scotland.

Professor Russell’s blog post ‘The Lords and tax credits: fact and myth’, published ahead of the vote, was quoted on the front page of The Times and reproduced in full on The Daily Telegraph’s website. A second blog post, ‘The Lords, politics and finance’, was published after the vote. In it Professor Russell argued that much like Labour ministers under Blair and Brown, Conservative ministers will need to learn how to manage a relatively assertive House of Lords in which they lack a partisan majority.
PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION INSPIRES CRITICAL THINKING FOR IDPP STUDENTS

Shavon Bell, Department of Political Science Affiliate Student 2015–16 writes:

In late November, students taking Cathy Elliott’s “International Development and Public Policy” course flocked to the Royal Geographic Society to view Nick Danziger’s photo exhibition, Revisited. Overall, the exhibition seeks to investigate the progress that large-scale global organisations have made in working towards the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals.

The MDGs, as they are known, reflect the early ‘00s desire to revitalise development efforts worldwide. Stretching from broad goals such as “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger” to health-based goals such as “combat HIV/aids, malaria and other diseases,” the Millennium Development goals were meant to improve quality of life for citizens within developing nations. Within Cathy Elliott’s module, students discussed the MDGs and Danziger’s interpretation of their implementation with a willingness to both praise and critique each.

Danziger addresses the MDGs by returning to individuals that he photographed five years ago, when policy implementation of UN’s overarching aims was in more elementary stages. The first visit, commissioned by World Vision in 2005, involved Danziger’s visit to eight nations where he captured forty narratives surrounding daily life. The photos touch upon the strivings and tragedies of these individuals amidst the backdrop of the MDGs. For example, one photograph features Abbas, a citizen of Niger, inside the 22-metre mineshaft in which he works. Another features him sitting in his village home with his family.

Cathy Elliott’s class discussed Danziger’s project primarily with regards to narratives of development. Her class was provided with readings on frames for discourses or pre-conceptions that govern the way that communities conceptualise a process, idea or place. In addition, students considered his works with regards to their ability to increase financial aid or help fundraising efforts for developing nations.

Coupled with the readings, seminar groups within “International Development and Public Policy” evaluated the success of the exhibition– was it successful in creating empathy between the subjects of the photos and the viewer? Was it therefore an entirely unbiased view of the lives of individuals such as Abbas? Was it effective in inspiring citizens of other countries to aid those in the Global South? Raucous debate allowed students of differing opinions to advocate for both sides of these arguments and to more rigorously examine narratives of development that they are presented with in their everyday lives.

These in-class exchanges proceeded so far as to investigate the nature of the term “developing nation” itself which, as any illuminating module should, left students with more questions than answers by the conclusion of class.

Danziger himself will be holding a talk for SPP students on 24 February 2016.
Dr Lauge Poulsen, MPhil/PhD Programme Director reports:

Congratulations to John-Paul Salter who successfully defended his thesis on how British and German banks lobby national and European regulators. John-Paul writes:

My thesis was called 'Lobbying in the European Regulatory Arena: the case of the European Banking Authority.' It looked at how British and German banks negotiate their way through their regulatory environment, and how they bridge up from the national to the European level (or don’t).

My examiners were Professor Albert Weale and Professor Mick Moran. They gave the thesis a very thorough and fair going over and the viva itself was actually quite enjoyable!

My next steps are to start applying for jobs as soon as possible and to push a set of articles I’ve had in development for a while out to some journals.

I’d like to thank the Department as a whole and my supervisors (Colin Provost and David Coen) in particular, for all the support and input over the last four years.

Heleen Jalvingh presented her research at the PADEMIA conference on Institutional Engineering by National Parliaments in Paris on 3/4 December 2015. PADEMIA is a network of European universities, working together in the field of the role of national parliaments in the EU.

