As I write this introduction at the start of December, I am struck by what a great success the first term has been. In September, we welcomed 400 Masters Students, 7 PhD students, 3 new members of faculty and 2 new visiting distinguished professors.

As the term has progressed we have hosted a number of high level policy debates, leading academics and student led events. I hope that all this activity has created a fun and intellectually dynamic environment for students and faculty to study in. As this issue of the Tavistock Times illustrates, we hope to maintain this activity with a number of high profile events and initiatives in 2013.

As has been reported in previous newsletters SPP is developing an exciting new Joint Executive MPA in Global Public Policy and Management with NYU Wagner. This is a unique and special degree intended to provide the edge needed by public service leaders to design and implement effective and sustainable policy in the face of unprecedented global and local challenges.

We are now delighted to report that the legal agreements between the two institutions have been signed off.

We were further able to develop this programme and the relationship with NYU when we had a delegation from NYU Wagner visit in early December. Tyra Liebman the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Administration, Katty Jones the Director of Program Services and Trena Drayton the Assistant Dean in Fiscal Operations and Human Resources joined us for discussions of joint regulations and curriculum.
but also had an opportunity to meet the Department and some of our PhD Students and discover a little of UCL. Through these discussions we will be able to put together the launch of the new website in January 2013 and a larger media release in March. It is also hoped that we will organise two high profile policy debates on globalisation and public policy in NY and London in 2013 with leading political figures. I hope I can tell you more on this in the next Tavistock Times.

Preparing for this growth in SPP we have made three new appointments for 2013/14 in Political Theory, Public Management and International Political Economy.

Ms Emily McTernan joins UCL in September 2013 as a Lecturer in Political Theory. Emily is completing a PhD in political philosophy at the University of Cambridge and is due to submit her thesis “Equality, Responsibility, and the Productive” in January 2013. She will join us from the Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method, at the London School of Economics and Political Science, where she is a fellow. Emily’s current research focuses on three debates: the scope of justice and whether it extends to choices made by individuals; the role of responsibility within an egalitarian theory of justice; and the relevance of empirical research to political philosophy.

Mr Marc Esteve joins UCL in September 2013 as a Lecturer in Public Management. Marc is currently a PhD candidate at the Institute for Public Governance and Management, ESADE Business School in Barcelona, Catalonia, due to complete in January 2013. Prior to joining us he has taught at both ESADE and Bocconi Business Schools. Marc’s main research interests are grounded in organisational psychology and uses organisational psychology to address problems in inter-organisational relations and networks. His research focuses on various aspects of cross-sector inter-organisational collaborations; the influence that the personal characteristics of managers have in the development and success of collaborations.

Mr Michael Plouffe joins UCL in September 2013 as a Lecturer in International Political Economy. Michael is completing his PhD with the Department of Political Science at the University of California, San Diego, with his thesis ‘The New Political Economy of Trade: Heterogeneous Firms and Trade Policy’. Michael’s research interest includes International political economy, firm heterogeneity and globalisation, business-government relations, diplomatic and economic networks.

On the 17th October, our original benefactor and to whom the SPP building is named – Stephen Rubin came to a small event and reception organised in his honour. It was a chance for him to be updated on our current research. Professor Peter John talked about the exciting research on public policy – especially on Nudge and regulatory reforms in the EU, Professor Neil Mitchell talked about the exciting work on Security Studies and Development being conducted in the department, Dr Meckled-Garcia discussed Human Rights issues and Professor Robert Hazel talked on developments in Constitutional affairs. It was an enjoyable event for all and it is now planned that we will hold a Rubin Seminar on “Global Impact” in his honour in June 2013.

As part of SPP’s on-going seminar series, we introduced some Policy in Practice seminars. We were fortunate enough to have Lord O’Donnell make the case for bureaucracy, Michael Jacobs and Duncan Brack both former advisers speaking on special advisers and their role in Government and Vijay Rangarajan the Director of Multilateral Policy of the Foreign Office talking on how international norms are generated and defined offering case studies on the responsibility of protecting freedoms. These seminars offerings were much appreciated by students and the faculty and we hope to do more of these events in the coming months with lectures from Jack Straw and Tony Wright.

