As I return to the Department, from a sabbatical at the European University Institute in Florence, I am struck by how much continues to evolve at the School of Public Policy. So much of this change is exciting and 2015/16 is going to be a special year for the Department with the launch of the new BSc in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, our first undergraduate degree and also the first cohort joining us on the Master in Public Administration (MPA) programme for experienced policy-makers. With these significant changes I am pleased to announce that we will be welcoming six new teaching faculty and three new administrators to the Professional Services Team. However, some change is sad, Nicky Henson our long time Departmental Administrator is moving back home to Yorkshire.

In my five years as Head of Department, I have worked very closely with Nicky on the day to day running of the School of Public Policy and much of the recent success and growth of the school can be attributed to her tireless hard work and detailed planning. She will be much missed by all who worked with her and we wish her the best of luck in her new role at the School of Education at York University.

In terms of academic staff, we continue to grow with Lucy Barnes joining us as a lecturer in Comparative Politics from Kent University. Jeff Howard will be joining as a Lecturer in Political Theory from Essex. Alex Hartman will join as a Qualitative Methods lecturer having just completed a PhD at Yale. Alan Renwick will be taking up a post as senior lecturer in British Politics and Deputy Head of the Constitution Unit from Reading University. To assist with the launch of the new MPA, Mike Seiferling joins us as a lecturer in Public Finance from the IMF and Christian Schuster will help build up our public administration, joining us from LSE. Most of these posts are new appointments but sadly I do have to announce that Jan DeNeve will be leaving us for Oxford University in January and James Melton will returning to the US to run his father’s farm. I am sure that many of you will want to write to them to wish them good luck in these new and different challenges.

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

On this note, I would like to welcome Hannah Umar who will be Nicky’s replacement as Department Administrator in the autumn. Hannah will be joining us from a finance role at UCL so is well placed to understand how the university works and I look forward to working with her in the new academic year.

Other significant changes in the administration team are the arrival of Mark Udhe who was appointed in June as IT Support Administrator. He will support and work closely with Stephen on IT support and web maintenance. Another new arrival in June was Holly Huddart appointed as a PG Administrator to help with the MPA and EMPA programmes.

With the launch of the new BSc in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, SPP traditionally known for its postgraduate teaching, will welcome undergraduate students to a degree programme for the very first time.
It is an exciting development for the Department. There has been enormous interest in the PPE degree with over a thousand applicants for the 30 or so places. Kayt Newman, PPE Administrator and Dr Tim Hicks, PPE Programme Director and the Department as a whole are looking forward to meeting our new students in Tavistock Square.

A particular attraction of the PPE at UCL is that it aims to provide grounding in the three disciplines and to permit the student to optimise the degree to particular interests and career objectives. Distinctive features of the degree are the strong element of student choice, its policy orientation and a fourth methods ‘pillar.’ Situated in our School of Public Policy, it can draw on the close connections the Department has with the policy community. Like other degrees at SPP, Research Methods will constitute a distinctive fourth pillar of the degree. Within the methods sequence, students can choose a separate Quantitative Methods theme supported by the new Nuffield, ESRC and HEFCE funded QStep Methods teaching Centre. Dr Jennifer Hudson the Director will be formally launching the centre with an event on the 22nd October. The Centre has new staff in place and a suite of module offerings that demonstrate the use of quantitative methods across the social sciences.

This year will also see innovations at the postgraduate level as we launch a new Master in Public Administration (MPA), which is tailored to students with significant work experience as well as strong academic records. Dr Marc Esteve, the Programme Director has developed a very innovative degree that will work closely with the new school of management at UCL and the Economics Department. At present, we have twenty students enrolled and they will be complemented with the arrival in January of ten EMPA students from the UCL/NYU Global Public Policy MPA programme. With regard to the EMPA degree, we are also pleased to announce that Stephen Rubin a long time friend and supporter of the School of Public Policy has created a scholarship for the EMPA for students from the Global South. UCL’s US Alumni have created a scholarship for an American to study on the EMPA and the Fulbright Foundation will offer a scholarship for a British student to participate.

As this new and exciting year begins I look forward to welcoming all our new students across our MSc, MA, MPA and PPE programmes at the end of September and I hope to see many of you at our Policy in Practice seminar series where we have leading policy-makers debating topical policy issues. In addition a few dates for the diary already are the US Ambassador Mathew Barzun on 20th October and Baroness Ashton on the 8th December hosted by the Global Governance Institute. You can find the seminar series schedule by visiting our website at: www.ucl.ac.uk/spp/seminars

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 Avia Pasternak, Lecturer in Global Ethics and MSc Global Governance and Ethics Programme Director.

What is your name?
Avia Pasternak

When did you join UCL?
In January 2014

What are your responsibilities in the Department?
I am a lecturer in global ethics and the Programme Director of the Global Governance and Ethics MSc.

What do you particularly like and dislike about your job?
I love the research, the interaction with my students and with colleagues. I am probably less keen about my rather long commute to work.

What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?
I guess that would be juggling work and family life whilst remaining sane.

Most inspirational person that you have met whilst at UCL?
I can’t name a single person. The Department as a whole stands out as an inspirational and supportive working environment.

Favourite location in UCL?
The main quad. It’s rather grand!

What would your ideal afternoon/evening in London include?
A walk through an art gallery followed by drinks in good company.

What is your favourite book?
Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck.

What are your hobbies?
I gave up on the idea of having hobbies after having my second son.

If you had not gone into academia what would you be doing now?
I honestly can’t think of another profession I would have liked better. I might have ended up as a disgruntled lawyer.

If you could implement one policy in the world today, what would it be?
A transformation in Britain’s immigration policies, which would bring it closer to complying with its basic humanitarian duties towards refugees and doing its fair share in the task of offering them asylum.
MA HUMAN RIGHTS STUDY TRIP TO GENEVA

Abi Smith, 2014-15 MA Human Rights student writes:

The annual MA Human Rights study trip took place at the end of June, with a number of students from the 2014/15 cohort gathered in Geneva for the 29th session of the Human Rights Council at the United Nations.

The visit coincided with a discussion of the recent report from the Independent Commission of Inquiry on Gaza, which examined alleged violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Commission's report concluded that both Israeli and Palestinian armed groups may have committed war crimes during the summer of 2014 and recommended that all states cooperate fully with any forthcoming investigations by the International Criminal Court. The Israeli government's refusal to cooperate with the Inquiry was noted in the report and became apparent during the session itself as the Israeli representative refused to enter the chamber, choosing instead to stage a press conference in the halls of the UN. Meanwhile, pro-Israel demonstrators gathered outside in support of Israel's boycott.