Matthew Gorwin presented his paper: “New Tricks for an Old Dog: QCA in Application to Diasporas and Host State Foreign Policy” at the IPSA Rainbow of the Methods conference in Antwerp in September 2015.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Celebrating our Political Theory PhD students

The Doctoral School of Political Theory is pleased to celebrate its 10th Anniversary. Since 2005, we have built a strong programme of political philosophy, built around:

– our tailor-made Political Theory Methods seminars
– our weekly PhD workshops (where PhD students present their work in progress)
– our high-profile Wednesdays Legal and Political Theory seminars (where graduate students in political theory can discuss cutting-edge work by prominent invited speakers)
– the Colloquium in Social and Legal Philosophy, jointly organised with the Laws and Philosophy department.

We are very proud of our students, who have been hired in some of the best universities of the world, or work in top research or consultancy positions.

Congratulations to all of them!

Laura Valentini (2008) is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics.

Shin Osawa (2009) is an Associate professor at the University of Kitakyushu, Fukuoka, Japan.

Katerina Mantouvalou (2009) is a Managing Consultant at ICF International.

Meghan Benton (2009) is a Senior Researcher at NESTA.

David Karp (2010) is a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) at Sussex University.

Chiara Cordelli (2011) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago.

Julio Montero (2011) is an Assistant Professor at Buenos Aires University.

David Blunt (2012) is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow and a fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

Takahiro Chino (2013) is a Fellow at Waseda University in Tokyo and a Max Weber Fellow at European Institute in Florence.

Maeve McKeown (2014) is a Junior Research Fellow at St Hilda’s College, Oxford.

Nick Martin (2014) is a Teaching Fellow in the Department of Political Science at UCL.

Sabina Espinoza (nee Appelt) (2014) is a Consultant for the World Bank on social development/social inclusion issues.

Lior Erez (2014) is a Teaching Associate at the Department of Political and International Studies, University of Cambridge.

Guy Aitchison-Cornish (2015) is a Max Weber Fellow at the European Institute in Florence.
NEWS FROM THE RAPT CENTRE

The RAPT Centre is now a visible and well-established research centre for political theory and religion, as demonstrated by the thousands of single visitors of our website (www.ucl.ac.uk/religion-political-theory-centre) and the regularly high levels of attendance at all our events.

Among the last important RAPT events, we had a very successful book launch for Recognizing the Nonreligious: Reimagining the Secular by RAPT member Lois Lee (Oxford University Press, 2015) and for Aliens and Strangers? The Struggle for Coherence in the Everyday Lives of Evangelicals by Anna Strhan.

We will have another book launch this term to celebrate the forthcoming publication of Religion, Secularism and Constitutional Democracy, edited by Jean L. Cohen and Cécile Laborde with Columbia University Press. The book includes contributions from a range of international scholars, with chapters on public justification and liberal neutrality by RAPT members Laborde and Bardon.

We also plan the publication of Negotiating Religion, edited by François Guesnet, Cécile Laborde and Lois Lee, which includes chapters by RAPT members Laborde and Lee, as well as three chapters by SPP colleagues: Saladin Meckled Garcia on human rights and religious establishment; Robert Morris (Constitution Unit) on the future of establishment in the UK; and Albert Weale on public reasons of the heart.

RAPT members Lois Lee and Aurélia Bardon have recently co-edited Religious Pluralism: A Resource-Book (EUI, 2015), with Kristina Stoeckl (European University Institute) and Maria Birnbaum (University of Oslo). The book includes working papers that were presented at a workshop organised by RAPT and ReligioWest at the European University Institute in January 2015. It is available online: http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/37704

After the successful Lecture Series in 2013/14 on “Secularism and Religious Freedom” and in 2014/15 on “Multidisciplinary Engagements with Religion,” the RAPT Centre launched the 2015/16 Lecture Series on “Religion in the Law” with a lecture by Professor Lawrence Sager (University of Texas) on “Why Churches (And, Possibly, The Tarpon Bay Women’s Deep Water Fishing Club) Can Discriminate.” It attracted a large audience of political and legal theorists from UCL Laws, UCL SPP, King’s College and the LSE. In his lecture, Professor Sager addressed some of RAPT’s key themes and issues: is religion special? Does this justify special rights for churches? More specifically, does it give churches the right to discriminate?