There have also been other exciting events within the department including a Panel Discussion with Sir John Gieve, former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England; Lord Roger Liddle, Chair of the Board Policy Network; David Babbs, from The Economist and Dr Colin Provost from SPP on the Eurozone Crisis and the Democratic Deficit. This event was run in conjunction with The European Institute. The Department also contributed to the behavioural Science Month at UCL with talks and roundtables on behavioural politics, the centre piece of the series being Professor Peter John’s inaugural lecture on Nudge and Thinking Think. Professor Thomas Pogge from Yale University came and gave a seminar as part of our Political Theory Seminar series on the violation of Human Rights of the poor. We were very lucky to have many distinguished speakers from varied institutions as part of both our SPP seminar series and the Political Theory seminar series.

The School of Public Policy will continue to grow and develop through 2013 with many exciting events to look forward.
In this sixty second interview we quiz Dr Robert Jubb, Leverhulme Early Careers Fellow, Department of Political Science

What is your name?

Robert Jubb

When did you join UCL?

I came to the Department as a Teaching Fellow in September 2009 and I have had my current position, as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, since October 2011.

What are your responsibilities in the Department?

I’m actually in the fortunate position of having fairly few responsibilities! My position is research-focused so although I have some teaching responsibilities – I’m convening an MA course, Republicanism and Liberalism, this year – really I’m supposed to be getting my head down and working on the research project the Leverhulme Trust and UCL were generous enough to fund.

I told them I’d write a book manuscript about how our duties of justice change when some people behave unjustly so I guess getting that done is really my main responsibility.

What do you particularly like and dislike about your job?

The obvious attraction of my position is the freedom and security the three years of the Fellowship give me but there are plenty of other things I like about being at UCL. For one thing, I enjoy being part of a community of smart and interesting political theorists – not just the faculty but the students too. It’s often a real pleasure teaching here because of that – even if teaching does typically also mean marking, which can be a bit of a chore. I grew up in London as well so one of the things I like about being at UCL is being able to live and work in my home city. To be honest, there’s actually very little that I don’t think’s pretty great about my position: if I could keep it forever, I would.

What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?

Professionally, I think the work I did to get my current position, which involved developing some ideas I had during my doctorate, publishing them, drawing out an implication for further research and then writing a research proposal capable of convincing both the Department and the Leverhulme Trust to fund that research is probably the most impressive thing I’ve done so far. I’m hopeful, though, that what I’m doing now, the work they’re funding, will be even better once it’s finished.

Most inspirational person that you have met whilst at UCL?

I keep being amazed by the range of things that students have done or are doing. The first year I was here, I supervised a student’s dissertation which, as well as being better than anything I could have done at an equivalent stage of my career, was apparently written whilst working more or less full-time at a charity working with socially excluded young people. The most impressive student I’ve come across though was I think a seriously disabled young man who took one of the courses I taught the year before last. Just being there was, for him, a struggle unlike anything I’ve ever managed.

Favourite location in UCL?

Although it’s not strictly in UCL, I really like Gordon Square – in the summer at least. Sitting on the grass in the sun, when we get it, with a book or some friends is one of those simple little pleasures it’s nonetheless important to take when you have the chance.

What would your ideal afternoon/evening in London include?

A leisurely stroll around one of the quieter, older areas just outside the centre – Barnsbury, Little Venice, Clapham Old Town – perhaps stopping in a park for a bit, then a couple of pints before dinner and probably increasingly less sedate drinks with friends.

What is your favourite book?

The book I probably open the most often is John Rawls’ A Theory of Justice but I think my favourite is probably a historical novel for children I read when I was a boy, Rosemary Sutcliff’s Bonnie Dundee. Part of that’s because I read (and re-read) it when I was a child but I think – or at least hope – it’s not only that. It’s about a young man who gets drawn into the political and religious unrest in Scotland in the late 17th century and apart from being unobtrusively well-written, has quite a powerful take on what’s come to be something of a theme in my work, the interactions and tensions between the personal and the political.

What are your hobbies?

About the only remotely organised thing I do outside of work is play football, mostly pretty badly, in Regent’s Park on a Sunday afternoon. Of course I go to the cinema and exhibitions and so on but how could you not in London?

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

I feel a bit like I ended up in academia because I didn’t really like the idea of doing anything else – being paid to sit around and read and think about things and from time to time, talk to other people about what you’ve been reading, always seemed pretty attractive to me – so it’s a bit hard to say what else I might have done. I did give fairly serious thought to becoming a schoolteacher when I was an undergraduate – I was lucky enough to have a very inspiring history teacher the last two years of secondary school – so I suppose that was the alternative.