Israel's notable absence and the reprimanding of Saudi Arabia for referring to Israel as a 'racist regime' certainly added a touch of drama to what was otherwise a fairly rehearsed and formal affair.

The discussion within the Council coincided with many issues that had been touched on during the human rights course at UCL, particularly the legal concepts of distinction and proportionality with regards to the laws of war. Although interesting from an academic and legal standpoint, the majority of the contributions from state representatives were rather repetitive and tended to speak in general terms, pointing to the increasingly politicised nature of the Council. This feature was also apparent in the second session we observed, which was a general debate on racism. Although some speakers used their allotted two minutes to target specific states or issues, many contributors erred on the side of caution by keeping their comments broad and non-inflammatory.

After observing the Council sessions and all of the political undercurrents that seem to guide proceedings, it would be easy to forget that such formalities are just the tip of the iceberg. Beneath the perfectly timed two-minute speeches and the endless repetitions of 'Mr President' there is an army of activists and organisations who work within and alongside the UN system in an attempt to fulfil the goal of universal human rights for all. To offer an insight into the various human rights organisations that interact with the Council and other UN mechanisms, representatives from the UNHCR, OHCHR, Universal Rights Group, SOS Children's Villages and others were invited to speak to us about their work and experiences in this area.

Leah Zamore and Cornelis Wouters from the UNHCR discussed different issues relating to refugees, including the legal application of refugee status and the problems associated with protracted displacement and refugee camps. In light of the current debates surrounding refugees fleeing armed conflict, both Cornelis and Leah's presentations provoked some interesting questions from the students.

Substantive areas of human rights were also addressed, particularly by Andrew Smith from Article 19 who described the challenges faced in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in relation to freedom of expression. The intersection of women's rights and education were highlighted by Nina Joyce from Graduate Women International and Alan Kikuchi-White from SOS Children's Villages explained how he has worked with the UN system to advocate the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

In addition to these discussions, the speakers were also able to offer some words of wisdom regarding employment opportunities in the increasingly competitive field of human rights. Matt Pollard from the International Commission of Jurists offered two rather memorable pieces of advice: be prepared to work for free and be prepared to work in the places where nobody else wants to go.
Following the presentations, the students had the opportunity to network with the speakers and were joined by UCL Human Rights Alumni who are currently working in Geneva. This provided the perfect opportunity for students to find out more about the day to day workings of the human rights regime and to follow up on any issues or questions that weren’t covered in the earlier discussions. Importantly, it also allowed students to establish some professional relationships within the human rights field which may prove useful in the not so distant future.

POLICY AND PRACTICE SEMINAR SERIES AT THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

Many distinguished practitioners and academics have visited our Department to speak for our Policy and Practice Seminar Series, which take place every Thursday, in term time, at 5.30pm. Sir John Gieve, Jonathan Powell, Dame Nicola Brewer, Jack Straw, Professor Michael Jacobs, Nicola Sturgeon, Sir Stephen Wall, Lord Gus O’Donnell and many more have shared with our students and public their time and expertise in their fields, such as diplomacy, EU issues, world politics, parliamentary development, special advisers, terrorism, election coverage, global governance, environmental policies, public policy and more. The attendance and enthusiasm with which the audience receive the talks is always enjoyable and together it is a grand way to lead to this year’s series.

The events are open to the public and they will be taking place every Thursday between 5.30pm – 7pm in Anatomy G29 JZ Young Lecture Theatre, starting from the 8th of October.

You can find the schedule of series by visiting our website at: www.ucl.ac.uk/spp/seminars or checking our online registration page at: www.uclsppeventbrite.com

You can also stay up-to-date with all the SPP news and upcoming events; follow our Twitter account at: www.twitter.com/uclsppe and like our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/ucl.politicalscience
DEPARTMENT WELCOMES INAUGURAL PPE STUDENTS

Dr Tim Hicks, BSc PPE Programme Director, writes:

This September, the Department will welcome its first cohort of BSc in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) students. The event promises to be an important point in the educational careers of the thirty or so new students who will be joining us. However, it will also mark a milestone for the Department as we finally have our ‘own’ undergraduate students. While we already have a thriving affiliate student programme and contribute important parts of the BA programme in European Social & Political Studies (ESPS), until this point, the Department has not provided the lead for any fully-fledged undergraduate programme. That changes this year.

PPE as a degree has a strong tradition in the UK and has proved to be a highly successful undergraduate offering. Indeed, so prominent are PPE graduates in public life that one can sometimes be led to wonder whether more ‘PPE-ists’ are what we all need. Clearly, we strongly believe that a PPE programme has a great deal to offer both those who study it and those who then benefit from the intellectual creativity and analytical skills that such graduates possess. Old as it is, though, we are also firmly of the view that we can improve the PPE model, making the UCL offering innovative and distinctive.

So what is distinctive about PPE at UCL? Our starting point was precisely the observation that PPE-ists have been so prominent in public life. If this is an important destination for such graduates, then they should surely be equipped with specialist expertise in public policy. Of course, this is an area that the Department is particularly well-placed to teach in; being born out of the UCL School of Public Policy so our students will study the policy process, itself – and therefore how to use it effectively. They will also have the opportunity to study how to conduct policy evaluations – and so to learn how to learn what works.

A second distinctive feature of our programme is a focus on research methods. Sometimes thought of as dry and abstract, they actually hold the key to empowering students to go out and generate new knowledge for themselves. “Give a person a fish...”, as they say. In keeping with the broad tradition of the Department, our methods offerings will be pluralistic. However, we have the notable advantage of being able to take advantage of the in-house Q-Step Centre (directed by Jennifer Hudson), which will provide a full quantitative methods curriculum for students wishing to specialise in this ever-growing area.

Of course, a PPE degree is a multi-disciplinary endeavour and the Department has not been alone in developing the programme. It is our good fortune to have been able to partner with UCL Philosophy and UCL Economics in the provision of the degree. Both have enviable reputations as leading departments in their fields, with the latter recently confirmed as producing the finest economics research in the country. In many ways, then, we are able to ride on the coat-tails of the highly successful undergraduate offerings of our partners – to the great advantage of our incoming students.

At the time of writing, we (and A-level students across the country!) await the exam results that will confirm university places through the UCAS system so I cannot say exactly who will make up the inaugural cohort of PPE students at UCL. However, I can say that they will be an exceptionally talented group of people. The competition for each of the 30 or so places was so fierce that we were able to limit offers to only those who showed both outstanding academic promise and an incorrigible intellectual curiosity for the social sciences. We will be very lucky to have them.