The RAPT Centre is also running a workshop, which provides a forum for RAPT members to present working papers. Members come from SPP, Laws, Philosophy and IAS, making the RAPT workshop one of the very few interdisciplinary political theory workshops at UCL.

We are also very happy to announce the forthcoming publication of Religion in Liberal Political Philosophy, edited by Cécile Laborde and Aurélia Bardon, under contract with Oxford University Press. The volume gathers most of the papers presented at our major international conference in June 2015. This is the first book looking at the concept of religion within liberalism. In the last few decades, questions regarding religion have received a lot of attention in liberal political philosophy. Strangely, political philosophers have not reflected on what they mean by religion and how it relates to many other liberal concepts or liberal principles. A new generation of political and legal theorists is addressing this issue: they are all included in this volume. We are expecting the book to be published in 2017.
RAPT Events

Forthcoming RAPT events include:

28 January 2016 5:15–7:00pm SPP Council Room
RAPT Lecture by Daniel Statman (University of Haifa) on ‘Religious Arguments in the Public Sphere: A View from Israel.’

28–29 January 2016
Workshop on Religion and Public Justification.

26 February 2016 2:00–6:30pm SPP Council Room
Roundtable on Religious Discrimination. Speakers include: Lucy Vickers (Oxford Brookes University), Emmanuelle Bribosia (ULB), Isabelle Rorive (ULB), Ronan McCrea (UCL), David Perfect (Equality and Human Rights Commission).

11 April 2016 2:00–6:00pm SPP Council Room
Workshop on Alan Patten’s, Equal Recognition. Discussants include: Alan Patten (Princeton University), Dario Castiglione (University of Exeter), Will Kymlicka (Queen’s University), Anne Phillips (LSE), Jonathan Seglow (Royal Holloway). The workshop is co-organised with the University of Exeter.

9 June 2016
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), Aurélie Bardon (UCL). Liberalism’s Religion is under contract with Harvard University Press (publication expected in 2017).

RAPT Events are open to all.

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.

USING NUDGES TO INCREASE COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION

Peter John, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, has been using nudge techniques to improve the delivery of local government services. He worked with Toby Blume at the London Borough of Lambeth to increase its local tax collection (Council Tax).

They redesigned the reminder letters that are sent to those who are late paying their tax bills. In a randomised control trial carried out in 2013–2014, they found out that simplifying the letter increased the number of people paying their tax by about four percentage points, saving the council from having to use the courts and bailiffs to collect the money. The council now uses this redesigned letter in its normal bill cycle.

On the basis of this work, the council won the Local Area Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA) research impact award in 2015.
IT UPDATE

Stephen Thomson and Mark Uhde provide the following Departmental IT update:

- Nearly all Staff WTS machines have now been migrated to the UCL domain and running Windows 10 with Office 2016. Some of these machines have also had their hard drives replaced with solid state drives (SSDs). The cumulative effect is that users now have a vastly improved computer experience and Political Science IT staff can install custom applications and easily apply updates.

- Before the start of Term Two, a digital signage screen will be installed in the Reception that will convey notices to students and details of up and coming events.

- Work will soon start on the new Political Science website. The URL will end with /political-science rather than /spp which should be more meaningful to external users and better reflect the diversity of programmes and research within the Department. The new website will utilise the new Silva templates which provide multi-device support, from smart screen to desktop. Current examples are www.ucl.ac.uk/ippr and www.ucl.ac.uk/q-step. This development stage forms part of the eventual migration to the new content management system, Drupal, which should be available to UCL Departments from mid 2016.

- The redesigned IPPR and IPAS site have been launched using the new responsive, Indigo content management system.

- A new wireless access point has been installed in the student common room which will give users a much improved wireless experience. In addition, an existing access point has been relocated to G.12, in the Constitution Unit.

- We are undertaking a feasibility study for an enhanced audio-visual system including Lecturecast capability to be installed in The Council Room.
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.

Dissertations produced by our students are often of a very high standard and can be developed into published works. The Department wishes to recognise the academic excellence of our leading students and so we have a ‘Best Dissertation’ Prize for each of our eight Master’s programmes. The prize is awarded to the student who receives the top confirmed mark for the current academic year for each Master’s programme. In addition, we award the Departmental Prize to the student with the top confirmed mark for the current academic year across all programmes in Political Science.