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

I think the policy there is most obviously a case for in the UK is a move to a more proportional voting system. Apart from anything else, it’s a travesty, particularly in what’s now no longer a two party system, that a system where it’s never been a requirement for a parliamentary majority that you win a majority of the popular vote – no one party has won the popular vote since 1945 – claims to work on the principle of one person, one vote. At the last election, it took nearly 120,000 votes to elect each Liberal Democrat MP and around 35,000 to elect each Conservative. It gets even worse if you look at smaller parties. The Greens needed more than 250,000 votes for one MP and the Democrat Unionists got eight for less than 170,000. If everyone’s vote really counts equally, how is that possible?
EU NEGOTIATION MOOT

Chrysi Kalfa,
2012-13, MSc European Public Policy student, writes:

This year’s EU Negotiation Moot took place at Europe House in London on 02 November 2012. The game was organised by the European Parliament, under the supervision and care of Gergely Polner, head of outreach for European Parliament in UK and Claudia Trauffler Carro, intern at the European Parliament in UK.

Along with 14 other students drawn from UCL’s MSc European Public Policy (EPP) and MSc International Public Policy (IPP) programmes, I took on the role of a European politician for a day. Like my fellow competitors, I was keen to learn more about the legislative process of the European Union and how deals are cut in the Parliament. Our challenge was to debate the Commission’s proposal on implementing a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) across the EU’s 27 Member States.

In the weeks leading up to the simulation each competitor was assigned a role, either as a Commission official, delegate from the Council Presidency (currently Cyprus) or as a Member of European Parliament (MEP). For those of us who were MEPs, this meant being allocated a party and nationality, researching the real-life respective positions and likely arguments for debate.

At an introductory meeting we were introduced to the rules, tasks and our roles. Identifying our collation partners, teams were able to introduce themselves and could start the process of consolidating strategies which took place in the following week in small cafes, common rooms and online social networking sites. At that phase the groups appointed roles and elected coordinators for the Economic and Monetary Affairs committee (ECON) and nominees for the chair of Presidency and the Rapporteur, the MEP responsible for drafting the legislative report.

At the training day at Europe House we were provided with arguments against and in favour of the FTT, as well as techniques for achieving successful negotiation outcomes.

The simulation day kicked-off with a trilogue, formed by the Rapporteur, the political group coordinators, the members of the Commission and the Council. This was held in order to search for compromise between the political parties in Parliament and the EU Member States represented by the
Cypriot Presidency. The Rapporteur presented her report and the debating began in Committee. All of this took place under the watchful gaze of the judging panel, comprised of the European Parliament’s staff, academics from the LSE, University of Westminster and UCL’s own Dr Christine Reh.

After a variety of arguments, pleas and diatribes persuasively conveying the interests of all sides, a break for lunch and reflection gave some time for the Rapporteur to update the report whilst the other MEPs tried to cut deals on their proposed amendments.

A second trialogue was held and it was becoming clear that there was a majority of support forming in favour of the Commission’s proposal - despite strong opposition from Council Presidency, representing the collective view of a divided Council. In the end it appeared that a consensus had been reached but due to a misunderstanding in the trialogue caused by the Commission’s scheme strategy, MEPs were presented by two contradictory amendments concerning where and on what percentage the FTT revenues should be distributed.

The problem had to be settled between the three main political groups in favour of the FTT – the European People’s Party (EPP), the Social Democrats (S&D) and the Greens. A compromise solution was agreed and negotiated amendments were passed by a majority in the Committee vote.

The subsequent plenary session provided a final opportunity for political grand-standing by MEPs but the final vote reflected the outcome of the Committee’s earlier vote and the Parliament supported the FTT proposal.

With the game completed, all that remained was for the judges to decide which individual performances were worthy of recognition. The level of the debate was so high that the judges couldn’t reach a decision for a long time. After prolonged deliberation the verdict was presented, along with compliments to all participants, a valuable reality-check and insights from the judges.

The first three prizes were awarded accordingly to Nick O’Hara, an EPP student from UCL, Laura Serres, an IPP student from UCL and Lorraine Harbison, a student from Westminster University.

In the end, perhaps the highlight of the day was the speech given by Frederick Wong, playing the role of a European parliamentary member of the European Freedom and Democracy party (EFD). Frederick played the role of Nigel Farage, invoking the spirit of Thatcher. Whilst he lost the debate, he ensured that he went down in theatrical style.