Employer demand for PPE graduates appears to be stronger than we had first thought!
EU STUDY TRIP

Robin Maus, 2014-15 MSc European Public Policy student writes:

To learn more about the everyday work and dynamics of the European Union is the goal of the annual study trip of the European Public Policy Programme to Brussels. However, travelling to Europe’s capital with a busy schedule comes at a price: Having to catch the first Eurostar from London at 6:50 in the morning! That did not discourage a group of EPP students from this interesting opportunity to meet and exchange with practitioners and UCL alumni. Together with the Programme Director Dr Christine Reh, who kindly organised this trip and invited the guest speakers, they embarked the train to Brussels.

After arriving, we quickly made our way to the Commission’s “Europe Info Europa” visitor centre next to the Berlaymont. Our first speaker was Agnieszka Sternik from the Commission DG Migration and Home Affairs. She presented the Commission’s efforts in coordinating the member states’ migration policies and the challenges of reaching agreements, especially in regard to asylum policies. The presentation showed the struggle between humanitarian necessities of a united Europe and what is deemed politically feasible in each member state.

Pierpaolo Settembri from the Commission’s General Secretariat gave us an introduction to his work in the preparations of the G7/8 summits and the EU’s role in these meetings of the world leaders. It became clear that the EU is a welcomed guest and partner there since it represents many economically important countries that would otherwise not be part of the Group. He also gave very interesting insights into his everyday work, preparing policy briefs and memos for top decision-makers and the different challenges he and his team face from day to day.

The third speaker on the first half of the day was Aoife Houlihan, Director at Kreab, a Swedish public affairs consultancy with an office in Brussels. Aoife presented her work in consulting European companies on the possible impact of new EU legislative proposals on their businesses. Many companies do not pay attention to European legislation but sometimes new classifications or regulative demands can have a huge impact on their performance. Aoife also elaborated on the difficulties public affairs consultancies face due to their need for information and the increasing demand for transparency in lobbying. After these three very stimulating talks the group dispersed to have lunch and walk around the European Quarter of Brussels.

We reconvened at the European Parliament where Richard Freedman gave us a general introduction on the work of the Parliament and its decision-making process. As part of his presentation we also visited the plenary which was a welcomed opportunity for souvenir photos, in front of the European flags.

Later we were joined by Felix Lutz from the Parliament’s International Trade Committee Secretariat. He presented the Parliament’s involvement in the TTIP negotiation process and his role in the Trade Committee.

After the talks the group decided to discuss the newly collected knowledge over a glass of Belgian beer at Place de Luxembourg. Here we met the alumni from the European Public Policy Programme who work and live in Brussels. It was very interesting to see the different career paths they chose and nice to chat with them about what opportunities Brussels has to offer.

With a few of us staying overnight, we were able to enjoy another day in this beautiful city – visiting the city centre of Brussels, the Modern Art Museum, the Magritte Museum – before going back to London with amazing memories. This trip turned out to be not only a great opportunity to see first-hand what we have been learning throughout the year, it turned out to be much more than that – an intense two days that allowed us to discover a brilliant city, its institutions and its beautiful museums but also a great moment to make great contacts with past students and ever-lasting friendships with our classmates.
Dr Jennifer Hudson appeared on Channel 4’s Alternative Election Night coverage alongside Jeremy Paxman, Cathy Newman, David Mitchell and Gary Gibbon, amongst others, to talk about the composition of the new Parliament and the unexpected election results following the vote on 7 May. With pre-election polls showing a hung parliament, few—if any—predicted a Conservative majority and the loss of many high-profile MPs: Ed Balls, Shadow Chancellor; Douglas Alexander, Shadow Foreign Secretary; Vince Cable, Secretary of State Business, Innovation and Skills; and Danny Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

The Parliamentary Candidates UK project (www.parliamentarycandidates.org), funded by the Leverhulme Trust, examines the socio-demographic and electoral profile of parliamentary candidates and provides comprehensive coverage of who is selected and elected. Dr Hudson’s (Principal Investigator) and Dr Rosie Campbell’s (Birkbeck, co-Investigator) research was commissioned by Channel 4 to answer the question: “How representative are our representatives?” Working with the production team, the PCUK data was linked to the Press Association’s so as each constituency was called, we were able to provide a contemporaneous profile of the new parliament in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, educational and occupational background. Channel 4’s programme reached seven million viewers during its time on air.

Data from the PCUK project generated significant media interest throughout the election campaign, with appearances on Good Morning Britain, BBC News, The World this Weekend, Sky News and coverage in print in The Telegraph, Guardian, Financial Times and Evening Standard. The project was made possible by the whole PCUK team, especially Dr Chrysa Lamprinakou, Marco Morucci and the superb PCUK interns.

On 17 June 2015, students from the MSc in Democracy and Comparative Politics programme attended the Mayor’s Question Time at the London Assembly.

During the Question Time, which happens ten times per year, Mayor Boris Johnson is quizzed by the elected London Assembly members. It is during these sessions that the Mayor is held to account by the Assembly and the sessions are open to the public.

The London Assembly itself is a fascinating unique example of devolved local government in the UK and was established in just 2000. It has a mixed election system, with members elected from constituencies as well as by cross-Londo party lists. In contrast to previous sessions attended by MSc students, this year’s discussion was quite tame, likely due to the UK General Election results a month before. However, as always students did get a scoop on current issues such as the commencement of the night tube and fears that the noise of it might be “rattling the teacups” of some unfortunate Londoners living in its proximity.

Following the Assembly visit, the students gathered at a pub by the River Thames for a lunch with tutors James Dawson and Sherrill Stroschein, hosted by the Department.
20 years on and changes ahead for the Constitution Unit

The Constitution Unit is the Department’s largest and longest established research centre. This year it reached two important milestones: 20 years since its original foundation in 1995 and the retirement of its founding director Professor Robert Hazell from full-time academic life. In autumn 2015 Professor Meg Russell, formerly the Unit’s Deputy Director assumes the role of Director. At the same time Dr Alan Renwick, who joins UCL from the University of Reading, takes over as Deputy Director.

The Unit’s 20th anniversary was marked at an event at UCL on 23 June, with various high-profile speakers from both the academic and policy worlds looking back at its considerable contributions. This balance reflected the Unit’s strong ethos of quality academic research with real-world application. Professor Vernon Bogdanor (King’s) gave the keynote address, reflecting on 20 years of constitutional change in the UK. Professor Charlie Jeffery (Edinburgh) reviewed the Unit’s work on territorial politics and devolution and other speakers included UCL’s Professor Dawn Oliver, on human rights and the judges and Peter Riddell of the Institute for Government on Whitehall - particularly noting Robert Hazell’s influence over plans for coalition government in 2010. Respondents included Chair of the Electoral Commission Jenny Watson and former Lord Speaker Baroness Hayman.