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’

Some of our prize winning students introduce their research in the following abstracts:


Anastasia Ushakova  
2014–15 MSc Public Policy student, writes:

**Vulnerable energy customers identification using smart meter’s data?**

For UK energy companies, issues of supporting vulnerable consumers and fuel poverty, together with carbon emission reductions, have been important over the recent years, especially with the introduction of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and the Green Deal by the UK government. With the availability of streaming data from smart meters, we are able to develop simple and reliable methods of identifying vulnerable energy customers and as a result develop targeted policy interventions. The research question of this study was thus how vulnerable customers can be identified from natural gas consumption data.

To answer this question, data sourced from smart meters in the Scottish region was analysed using machine learning techniques: a clustering and neural network predictive model. The study was based on the sample of 2,000 smart meters from the Scottish region that recorded half-hourly consumption across the year 2014. Total yearly consumption was also visualised.

Despite the fact that neural networks did show some possibility for prediction (76 per cent prediction power) and clustering was highly representative of greater differentiation in consumption patterns among vulnerable and non-vulnerable customers, data has shown high heterogeneity, which implies that for more precise analysis, further research suggestions presented in this paper need to be considered. As an example, further research may consider inclusion of variables on climate and geographic characteristics that may well contribute to predicative power of the model. The extent to which analysis of gas consumption from smart meters was analysed in current academic literature is still quite limited and it is also the first time that gas consumption data has been attempted for predictive analysis; therefore, the paper opens up a clear possibility to use machine learning techniques not just for operational research but also for public policy research that aims at informing policy interventions in the energy sector.

Laetitia Labaute  
2014–15 MSc European Public Policy student writes:

**Public support for foreign development aid in times of economic crisis**

What is the impact of an economic crisis on public support for foreign development aid? While no previous empirical research answers this question, addressing it in the current context of financial crisis and aid fatigue is fundamental.

Based on previous research that links public opinion on international redistribution to attitudes toward domestic welfare spending, this paper argues that an economic crisis results in higher demand for social welfare spending and domestic redistribution, which has a direct impact on individuals’ preferences and priorities over their own government’s spending in the context of austerity. This in turn affects attitudes toward international redistribution: I hypothesised that both at the individual and country-level, economic insecurity and concerns should be related to lower support for development aid. However, at the individual-level this effect should be attenuated for individuals that place themselves on the left political spectrum, and for those who favour their government’s intervention abroad and its development policy compared to other actors in the field. To test these predictions, this study focuses on public support for development aid in the EU’s Member States in light of the recent 2008 global financial crisis. Using data from the 2009 Eurobarometer survey, the results found through several ordered logistic regressions confirm the hypotheses, even though at the individual-level, the negative impact of an economic crisis is overall low. Rather than a sharp increase in individuals’ willingness not to achieve the EU’s aid commitments or in support for decreasing aid below its current level, the impact is better reflected through lower support for increasing aid beyond the 0.7% target promised by the European Commission and MS. Moreover, being convinced that the EU is the best placed actor in development lessens negative attitudes toward aid in times of economic strain.

If development aid is to remain the main instrument of international cooperation, one way for the EU – as the world first aid donor – to reassert its position in the global post 2015 development agenda is to honour its commitment to reach the 0.7% international standard. Fortunately, the results presented here show that European public support for this objective remains strong and almost unchanged despite the unfavourable economic context. Achieving this will necessarily go with legitimising the EU’s aid budget at home by reasserting the public about its effectiveness and about the overall uniqueness and complementarity between the Commission’s and Member States’ aid, compared to other development actors.
Francis Andrews
2014–15 MSc Democracy and Comparative Politics student, writes:

Mobilising “ordinary” people to violence: What mechanisms facilitated interethnic violence in western Myanmar in June 2012?

This dissertation emerged from several years spent reporting on the issue in question as a journalist. Although I was familiar with the ‘story’ of ethnic relations in western Myanmar, I was eager to develop a detailed understanding of the mechanisms at play in triggering the shift from a non-violent to violent relationship between Rohingya and Rakhine.