Speaking of theatrical style, UCL student Rishi Patel passionately played a rather convincing Green MEP with a late plenary flourish.
On 8 November, I received the British Academy’s Serena Medal for 2012 at a ceremony for this year’s award winners held at the Academy’s offices in London. The medal was endowed by Arthur Serena in 1919 to mark Great Britain’s alliance with Italy in the First World War and is awarded annually for ‘eminent services towards the furtherance of the study of Italian history, literature, art or economics’. Little is known about Arthur Serena beyond the fact that he was a Venetian shipping and insurance broker and son of the Venetian patriot Leone Serena – not even his date of birth. However, he also endowed the Chairs of Italian at Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester at around the same time.

The award surprised as much as it pleased me. Like the other British Academy awards and prizes, the decision is made by a specialist committee and the recipient is not even aware of being considered. Though my fellow awardees at the ceremony all seemed to be not simply Professors but Knights of the Realm (the economist Sir John Vickers), Lords (Lord Richard Harris, the former Bishop of Oxford), Dames (the social anthropologist Dame Marilyn Strathern) or at the very least Commanders (UCL’s new recruit as Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies, Lisa Jardine CBE), it was reassuring as a somewhat overwhelmed mere commoner that even such practised speakers as Professor Jardine felt at a loss for words. It was a touching event and I felt very honoured to be a part of it.

Former recipients of the Serena Medal are a dauntingly distinguished collection of Italianists, ranging from the philosopher and historian who was the subject of my PhD thesis, Benedetto Croce (in 1927), to the Princeton art historian Patricia Fortini Brown (2011). Many influenced me in various ways: some through their work, such as the historian of Italian philosophy Eugenio Garin and the translator William Weaver; others, like Croce, were the objects of my research, such as Gaetano Salvemini, many did so personally, such as Franco Venturi, who helped with my early forays into the Italian Enlightenment with introductions to other scholars and advice; the contemporary historians of Italy Paul Ginsborg, who was a former supervisor of mine at Cambridge and Denis Mack Smith, who gave me his Croce library – many personal gifts from the philosopher. All the previous UCL recipients have been Professors
of Italian and for the most part experts on renaissance poetry or history and include Edward Gardner, an early recipient in 1922, the historian of Venice Sir John Hale in 1986 and most recently, in 2010, Emeritus Professor Laura Lepschy, who, among other writings, co-authored with her husband Giulio – another recipient of the award - the book prized by all undergraduate students of Italian everywhere, The Italian Language Today.

Compared to these, my own services to Italian studies seem slight. My career as an Italianist belongs to my back catalogue as it were and relates to my post-doctoral and doctoral research of 20-30 years ago which led to my books on Modern Italian Social Theory: Ideology and Politics from Pareto to the Present (Polity and Stanford University Press, 1987) and (with Darrow Schecter) Gramsci and the Italian State (Manchester University Press 1993), scholarly editions of Norberto Bobbio’s The Future of Democracy and Which Socialism? (both Polity, 1987) and of Gramsci’s Pre-Prison Writings (CUP, 1994) and Cesare Beccaria’s On Crimes and Punishments (CUP, 1995), as well as the Italian sections of my Liberalism and Modern Society: An Historical Argument (Polity and Penn State University Press, 1992). Along with various articles and book chapters, fifteen of which ECPR Press are to publish next year as Croce, Gramsci, Bobbio and the Italian Political Tradition, that is the sum of my Italian output. At one stage I had an ambition to write a history of Italian political thought from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, which in its way would also have been a history of the modern state seen through the Italian mirror but I got diverted into more contemporary issues and projects.

Perhaps the work I am proudest of is my edition of Beccaria. The eighteenth century English translation of Beccaria is credited as the origin of Bentham’s phrase ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’ but that is in fact a mistranslation - one of many errors introduced by the French translator of this work that subsequent translators repeated, not just in French but in English and German editions of the work and that prompted famous – but in the event misplaced – critiques by Kant and Hegel as well as Bentham. So my edition revealed Beccaria’s argument to be rather more complex and coherent than had been thought. Given the unfortunate continued practice of the death penalty and torture by even liberal democracies, it is sadly all too relevant to have demonstrated that Beccaria’s arguments against both are somewhat stronger than many have supposed. If I have largely left the field of Italian studies, therefore, I am pleased that my past work retains some value, not least in illuminating the thinking of the philosopher who provided the inspiration behind UCL.