A series of posts summarising the presentations appeared on the Constitution Unit blog over the summer. The Unit’s achievements were also marked by an interview with Robert Hazell on Radio 4’s Westminster Hour on 2 August. Links to both, and to more photographs of the event, are available [here](#).

While the Constitution Unit has an impressive past, it also has a bright future. Meg Russell is well known for her work on the British parliament and parliaments comparatively. She is also a strong advocate of impact in academic research (as reflected in her inaugural lecture [here](#)) and regularly appears in the media (e.g. [here](#)).

Alan Renwick brings expertise in electoral systems and referendums, and is partner on a new ESRC-funded project piloting options for a citizen-led constitutional convention for the UK. The Unit’s Dr Jennifer Hudson is researching parliamentary candidates and the evolution of the UK political class. As well as publishing from these projects, the team is building up a network of Unit Fellows and Associates, in fields such as devolution and human rights and will continue with a lively events programme. You can keep in touch with the Unit through its Twitter feed (@ConUnit_UCL), website, blog and newsletter, the Monitor.
Devolution and the future of the union

Just before the election the Constitution Unit published a report charting the future of the union in the light of the rapid changes in devolution planned by the new government. Their cumulative impact could radically change the nature of the political, economic and social unions which underpin the UK. The report warns that – without intending it – these changes could render the union ungovernable or lead to its break up as a state.

The nature and functions of the union have been taken for granted. They need to be spelt out. The economic union provides the UK with a single market, with a single currency and strong central fiscal regime. The social union provides the social solidarity which binds the UK together, by redistributing revenue and pooling and sharing risk through welfare benefits and pensions. In the political union, every part of the UK is represented in the Westminster parliament, which manages the economic and social unions and as the sovereign parliament can itself reshape the political union.

In forecasting further devolution, the report posits three models, labelled Devo More, Devo Even More and Devo Max. The status quo is called Devo More because it includes the big commitments already made to further devolution. Devo Even More would add further big taxes, such as corporation tax and employers’ national insurance. Devo Max, also known as full fiscal autonomy, would allow the Scottish Parliament to set and collect all taxes in Scotland, remitting a portion to the UK for shared UK services.

Devo Max would carry big financial risks for Scotland. Its own revenues would be inadequate, requiring cuts of £7-8 billion a year, with significant multiplier effects. It would not have any attraction for Wales and Northern Ireland, given their structural fiscal deficits. Nor would it have benefits for the UK. The UK government would continue to bear risks for currency and monetary policy without control over fiscal policy in Scotland. The report concludes that Devo Max could not be a stable settlement but is likely to be a staging post to Scottish independence.
Magna Carta and Its Modern Legacy

In June, Magna Carta (1215) celebrated its 800th birthday. The Great Charter is one of the oldest in force legal documents in the world, as four lines from the original charter are still on the statute books in the United Kingdom. More importantly, Magna Carta has become a symbol of limited government that is recognised all over the world. However, when celebrating the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta’s birth, one should not forget about the 800th anniversary of its death on 24 August 2015. Magna Carta (2015) died when it was annulled by Pope Innocent III, just two months and nine days after it was sealed. The Great Charter was subsequently amended and reissued in 1216, 1217, 1225 and 1297 but its early death serves as a reminder that, in 1215, Magna Carta was a failure. It was completely ignored by King John and ultimately, led England into the very civil war which it was meant to prevent.

In our new volume, Magna Carta and Its Modern Legacy, Robert Hazell and James Melton have put together a collection of essays that both commemorate Magna Carta’s 800 year history and provide a balanced assessment of the Great Charter’s legacy. The volume is divided into three sections: 1) Magna Carta’s influence in the UK, 2) its influence abroad and 3) 21st century reflection on Magna Carta. While the scholars who have contributed to the volume all recognise the symbolic importance of Magna Carta, they all also realise that many of the claims made about Magna Carta are grossly exaggerated. As a result, the account of Magna Carta told by their chapters is more realistic than the account told by many commentators. Instead of unbridled enthusiasm for the Great Charter, contributors recognise that its influence has not been wholly positive.

The theme which emerges from these chapters is that the Great Charter’s story is complicated. On the one hand, Magna Carta provides hope that citizens can rise up against an oppressive executive. On the other hand, it has frequently been ignored by numerous English Monarchs and sometimes even used to justify egregious human rights abuses so at this monumental time in Magna Carta’s history, one should not only celebrate Magna Carta’s birth but also its death. Its death is important because it serves as a reminder that parchment alone is insufficient to constrain executive authority. It was not sufficient in 1215, when King John ignored the promises he made upon sealing Magna Carta and by itself, parchment remains unlikely to serve as such a constraint in 2015.

Magna Carta and Its Modern Legacy is published by Cambridge University Press.
PhD PROGRAMME NEWS

Dr Slava Mikhaylov, 2014–15 MPhil/PhD Programme Director reports:

Media Coverage of Research

Orlanda Ward’s research on gender and GE2015 coverage for Fawcett Society’s #viewsnotshoes campaign was covered by The Guardian (with Heather Savigny, Bournemouth, and Deirdre O’Neill, Huddersfield).

Christiane Andersen published an article on Indian politics in leading Danish newspaper Politiken (2015, 26 May).


Awards and Recognition

Christiane Andersen was named a 2015 Global India Fellow by the Global Forum for Indian Leadership, GFIL (http://gfil.org/who-we-are).

Christiane was also nominated in the PGTA categories at the UCLU Student Choice Awards + SPP teaching awards. She also qualified as an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Conference Presentations

Orlanda Ward presented a paper Figuring BAME women in politics at LSE’s Figures and Figurations conference. Orlanda also presented a paper Framing BAME female conservatives in 2010 and 2015 at the Oxford Re-Thinking Right Wing Women conference.

Matthew Godwin presented the paper, New Tricks for an Old Dog: QCA in Application to Diasporas and Host State Foreign Policy at the June workshop Migration, Diaspora & The Global South at SOAS.

Giulio Fornaroli presented a paper titled Why Reasonableness Cannot Be a Ground for Political Bindingess at the Warwick Graduate Conference in Legal and Political Theory on 21 February 2015.

Giulio Fornaroli presented a paper Reasonableness within Political Liberalism: Why It Cannot Serve as a Politically Binding Distinction at Pavia Graduate Conference in Political Philosophy (8–9 September 2015).

Training Workshops

Matthew Godwin attended the 2015 European Consortium on Political Research (ECPR) two-week methods workshop in Ljubljana, Slovenia for the modules on Qualitative Comparative Analysis.
**NEWS FROM THE RAPT CENTRE**

**RAPT Conference**

The RAPT Centre organised a major international conference on June 10–12. It brought together 28 prominent invited experts on the status and place of religion in contemporary liberal political philosophy.