I was able to draw on testimony collected by researchers who gained access to participants in the violence, as well as a database of “information”—inflammatory news reports, propaganda leaflets and so on—that circulated prior to the episode of violence.

While there has been a fair amount of news coverage of the issue, there has been very little in-depth exploration of what motivated one side to attack another. My research therefore began with an analysis of the theory surrounding mobilisation of ethnic groups to violence and I was then able to draw on the testimony made available to me in order to test existing theory against this very recent episode of group violence.

I located many of the prior acknowledged mechanisms within this specific episode, particularly the role of elites in manipulating fears of an other ethnic group and go some way towards eliminating—or limiting emphasis on—other theories, in particular those suggesting ‘ancient hatreds’ as a primary catalyst for ethnic group violence.

In a comparative analysis of the Information and Testimony data, I was also able to draw a link between the messages circulated prior to the violence and participants’ rationales for involvement in the violence. This suggested that a change in the nature of information prior to the violence prompted a change in mobilisation patterns that ultimately led to the violence.

Rachel Fox
2014–15 MA Human Rights student, writes:

What challenges do homeless women in England experience in seeking freedom from gender-based violence?

Women who are homeless and living in mixed-sex hostel accommodation in England are a particularly marginalised group, whose experiences of gender-based violence are poorly understood.

Through 18 semi-structured interviews – with homeless women, hostel support workers and other relevant professionals – this qualitative research study seeks to address this gap in the literature, applying a feminist approach.

It develops the argument that homeless women in England experience significant challenges in seeking freedom from gender-based violence, often managing their experiences alone and seeking support only as a last resort.

While they experience many of the same challenges as women in other contexts, their attitudes and experiences appear to be shaped in important ways by (i) the nature and prominence of social networks and norms in the homelessness context which create pressures for women to ‘manage’ alone, and (ii) the complexities of women’s histories, which serve to foster deep mistrust in services and institutions.

Overall, this research contends that it is essential to understand holistically the context in which homeless women navigate their daily lives in order to better support their right to freedom from violence.
Chaka Laguerre
2014–15 MA Legal and Political Theory student, writes:

**Epistemic Injustice: Interactive spaces between silences testimonies and hermeneutical silences**

There is something deeply troubling yet fascinating about epistemic injustice—when a person is harmed specifically in her capacity as a knower. It is an often undetected and pernicious form of injustice that further oppresses the oppressed, causing profound harm to their psychologies, practical lives and human value. That is to say, it is an injustice that we should be deeply concerned about understanding and addressing.

At the same time, it is a phenomenon that has captured the intellectual interests of academics seeking to understand the relationship between power and knowledge practices, which I suggest has led to less rather than more conceptual clarity.

Miranda Fricker offers a powerful account of epistemic injustice that draws a rigid line between two forms of epistemic injustice that she identifies: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. This dissertation considers whether this bifurcated framework of epistemic injustice is adequate and proposes an alternative approach to viewing epistemic injustice.

I suggest that framing epistemic injustice within a paradigm of “silencing” opens up possibilities for other forms of epistemic injustice that have been overlooked or undetected to be recognised and explored. Further, it illuminates the various and complex ways in which testimonial and hermeneutical injustice interact with each other.

First, I argue that Fricker’s rigid framework cannot account for other forms of epistemic injustice because she does not fully explore the inextricable relationship between testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. Moreover, I argue that Fricker’s framework actually precludes possibilities for their recognition by prescribing rigid formulations of epistemic injustice. I do so by analysing non-willful epistemic meta-ignorance as a form of epistemic injustice through the lens of the “post-racial” myth in America.

Second, I consider the various ways in which testimonial and hermeneutical injustice cause and depend upon each other.

Third, I propose a framework for silencing within which we ought to situate epistemic injustice in order to account for the complex ways in which testimonial and hermeneutical injustice interact.