Further information on the Serena Medal can be found at: www.britac.ac.uk/about/medals/Serena_Medal.cfm

THE SPIDER KING’S DAUGHTER

One of our students, Imachibundu Oluwadara Onuzo, has been short listed for the Dylan Thomas Prize for her novel The Spider King’s Daughter.

Imachibundu grew up in Lagos, Nigeria as the youngest of four children to doctor parents. After receiving a first in History from King’s College, London in July 2012, she is currently doing an MSc in Public Policy at UCL.

This is a prize for writers writing in English who are under 30. It has also been long listed for the Desmond Elliott Prize for debut novelists. Her work has been highlighted in The Telegraph, which described the book as “a modern-day Romeo and Juliet set against the backdrop of a changing Lagos”.

Further information on the Serena Medal can be found at: www.britac.ac.uk/about/medals/Serena_Medal.cfm
On 06 November 2012, American voters went to the polls (and others mailed in their absentee ballots) to select who would lead the United States for the next four years. President Obama secured re-election by a comfortable margin, winning the Electoral College, 332–206, although the popular vote was closer, indicating that Obama had won by just over three percent.

With President Obama still in the White House, we have a much better idea of how the nation’s major problems, including the economy, the national debt, health care and financial regulation, will be tackled over the next four years. However, this election did present stark choices and different proposed policy directions from the two candidates, as a Romney presidency would have looked quite different from a continued Obama presidency.

On 31 October 2012, members of staff talked to students about how exactly the two presidencies would differ. Iwan Morgan from the UCL Institute of the Americas joined SPP staff Jennifer Hudson, Colin Provost and Albert Weale to each address some of the more salient policy topics under discussion in the election season. Economic policy and health care, topics discussed by Professors Morgan and Weale, were central to the differences between the two administrations. Professor Morgan discussed the twin goals of trying to further boost the American economy, while also trying to bring the budget deficit under control. He indicated that a Romney presidency might not succeed in bringing down the deficit, as it planned to further cut taxes and would face political obstacles in generating equivalent spending cuts. Neither, however, was he greatly optimistic about President Obama’s prospects, given that he would most likely face another Republican majority in the House of Representatives. Thus, the balance of power would prevent either party from enacting too bold a platform of fiscal policy.

In order to reduce the deficit what programmes would be cut? Professor Weale addressed the important topic of public healthcare in the U.S. and how it figures into the debate on public spending. In particular, the government programme of Medicare has seen continued rising costs, yet its popularity among the key demographic of retired persons means that attempted reform of the programme can be very damaging to political careers. Romney’s vice presidential running mate, Paul Ryan, had wanted to eventually replace Medicare with a system of vouchers that would allow citizens to choose different private care options but as Professor Weale indicated, competition in health care markets does not always produce clear benefits. Thus, while the plan was expected to generate some savings, it was less clear what the longer run benefits would be. Finally and in retrospect now, many observers blame the team’s Medicare reform ideas for losing the senior citizen-heavy swing state of Florida.

How would either administration prevent another financial crisis from occurring? Colin Provost addressed this topic, as he talked about how bank regulation would continue under either presidency. There have been plenty of complaints from banks about the new Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act, which, with its hundreds of pages of text, is said only to be a boon to lawyers. However, newly created agencies – the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Financial Stability Oversight Board – would, under President Obama combine to have a better sense of overall risk in the financial system, thereby making another crisis less likely. Provost indicated that Romney, who had favoured a complete repeal of Dodd-Frank, would not command the necessary congressional majorities to repeal the law but would instead nominate agency appointees who would apply significantly lighter regulatory touches to the financial system.
Finally, Jennifer Hudson addressed the issues of finance and tone in the campaigns leading up to the election. Hudson indicated that large amounts of money had been spent in this election season, continuing a trend from previous elections but this characteristic of American elections was not likely to go away anytime soon, as the principle of using money as speech was codified by the Supreme Court in its 2010 “Citizens United” decision. Under the decision, independent groups, such as corporations and unions, can now spend unlimited amounts of money endorsing the candidates of their choice and as a result, spending on campaigns is only likely to increase over time, something that will happen regardless of who is in power. Additionally, Dr Hudson stated that this was one of the most negative campaigns in recent memory as well, a point perhaps reinforced by the large sums of independent advertising money being spent.