**Four main themes discussed in the conference**

The first theme was the special status of religion in law and politics (discussed by George Letsas, Enzo Rossi, Cécile Laborde, Ronan McCrea, Andrew Koppelman, Micah Schwartman). Recent debates over the concept of religion in political theory have led to questions about the relevance of this concept in law and politics. Liberal political philosophers have argued that the special treatment of religion is not morally justified because it would amount to unfairly privileging religion over relevantly similar secular commitments but if religion is not the object of any particular political or legal protection, do we still need it as a concept in law and politics?

The second theme concerned the separation of religion and politics. There are two main domains in which liberals have tended to favour a special exclusion of religion, i.e. religious disestablishment and public justification. Concerning religious disestablishment, liberals have assumed that there should be a separation of state and church and that this had implications for the public expression of the state, including for symbolic expression (discussed by Sune Laegaard, Corey Brettschneider, Jean Cohen). Public justification commits liberals to a deeper kind of neutrality concerning the reasons provided to support state action and imposing restraints on political actors (discussed by Matthew Clayton, Saladin Meckled-Garcia, Matteo Bonotti, Cristina Lafont, Kevin Vallier).

Third, questions of religious freedom and religious exemptions were discussed (Peter Jones, Jonathan Seglow, Simon May, Alan Patten, Daniel Weinstock, Chiara Cordelli, Annabelle Lever, Daniel Statman): Should special protection be given to religious beliefs and practices? Should this protection be given to religion only? What does the protection of religious freedom mean? When should we, if ever, grant exemptions from generally applicable laws? Many liberals think that there is no normatively relevant distinction between religious convictions and non-religious convictions and therefore that giving a special treatment to religious convictions and not to relevantly similar secular convictions is morally unjustified. Another key problem for liberals is the tension between religious freedom and other liberal values: this tension means that the limits of religious freedom have to be identified.

The last theme was conscience, identity and toleration (discussed by Akeel Bilgrami, Kimberley Brownlee, Maeve Cooke, Emanuela Ceva, Rainer Forst, Chandran Kukathas). Because the definition and the use of the concept of religion in political philosophy have been questioned and criticised, other key liberal concepts that have often been associated with religion, such as conscience, identity and toleration, have been questioned as well. Liberal political philosophers now need to rethink these concepts: What is the appropriate object of toleration or protection that the liberal state should identify? How does it relate to religion? What are the limits of toleration? Should one tolerate the intolerant?

We have publications plans with Oxford University Press for a volume entitled *Religion in Liberal Political Philosophy*, gathering most of the papers presented at the RAPT Conference.
Lecture Series

After the successful 2013/14 Lecture Series on “Secularism and Religious Freedom,” this year’s Lecture Series focused on “Multidisciplinary Engagements with Religion.” We invited prominent international scholars in law, history, anthropology and sociology: Winnifred Fallers Sullivan (Indiana University Bloomington), Benjamin Kaplan (University College London), Maleiha Malik (King’s College London), James A. Beckford (University of Warwick), Tariq Modood (Bristol University), Linda Woodhead (Lancaster University) and Saba Mahmood (University of California, Berkeley).

Publications

The RAPT Centre is happy to announce the following publications:

Cécile Laborde

Lois Lee
Recognizing the Non-Religious: Reimagining the Secular, Oxford University Press.
This book examines the role of non-religious cultures in the world today and reconsiders concepts and theories of secularity, secularism, atheism and nonreligion itself.

Cécile Laborde
Liberalism’s Religion is under contract with Harvard University Press, publication expected in 2016.

Cécile Laborde and Jean Cohen (eds.)
Religion, Secularism and Constitutional Democracy, Columbia University Press, publication expected in 2016. This volume includes contributions from a range of international scholars, with chapters on public justification and liberal neutrality by RAPT members Laborde and Bardon.

François Guesnet, Cécile Laborde and Lois Lee (eds.)
Negotiating Religion, Ashgate, publication expected in 2015. It includes chapters by RAPT members Laborde and Lee, as well as three chapters by colleagues in the Department of Political Science: Saladín Meckled García 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.

Aurélia Bardon, Maria Birnbaum, Lois Lee and Kristina Stoeckl (ed.)
Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Religious Pluralism, European University Institute Working Book, publication expected in 2015. This book includes working papers that were presented at a workshop organised by RAPT and ReligioWest at the European University Institute in January 2015.

For a full list of our publications, see our website: www.ucl.ac.uk/religion-political-theory-centre/publications

If you want to be updated with news concerning RAPT events and publications, please email Aurélie (a.bardon@ucl.ac.uk) or Lois (lois.lee@ucl.ac.uk) to be added to the RAPT mailing list.
INTRODUCING: THE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE RESEARCH AND EVENTS TEAM

The Global Governance Research and Events Team (GGREAT) is a student-led interdisciplinary group focused on the promotion of student engagement with global governance and ethics issues, from both a policy and academic perspective. Launched in 2014 and affiliated to the UCL Global Governance Institute (GGI) based in the School of Public Policy, we have sought to bring together students from across the spectrum of UCL disciplines – including medicine, law, engineering, climate, political science and international relations – to explore the many facets of global governance with a focus on pressing issues of the day.

2014–15 has provided no shortage of global governance headlines: from Ebola, to the Sustainable Development Goals and of course, preparations for the Paris climate negotiations this December. Our intrepid team of ten has sought to bring global governance events to the attention of the UCL student community through a series of activities, including academic seminars, practitioner talks, film screenings and social events. We have had the privilege of hosting a series of renowned experts to provide their own fascinating inside take on the politics and practice of governing global public policy.

Our events programme this year kicked off with Resilience Manager for the UK National Health Service, Dr Chloe Sellwood, who provided a forensic insight into pandemic preparedness strategies within the UK National Health Service and its connection to international structures. In detailing potential impact scenarios of the Ebola crisis, as well as the actors and governance mechanisms dedicated to controlling and mitigating the effects of various infectious diseases worldwide, it was – perhaps in equal measures – alarming and reassuring.

We also shone a spotlight onto global financial governance, with an absorbing introduction to the dark underbelly of the globalisation enterprise in the form of illicit financial flows of major banks and the controlling influence of opaque international economic centres of power. We are grateful to Dr Shmuel Nili from Yale University for serving as our guide in a lively debate on the ethical controversies such activities throw up for “good” global economic governance.

Another highlight of the year was Dr Ilan Kelman, GGI Thematic Director for Global Environmental Sustainability, who led us in an interactive seminar on climate change and sustainability, examining the broad interdependency of environmental governance practices and the challenges and opportunities we face at this critical juncture. Drawing on his experience researching the impact of climate change on small island nations, Dr Kelman strikingly illustrated the complexity but also the absolute imperative that we overcome collective action problems on perhaps the most pressing global governance challenge of our age.