Finally, I conclude that exploring these interactive spaces between silenced testimonies and hermeneutical silences opens up possibilities for recognising and understanding even more latent forms of epistemic injustice.
NEW STAFF

The Department would like to welcome the following new staff:

Hannah Umar
Department Manager

I joined the School of Public Policy in November 2015 as Department Manager, responsible for managing the provision and efficient delivery of professional services within the Department with particular focus on the strategic planning of teaching, staffing, financial management and the delivery of estates and space projects.

I have worked at UCL for nine years, as a Department Manager for a professional services department – UCL Public and Cultural Engagement – which comprises three museums, teaching and research collections, the Bloomsbury Theatre and the Public Engagement Unit.

Prior to that, I worked at London Business School supporting research grants and before that I worked for the firm that created the Higher Education Role Analysis system which grades roles in Higher Education.

I have a Masters degree from UCL in Classics and my BA degree is from Warwick University in Ancient History.

I am very eager to discover the academic side of the university and look forward to contributing to the continued success of this department.

Tom Holroyd
Administrative Assistant

I joined the Department in September 2015 – just in time for the mayhem of Induction – as an Administrative Assistant, after a somewhat peripatetic career thus far has led me (more than willingly) into university administration. I am predominately working on the postgraduate side and with involvement in many of the broad array of tasks carried out by the student administration team.

After graduating with a degree in History in 2009, I spent a year back home in Leeds before moving down to London and spending three years working as a Content Administrator for a financial training company in Canary Wharf’s gilded cage.

I left London in order to live abroad for a while and spent a year teaching English in Argentina. My time there was bookended by two stints at the Leeds University Business School, where I worked in the Undergraduate Office (late 2013/ early 2014) and in the Research Office (for most of 2015, immediately prior to joining UCL).

I very much enjoyed my time working at the University of Leeds and am very excited to be continuing in the sector at an organisation like UCL. It is also great to be back in London; I would imagine it will be quite some time before I tire of my office being in Bloomsbury. The nice thing about writing this after being in the job a few months, is that I can honestly say how much I am enjoying being in the Department and working with everyone here.
So when I got an internship opportunity at the Swedish Embassy in Amman in September 2011, I could not decline the offer. Only two days after having handed in my dissertation at UCL, I moved to Jordan. This is at the time when the ‘Arab Spring’ just had erupted and the region was about to be fundamentally transformed. No one really knew in what ways and directions but my curiosity made me accept the challenge.

I assisted the ambassador in questions related to politics, with a special focus on democracy and human rights. My main task was to research the role of Islamists, their impact on societies and particularly on women’s rights. I interviewed the head of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood and the leader of the Islamic Action Front, a political party formed by the previous actor. I met several other interesting people, including researchers on Islamists. During my time at the Swedish Embassy, I finished my second master’s degree in Peace and Conflict Studies.

I decided to stay in the Middle East since I had more to give and learn. My next mission was at UNOPS, where I worked on projects related to civil society in South Kurdistan, but from Amman. I was in touch with human rights’ groups and other grassroots organisations and Kurdish parliamentarians. Moreover, I assisted in the implementation of programmes in which Kurdish women were empowered through local initiatives and analysed and monitored Kurdish and Iraqi media.

On the side, I started working as a research assistant at the Regional Centre on Conflict Prevention, a governmental institute that belongs to the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy. One of my main tasks was to analyse the radicalisation processes of Islamists in Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood and their political party.

In early 2012, Jordan was starting to really feel the spill over effects from the war in neighbouring Syria. The country was now faced with a refugee crisis and I got the opportunity to start helping out on the Syrian border in the Zaatari Refugee Camp. Having worked politically and with development issues, I now wanted to gain experience within the humanitarian field and emergency responses. Working in Zaatari was my first encounter working with refugees at all. My experiences in Jordan later led to an offer from UNHCR in South Kurdistan.

And so I moved back to my homeland in March 2013 and lived in Erbil, the Kurdish capital, for the next two years as a ‘returnee Kurd’ where I first worked with refugees and IDP’s. The refugees were now mainly Kurds fleeing ISIS, other militant Islamists and the Syrian regime itself. In 2014, I felt an urge to go back to the political field; something that I realised was more in line with my long-term interests. Hence, I started working as a media and political advisor and on a consultancy basis with KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government), at the Department of Media and Information. I analysed current international and local affairs and media reporting, wrote news stories and press releases among other tasks.