In summary, the election presented a diverging set of policy choices and while avoiding any particular talk of election mandates, voters re-elected President Obama. Talk of repealing Obama’s health care reform and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act will now be put to rest but the economic challenges facing the president are still enormous. The pressure to keep job numbers in the right direction will be substantial but then again so will pressure from House Republicans about reducing the deficit. It will be this pressure in particular that prevents Obama from increasing spending dramatically, thereby potentially affecting the economic recovery. Additionally, Republicans in both houses of Congress will expect the president to address the rising costs of Medicare and other entitlement programs as well. It will be an exciting few years and there will be plenty to discuss, until we from SPP reconvene in 2016 to rate the presidency of Barack Obama.

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**SPP SEMINAR SERIES 2012–13**

This year sees the continuation of the School of Public Policy’s guest speaker series. Each Thursday during terms one and two, SPP invites a speaker for a presentation to our students. The principal goal of these lectures is to provide SPP students with additional perspectives on contemporary policy issues.

The series is crafted to cover a wide range of topics in policymaking. Previous lectures touched on the controversy surrounding the Eurozone debt crisis, the difficulties inherent in post-civil war reconciliation and the retreatment of the welfare state.

In the past, the series focused primarily on bringing outside academics into the Department to share their research. The 2012–2013 series, however, offers a new balance between academic speakers and practitioners. SPP is excited to be able to deliver a greater diversity of perspectives. Our hope is that students gain a deeper understanding of policymaking from the practitioner’s point of view.

This year the SPP Seminar Series features all of the Department’s Visiting Professors and other high profile names in British politics. Visiting Professor Lord (Gus) O’Donnell, former Cabinet Secretary, spoke on 1 November on the topic ‘In Defence of Bureaucracy’, to complement a Radio 4 programme he is doing on the same subject.

On 22 November Visiting Professor Michael Jacobs (former adviser to Gordon Brown) and Duncan Brack (former adviser to Chris Huhne) talked about the work of Special Advisers. On 29 November Visiting Professor Sir John Gieve, former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England and former Blair adviser Lord (Roger) Lidde discussed the Eurozone crisis and the democratic deficit.

In the New Year, Visiting Professor Tony Wright will be speaking on 17 January about Politics and Politicians, developing themes in his recent book Doing Politics. On 7 February Jonathan Powell, former Chief of Staff to Tony Blair and chief government negotiator on Northern Ireland 1997–2007 will be talking about his work on conflict resolution around the world through his NGO Inter Mediate. On 7 March Visiting Professor Jack Straw will be talking about his experience as Foreign Secretary, drawing on his recent autobiography – Last Man Standing: Memoirs of a Political Survivor

Also later this year, students have the opportunity to hear from other prominent policymakers. For example, Vijay Rangarajan, the Foreign Office’s Director of Multilateral Policy, will offer comments on the current foreign policy challenges facing the United Kingdom.

The School is also excited to once again welcome leading academics. This year saw presentations by Hussein Kassim (University of East Anglia) and Daniel Nexon (Georgetown) on the European Commission and theories of global power, respectively. Future talks include Martino Maggetti (University of Zürich) and Gary Lafree (University of Maryland). The full schedule of events can be found on SPP’s website at the following address:

[www.ucl.ac.uk/spp/seminars](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/spp/seminars)

The Department wishes to thank all the speakers for their generosity. We hope the students continue to find the series valuable as a source of information on diverse issues. Requests for more information, as well as any feedback, can be sent to Dr Jeffrey Kucik at j.kucik@ucl.ac.uk

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday evenings.
NEWS FROM THE CONSTITUTION UNIT

The Constitution Unit is the largest research centre within the School of Public Policy. It is the UK’s leading centre for the study of constitutional reform and has a long track record of conducting high-quality research and influencing policy debates through publications and events. Unit Director Professor Robert Hazell, Deputy Director Dr Meg Russell and Dr James Melton teach courses within SPP and act as supervisors for students’ dissertations.

The Unit is currently researching the following areas:

- Parliament, including the changing role of the House of Lords and the impact of Parliament on the legislative process
- The Politics of Judicial Independence
- Special Advisers
- Comparative Constitutional Design

SPP students are welcome to attend the Unit’s monthly seminars and part-time students and alumni may also be interested in our internship programme (see below).