A core objective of GGREAT has been to provide a welcoming space and environment for students to come together and identify shared interests, potential for collaboration, as well as share ideas on future careers and opportunities in the field of global public policy. With the support of the GGI, we hosted a series of social gatherings throughout the year, ranging from informal meet-ups to practical seminars with UCL graduates and professionals working in a range of relevant sectors. We also organised a series of film nights, inviting discussion on global governance challenges (and possible solutions) to the issues raised in such provocative features as *The Brussels Business*, *Citizenfour*, *Sand Wars* and *Black Gold*.

Looking back on the year, it has been hugely rewarding to see our burgeoning global governance student network coalesce, drawing in diverse young professionals from across UCL with an interest in sharing ideas on the big questions which confront our generation. In these deeply uncertain times, we believe it is vital to highlight challenges facing global governance and to provide a space for meaningful discussion on what might be done to meet them. We hope that the groundwork we have laid will inspire the next global governance-inspired cohort of students to pick up the baton and take GGREAT to even greater heights!

GGREAT 2014–15 included Theo Aloff, Sam Applebee, Philippe Beck, Corina Campion, Isabel Diego, Sebastian Fonseca, Horatio Georgetown, Kristina Kashfullina, Cherie Koh and Andreas Schiff
Stephen Thomson and Mark Uhde provide the following Departmental IT update:

- Stephen Thomson and Mark Uhde are now part of a new team to provide IT support to many departments in the Faculties of Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences. The team will operate under the local but central model that was pioneered in SLMS several years ago. The new team will cover the following Departments: Anthropology, Archaeology, Political Sciences, History, History of Art, Institute of the Americas, English Language and Literature, European Social and Political Sciences, Greek and Latin, Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Information Studies, Philosophy and the School of European Languages, Culture and Society. Stephen and Mark will continue to be based in G.12, 29/30 Tavistock Sq.

- Currently we are moving unmanaged computers to be bound within the UCL domain. This will improve computer security and automate access to UCL IT Services.

- Staff WTS managed machines are based on Windows XP and this operating system is no longer supported by Microsoft. There is a UCL-wide initiative to upgrade all XP machines to Windows 7 and this is currently in progress within our Department. This change enables the future migration from legacy WTS systems to the replacement Enterprise Desktop@UCL Anywhere service.

- The Q-Step website at www.ucl.ac.uk/q-step has been redesigned using Indigo – the new content management system. One of the primary improvements is that the website will display correctly on mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets. We will soon begin the redesign of The Constitution Unit’s website using Indigo with a view to launching it in October.

- Currently, we are looking into the feasibility of changing The School of Public Policy’s URL to www.ucl.ac.uk/political-science. By removing the current acronym, ‘spp’, it would give a clearer, more understandable web address and could improve the School’s search engine results. We would also take this opportunity to redesign the School’s website using Indigo.
Klisman Murati, President, International Public Policy Review writes:

6.30am sharp I meet with Alex and Arina at St Pancras International, as the rest of our group trickle in and the questions and excitement begins. Is there time for a coffee says one – yes but stay close we are boarding soon. Where are the rest of them – says another. We get coffee and find the rest of the participants. Does everybody have their tickets I shout? YES! Ok great, let’s go!!

After the morning flurry of getting everybody together, checking off names, mini panics of the late comers and giving out of all the tickets, the first ever IPPR road trip is upon us. 40 students of UCL’s finest pack into coach 4 on the Eurostar to Brussels. This sounds like it’s going to be fun. We have a chance to gather ourselves, relax, share snacks and dissertation strategies. Lucky for some. Arina, Alex, George and I are going through the details of our itinerary for our visit to the European Parliament and the European Commission. We are about to visit what is probably the most discussed political project of Europe’s post-war history: the European Union. We had questions, thoughts, interests and were eagerly awaiting what the epicentre of European affairs had to offer. Did I mention this was all happening behind a backdrop of a 35 degree heatwave!

Two hours later we arrive in Brussels. For some it was nothing new, for others like myself it was the first time experiencing this beautiful city and I was soon to find out its reputation for chocolate and beer were founded on solid proof. Now, coordinating a group of 40 was not easy. Half of us managed to figure out the metro system and found our way to the hotel, we got refreshed and changed into our Sunday best and hit the road towards European Parliament. After a phone call or two we managed to meet up with the rest of the team, got some quick lunch and eagerly headed into the fully air conditioned European Parliament lobby where we were greeted by Richard Freedman.

Richard gave us an informative seminar about the inner workings of Parliament, the differences between the three main EU institutions. He also spoke on the Greek crisis and the recent discussions inside the Parliament on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, something we were eager to learn about in more detail.

We then headed up to the 4th floor and after admiring some art, we entered the parliamentary chamber where the 751 MEPs sit and where the EU’s 24 official languages are depicted through the interpreters’ booths. After more thoughtful conversation with Richard on the political groups, the voting procedures and the committees system, we were free to take quality photos with the European Parliament in the background for our LinkedIn profiles…obviously!

For the rest of the day we were free to explore Brussels and after allocating our rooms at the hotel, we hit the town. The cool evening breeze was definitely something to remember especially when you are with friends and surrounded by what seemed like unending boulevards of chocolate shops.

The next day after missing breakfast George, Leon and I met up with some of the others and went out in search for breakfast and found a spot right in the middle of town for a hearty brunch. After some chocolate shopping we were all on route to our final destination, the European Commission.

Little did we know that the Commission has over 75 buildings in Brussels alone. After our trek up and around the European neighbourhood we found the Commission’s building where once again we were greeted by wonderful staff and some amazing air con! The talk at the Commission focused on the role of this European institution in the decision-making process, complementing perfectly what we had learnt at the European Parliament a day earlier. To that end, Brussels bid us a bon voyage.

I would like to take this time to thank the European Parliament for funding this trip on the behalf of everyone from the IPPR. This was an excellent opportunity which allowed us to learn more about the functioning of the European institutions, see with our eyes where key EU decisions take place, and get a glimpse of the Brussels experience. I would also like to thank Arina and Alex for making all the arrangements for the visits and George for booking the hotel and to everybody who came. We hope you loved it and hope this trip marks the beginning of an IPPR tradition.