The situation in South Kurdistan had drastically changed by now and ISIS had started attacking Kurdish towns and cities. At the height of the conflict last year, ISIS was less than 28 kilometres away from Erbil. This is when President Barack Obama declared the capital a ‘red line’ and ordered air strikes to assist the Kurdish Peshmerga forces. War and terror was now once again a reality in Kurdistan.

After some years abroad, in which the Middle East was transformed and history being written in front of my eyes through the “Arab Spring” and ISIS’s terror, I decided to finally move back to Sweden. I left South Kurdistan in April 2015. Today, I am working for the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs while trying to resettle back into society.

My student year in London was really the starting point and it shaped my future decisions; it was at University College London that my personal and professional adventure started five years ago.
Past students Andrew Seward, MSc International Public Policy 2011–2012 and Kevin Conroy Security Studies 2009–2010 write:

How did you come to work together? What are you working with now, and how did you get there?

Andrew Seward
International Public Policy 2011–2012

After working in development research for a few years, I joined ENABLE2 (and Adam Smith International) as Project Manager in October 2014. One of the immediate tasks I needed to look at was identifying a Team Leader for the programme. Kevin’s knowledge and experience working in Northern Nigeria was a natural fit for the role.

Kevin Conroy
Security Studies 2009–2010

I had been working in Nigeria for almost 3 years as a Regional Manager for another DFID programme run by ASI. We first met at the opening of the new HQ in Abuja, where Andrew introduced himself as the project manager for ENABLE2. In May this year my contract came to an end with my previous programme and at the same time ENABLE were recruiting for a Team Leader. I moved from advising from the side lines and into the Team Leader role. Now we work together.

What is your project aimed at and what are your respective roles?

Kevin: We work to overcome some of the big constraints facing economic growth in Nigeria. Nigeria has huge economic potential and vibrant entrepreneurs. However, environment for doing business is generally poor; opaque tax systems, predatory government, lack of information, poor infrastructure etc etc. We seek to overcome these constraints by helping local business people and government identify their biggest challenges and support them to advocate for the changes need to improve their lives and incomes. We also build the capacity of the media and research institution’s to inform and report on the business environment constraints and the effect of reforms.

Andrew: Kevin’s focus as Team Leader is overseeing the technical aspects of the programme – defining the strategic direction of the programme and guiding the team in their engagement with stakeholders and actors. As Project Manager, I’m responsible for overseeing all commercial and operational matters of the programme (finance, contracting, logistics, security, etc). Our roles overlap a lot so collaboration with each other is key – thankfully coming from a similar background has helped a lot.

How do the skills you picked up at SPP support your work?

Kevin: I initially started my post SPP career as an analyst working with quantitative and qualitative data in conflict zones. Definitely the research and analytical skills have served me well. I think the high level of coursework (MSc Security Studies) and high standards of assessment definitely raised my game in terms of work ethic and productivity.

Andrew: In my previous job setting up a research firm, I used the research methods skills from the course all the time in research design and analysis. Whilst I don’t use them as regularly now, they definitely still help in monitoring and assessing programme results.

If you could go back in time and pay a little more attention to a specific class/lecture, which one would it be?

Andrew: Quantitative Research Methods! Being able to interpret data effectively and the training that you get on statistical methods gives you a great practical skill set that is really valuable in development, where data is often not often the most reliable.

Kevin: Hmmm difficult question, I did get a distinction so didn’t do too bad! But I think I would have done more on the qualitative research side. My dissertation and subsequent work was quant based and I feel I’d need to reread a lot of qualitative methods if I wanted to do a good job on that side.

You studied different programmes – does that make a difference to how you work today?

Kevin: Probably not, it would be the modules that count. I guess I wouldn’t have worked in Kano if I hadn’t pursued a lot of the security related modules.

Andrew: Not hugely – I actually took quite a few of the Security Studies courses so our knowledge base certainly overlaps. The core research modules are both things that remain hugely valuable, particularly on a programme like ENABLE where monitoring and results measurement is so important.

How do you feel SPP graduates are prepared for today’s job market?

Kevin: SPP graduates should not overlook the importance of good research skills in the job market. It’s not just for academics! Lots of jobs in development, conflict areas, policy making, think tanks etc. require diligence in this area.

What has surprised you working in international development? Any advice for prospective SPP graduates?

Kevin: Specialise in locations or topics that are not already full of specialist/academics, i.e. Afghanistan. Working in development, it surprised me that even the most risky places are full of people who will do whatever they can to make you comfortable and generally showing a little interest means you can learn a lot. Apart from the above, building a network at SPP and UCL will serve well you well. Internships are hard, especially unpaid but worth the networking opportunities. Some of my fellow interns after university are now in management roles and we help each other out a lot.

Andrew: Aim to be realistic in the work you can achieve. In development, you often find that there are so many factors outside of your control that expecting clear and instant results is unrealistic. It’s better to appreciate that there are so many factors outside of your control that expecting clear and instant results is unrealistic. It’s better to appreciate the process, people and environment that you’re working in. Be willing to go anywhere and make sure you’re always trying to listen and learn from everybody that you work with.
Alejandra Palma  
*MSc Democracy and Comparative Politics, 2013–14*

My time at UCL was one of the most intense but rewarding years of my academic life. From the very beginning I became highly involved in SPP and the Student Union (UCLU). I was elected Student Academic Representative (StAR) for the DCP programme to represent the views of my peers to the University. I also sat on the Library Committee and acted as the voice of students, liaising with the Department and UCLU to influence UCL’s decision making processes. Furthermore, I applied and was selected for the very competitive and sought-after role of post-graduate Vice-Warden in student halls. I lived in Anne Stephenson House and was in charge, along with my fellow vice wardens, of providing emergency cover for five UCL halls of residence on a call out basis. My duties included maintaining good order, promoting a good social atmosphere and advising students with pastoral problems. I am proud to have been able to get involved in student life and help improve the living conditions in university accommodation. During the summer, I obtained a job with UCL Estates. Writing the dissertation was very demanding and even more so while working at the same time. Nevertheless, this experience enabled me to acquire valuable work experience in the UK, increase my professional network and build long-lasting friendships.

As an international student (non UK/EU), securing employment in London can be much more challenging due to an expiring student visa and the limits on which organisations can sponsor permits. The road is not easy but I can say with confidence that a degree from SPP and UCL is certainly a great advantage. It reflects both the success of being admitted among hundreds of qualified applicants and that of completing relevant coursework and acquired competence in rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods. After graduation, I applied for several roles in London and was invited to quite a few assessment centres and interviews. I believe the SPP/UCL seal had weight on getting past the initial filters. It was encouraging to almost always find SPP Alumni in the hiring organisations’ ranks. I applied for a role at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and went through a demanding recruitment process, from which I came on top, happily! I received a great offer and a permanent position. It must be noted that my personal tutor, James Dawson, provided a letter of reference supporting my application. His endorsement as a lecturer contributed to this positive outcome. I joined EBRD’s Evaluation Department (EvD), where we work in assessing the performance of the Bank’s completed projects and programmes. We carry out systematic analyses of results both at individual project and broader policy themes levels. EvD’s aim is to contribute to the Bank’s legitimacy, relevance and performance. Even though I just recently joined, I am already conducting evaluative work independently, as well as contributing with quantitative analyses as part of a Special Study team.

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I remember my year at SPP fondly. The coursework, the dissertation and the participation in all the activities UCL afforded me were the first step and passport to both my professional career and personal life in the great city of London.

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**FUTURE EDITIONS OF TAVISTOCK TIMES.**

**TAVISTOCK TIMES** is published three times a year with the next edition due to be published in April 2016.

Ideas for future articles should be sent to: Helen Holt (h.holt@ucl.ac.uk) before the end of February 2016.

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

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Articles in the newsletter express views and opinions of individuals and not necessarily those of the Department of Political Science.