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POLITICAL THEORY EVENTS AT THE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE

During Spring 2015, the Department and the Global Governance Institute hosted two speaker events, under the GGI’s Global Justice and Equity research thematic

The Ethics of Global Philanthropy (March 30th, 2015)

This two hour speakers panel brought together leading academic experts and practitioners for a cross disciplinary discussion on the ethics of global philanthropy. The panel included Professor Rob Reich from Stanford University, who has published extensively on the ethics of philanthropy; Clare Matterson, the Director of Strategy at the Wellcome Trust and responsible for strategic planning and policy; and Andre Hellar Perache, head of Programmes Unit in Medicins sans Frontieres. The panel was organised and chaired by Dr Avia Pasternak.

The lively presentations and discussion that followed, covered ethical concerns that relate to the growing share of private global funds in development investment. Professor Reich suggested that the extensive tax exemptions that private global funds receive should grant democratic public the right to be more involved in their expenditure decisions. Clare Matterson discussed the work of the Wellcome Trust, and how it ensures transparency and accountability. Andre Hellar Perhace described the organisational structure of Medicin san Frontieres and what factors guide their decisions to send medical assistance to high-risk areas. A detailed description of the debate can be found here: http://journalista.co.uk/do-philanthropists-need-to-improve-their-pr

The changing Nature of Political Obligations (May 12th–13th, 2015)

This two day workshop, organised by Dr Emily McTernan and Dr Avia Pasternak, brought together political theorists and philosophers to discuss new trends in theories of political obligations.

Theories of political obligations traditionally focus on the relationship between citizens and their state but global integration (financial, institutional, legal) has created new challenges for our understandings of legitimate political authority. Citizens find themselves under the authority of bodies other than their own state; and states find themselves exerting power/authority over populations other than their own citizens. The workshop aimed to generate a discussion on the ways in which globalisation changes the nature and scope of political obligations and the new challenges it raises for our understanding of legitimate political authority.

The workshop included papers by some of the leading scholars in recent the philosophical literature on political obligations:

• Miriam Ronzoni (The University of Manchester) “The Demandingness of Coercion Theory”
• Laura Valenti (LSE) “When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do: Respect, Positive Norms, and the Authority of Law”
• John Horton (Keele University) “Associative Political Obligations and the Distributive Question”
• Margaret Moore (Queens University at Kingston) “Political Authority, Territorial rights and Associative obligations”
• Lea Ypi (LSE) “Political commitment and the value of partisanship”.
• George Klosko (University of Virginia) “Political Obligation, Democratic Authority, and Respect for the Law.”
• Ashwini Vasanthakumar (Oxford University) “The Problem of Dual Political Allegiance”
• David Lefkowitz (University of Richmond) “Democratic Authority and Global Governance”
• Gabriel Wollner (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) “On the Claims of Unjust Institutions: Reciprocity, Justice and Non-Compliance”.
• Emily McTernan (UCL) and Avia Pasternak (UCL) “In Defense of Political Rioting”.

The workshop attracted audience from various universities across the UK and included lively debates on the effects of global trends on theories of political obligations. It was funded by UCL’s Faculty for Social Sciences and supported by the Global Governance Institute.
Congratulations to Colin Provost, Cathy Elliott and Paolo Morini who won the Department’s Teaching Prize for the 2014/2015 academic year!

The Department awarded a prize for outstanding teaching in three categories: permanent staff, teaching fellows and teaching assistants. We used student nominations to identify potential candidates and the prize committee then selected the winners based on their course materials, teaching methods and module evaluations.

Many thanks to students and staff for supporting the selection process and congratulations to the winners!
NEW STAFF

The Department would like to welcome the following new staff:

Dr Lucy Barnes
Lecturer in Comparative Politics

I am delighted to be joining UCL in January as a Lecturer in Comparative Politics.

My research interests lie in comparative politics and political behaviour, with a regional focus on the advanced industrial democracies. I am particularly interested in tax policy and in that vein am working on three major projects. The first is a comparative project asking why some countries rely on more progressive tax systems than others. The second project, a collaboration with current SPP Lecturer Tim Hicks, centres on tax and fiscal policy responses to the Great Recession. Finally, in another collaborative project, I have been examining the impact of information about policy costs on individuals’ knowledge and preferences over the government budget.

I received my PhD in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University in 2010 and spent the intervening years as a Prize Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford. I will be coming to UCL from the University of Kent, where I have been a Lecturer in the Q-Step Centre for a little over a year so I am excited to see how that project is working here at UCL. As a graduate of Oxford’s PPE programme, I’m also keen to meet our new undergraduates in January.

Dr Christian Schuster
Lecturer in Public Management

I am very excited to be joining UCL in September 2015 as a Lecturer in Public Management on UCL’s new MPA in Public Administration and Management Programme.

Currently, I am a Fellow in Political Science and Public Policy in the Government Department of the London School of Economics. It is also at the LSE where I completed my PhD.

My research examines bureaucracies in developing countries, with a regional focus on Latin America. I am particularly interested in the causes, consequences and processes of ‘good governance’ reforms in highly politicised bureaucracies.

Methodologically, I draw on case comparisons, elite interviews, surveys and survey experiments in my work.

Previously, I was a World Bank Economist working on governance reforms in Central America and a Visiting Research Scholar at the Inter-American Development Bank. I look forward to bringing some of this hands-on experience with public management reforms to the classroom – and of course, to joining and learning from UCL’s exceptional set of scholars.
Mark Uhde
IT Support Administrator

Mark joined the School of Public Policy as IT Support Administrator in June 2015, coming from the University of Montana School of Journalism, where he served as Assistant Journalism Technology Director. His experience includes Windows configuration and deployment, Apple OS X support, IEEE 802.11 (Wi-Fi) network design and implementation, broadcast studio support, live event production technology, mobile device support, website maintenance, end-user support, hardware repair and helpdesk management. He is especially experienced in providing assistive technology and complying with accessibility legislation and best practices.

Mark recently completed his Masters of Business Administration degree and Entertainment Management certificate at the University of Montana whilst working there. Prior to this, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Education, also at the University of Montana. He is excited to bring this background to the School of Public Policy, where he will strive to assist in maintaining excellent IT support with first-call, same-day ticket resolution even as the Department experiences rapid growth.

Holly Huddart
Postgraduate Administrator
(EMPA/MPA)

I joined the School of Public Policy in June 2015 as the Postgraduate Administrator. I will be responsible for looking after the Masters of Public Administration and the Executive MPA in Global Public Policy and Management which the School of Public Policy runs jointly with NYU Wagner. Prior to this I was working at the University of Surrey as a Postgraduate Programmes Administrator for the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences and I have also worked at UCL’s Right’s and Advice Centre alongside doing my Master’s degree.

I graduated in 2010 with an MA in Russian Studies from the School of Slavonic & Eastern European Studies (UCL) and previous to this I read History at Royal Holloway. In the short time that I have been at the School of Public Policy, I am very much enjoying the challenge and hope to contribute positively to the Department’s success in the future.
When I started the MA Human Rights in 2009, I had already worked in human rights for several years. I started my career as a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. State Department, where I served in Baku, Azerbaijan and then briefly at the United Nations in New York, followed by an internship with ARTICLE 19, a London-based freedom of expression organisation. I decided to pursue a postgraduate degree to broaden and deepen my knowledge of the field.

About halfway through the course, ARTICLE 19 offered me a part-time staff position with their Europe Programme, working mostly on Azerbaijan. I accepted and spent a hectic six months juggling advocacy work with finishing up the degree. It was difficult at times but I enjoyed the balance between the more theoretical classwork and its practical application.

After completing the MA Human Rights, I continued working with ARTICLE 19 for another two years, eventually shifting from a staff position to consulting, which allowed me to take on some writing and other freelance work on the side. Most of my work with ARTICLE 19 centred on coordinating the International Partnership Group for Azerbaijan, a coalition of international organisations working to promote freedom of expression in Azerbaijan.

I moved back to Baku, Azerbaijan in June 2012, where I continued working with ARTICLE 19 for several more months before leaving to work directly with local human rights NGOs in Baku, primarily the Human Rights Club. In December 2012, I helped launch Art for Democracy, a vibrant and creative campaign that used all forms of art to promote democracy and human rights in Azerbaijan.

At the same time, the ruling Azerbaijani regime was becoming increasingly hostile and aggressive towards critical voices. Immediately after the launch of the Art for Democracy campaign, my Azerbaijani residence permit was illegally revoked, resulting in long periods of separation for my family. I have been unable to return to the country ever since but have continued my work campaigning for human rights in Azerbaijan from abroad.

In 2013 and 2014, I worked as the Advocacy Director of the Human Rights Club and published extensively on human rights issues in Azerbaijan for media outlets such as Al Jazeera English, Index on Censorship, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Foreign Policy Centre, a London-based think tank where I remain a Research Associate. I also became a frequent commentator on human rights issues in Azerbaijan on social media networks.

In August 2014, the Azerbaijani regime began what has proven to be the worst human rights crackdown to date. As a result, nearly everyone I worked with in the country has been jailed on political charges or forced to flee the country for safety. Human rights advocacy has become impossible within the country.

In light of this crackdown and the targeting of my closest Azerbaijani colleagues, this year I took on the role of Coordinator of the Sport for Rights campaign, a coalition of international organisations working to draw attention to the human rights situation in Azerbaijan in the context of sporting events such as the inaugural European Games, which was held in Baku in June. So far the campaign has been very successful, generating a huge amount of media coverage and even resulting in U2 lead singer Bono appealing on behalf of Azerbaijani political prisoners on stage in Montreal.

In truth, human rights work has been more difficult than I ever could have imagined. I have witnessed staggering injustice and seen far too many friends and colleagues targeted simply for telling the truth about the situation in their country. The impact on their lives and their families is devastating. I have also faced a certain degree of pressure...
myself, ranging from getting kicked out of the country to being harassed online and outrageously defamed in the pro-government press in Azerbaijan.

Although you certainly have to develop a thick skin, human rights work is always interesting to say the least, and even minor victories can be very rewarding. For my work in Azerbaijan, it has become largely about carrying on the legacy of my jailed colleagues – giving them a voice when they have been silenced for defending the rights of others targeted before them.

My studies at UCL have proven valuable so many times over the past five years, both on a practical level and more philosophically, firmly grounding my belief that human rights matter and are worth fighting for everywhere, for everyone. I will continue to draw from this experience in pursuing other areas of human rights work and perhaps even an eventual return to academia, as I believe there is a need for greater crossover between practitioners and academics in the field.

Isabelle Younane
MA Human Rights, 2013–14

For me, pursuing a Master’s degree in Human Rights at UCL was a crucial step towards my ideal career. Having studied English Literature as an undergraduate and worked for a year training to be a journalist in the south of France, I had the writing skills but not the level of expertise required to work in communications and editorial for a non-governmental organisation or perhaps, one day, for the United Nations.

Knowing that I wanted to combine my journalistic background with my interest in human rights, I tailored my MA degree to how the media interacts with human rights. My dissertation focused on media coverage of torture committed by US troops against Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib. Little did I know that six months later, I would be sitting opposite Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Chairman of the United Nations Association – UK, who was working as a UK Special Envoy to Iraq at the time of the Abu Ghraib scandal in 2004.

But even with an MA in Human Rights, elbowing my way into the third sector was not an easy task. I juggled my dissertation with two part-time internships, one at Save the Children, where I worked on their ‘Turn Up Save Lives’ campaign to enshrine in law the Government pledge to devote 0.7% of national income to overseas aid. The other was at Minority Rights Group International, where I assisted the Communications Officer in writing news articles for the website, placing articles in the press and conducting interviews with grassroots activists. It was an invaluable experience.

Alongside my studies and internships, I set up the UCL Human Rights Journal, an online platform that enabled Human Rights students to submit opinion articles about the plethora of human rights issues cropping up in current affairs. I also blogged for the Huffington Post on occasion, notably on ‘Killer robots’, the Channel 4 programme ‘Benefits Street’ and Russia’s takeover of Crimea.

But even with two degrees and two internships under my belt, a paid job was hard to come by. I signed up for a recruitment agency, Prospectus, which secured me a two-month contract at an alcohol and drug abuse charity. While it wasn’t my ideal first job, it paid well and it provided that all-important bridge between “intern” and “employee” that was, I believe, critical to my later employment as a Communications and Campaigns Assistant at the United Nations Association – UK.

My current job is everything that I could have wished for a year after completing my Master’s. Working for a small team means that I have the chance to work in a range of different areas: I manage the organisation’s social media channels and website and I work creatively on the 1 for 7 Billion campaign to improve the process by which the UN Secretary-General is selected. I am also the ‘media lead’ – I liaise with journalists and other NGOs to maximise the reach of our work and I am the online sub-editor of (and a contributor to) UNA-UK’s flagship publication, New World.

In summary, I can only emphasise that I do not believe I would have the varied, exciting job I have today if it wasn’t for my Master’s degree. But at the same time, job-hunting in the third sector is much like job-hunting anywhere else – you need to have practical, hands-on experience before someone hands you a pay cheque.
CLASS OF 2014–15

SPP Group of 2014–15

The Department would like to take this opportunity to wish our entire 2014-15 student cohort every success in their future careers and encourage students to keep in touch with the Department.

FUTURE EDITIONS OF TAVISTOCK TIMES.

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

Ideas for future articles should be sent to:
Helen Holt (h.holt@ucl.ac.uk)
before the end of October 2015

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

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