Full details of the Constitution Unit’s activities can be found at: [www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit)
The Constitution Unit continues to be in the news. Professor Robert Hazell has given a lot of media interviews about the Scottish independence referendum. In October he gave evidence to the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee explaining why an independent Scotland would not automatically remain a member of the EU but would have to re-apply. In July his research was cited over 40 times by the Commons Justice Committee in its post-legislative review of the FOI Act. He has also given a lot of talks about the coalition, following publication of his book The Politics of Coalition, co-authored with Dr Ben Yong.

The Unit’s Deputy Director and Reader in British and Comparative Politics Dr Meg Russell has been similarly busy, in particular in debates on reform of the House of Lords. She gave evidence to the parliamentary Joint Committee, and appeared on Newsnight to comment on the government’s bill. She forecast that it would not get through Parliament and when it failed urged the government to proceed instead with essential lesser reforms. In December she sent her new book on the House of Lords to OUP and her big two year study on Parliament’s impact on government legislation is also nearing completion.

New Freedom of Information Handbook for Academic Researchers

To mark Right to Know Day on 28 September, the Constitution Unit published a new handbook for academic researchers on how to make FOI requests.

“Academics are educated and intelligent people” the Unit’s director Robert Hazell said. “But it is remarkable how stupid they can sometimes be when framing FOI requests. So we thought it would be worth producing an FOI Handbook specifically for academic requesters”.

The new handbook contains the Constitution Unit’s collected wisdom on the successes, pitfalls, tips and tricks to help academics make the best use of FOI. It is based on surveys and interviews with academic requesters and with government officials who deal with their requests.

Dr Ben Worthy, senior researcher on the project (now Lecturer at Birkbeck), advised academic requesters: “Think about FOI requests early on. Be realistic: you are not going to get every response back in 20 days. So expect delays and allow for that in your research timetable. And be realistic about what comes back: you may not get the information in the format you asked for”.

See the online edition of the Handbook here.
Judicial Independence and the Supreme Court

The Constitution Unit began a three-year project into the politics of judicial independence in the UK in January 2011. It examines the definition and proper limits of judicial independence; how and who judicial independence should be protected; and who is now accountable to the judiciary.

On 3 October the project held the fifth in a series of practitioner seminars on ‘Judicial Independence and the Supreme Court’. The seminar was run under Chatham House Rule but a short note is now available on our project website: read the note.

Amongst the points made by contributors was that statistics do not bear out the popular perception that the Supreme Court is exercising more power over the Scottish legal system than was the case prior to Scottish devolution. Although there has been an increase in the volume of cases going from Scotland to the Supreme Court (and its predecessor the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords) the success rate for Scottish appeals was essentially the same as that for other cases under the Appellate Committee, and since the creation of the Supreme Court in 2009 the success rate for Scottish appeals has been notably less than that of others.

There were differing views on appointments to the Supreme Court. The Crime and Courts Bill proposes to remove the Deputy President from the appointment commission for the Court. Some regarded this as negative: the justices of the Court have the best knowledge about what the court needs in new appointments. Others disagreed, arguing that while this might be true, no part of government in a democracy should be self-replicating.

See website here

Blog

The Constitution Unit has a blog which is regularly updated. Some recent pieces cover the Scottish Independence referendum, Scotland’s voting system, and the October reshuffle of special advisers.

See here

Internships

Part-time current SPP students and SPP alumni may be interested in applying for the Constitution Unit internship scheme. Interns are invited to assist in one of the Unit’s project streams, which currently include special advisers, parliament, comparative constitutions, judicial independence, and constitutional and administrative law.

Please find details at:
www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/aboutus/internships
SPP OPEN DAY
NOVEMBER 2012

Helen Elliot and Genavive Sarkis,
Department of Political Science write:

This year, the Department took part in the Joint Faculty Graduate Open Day. Various departments from Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences were present. The event took place on Wednesday 21 November 2012 and was a great opportunity for prospective students to learn more about our programmes, meet our staff and visit the School.

The first part of the day was held in the Wilkins North Cloisters where the School of Public Policy had a stand offering information and advice. Prospective students were then invited to attend a programme of events arranged by the University. The day’s events included a talk by Professor Stephen Smith, the Dean of Social and Historical Sciences and talks by the UCL Careers Service and Graduate School. Students were then taken on a tour of the UCL Campus and the library led by current UCL students.

In the afternoon, prospective students were invited to drop in to the Department in the Rubin Building where Programme Directors and admissions staff were on hand to answer any questions and to show visitors around.

Feedback from the day was extremely positive with students commenting on the quality of the programme information and how friendly and approachable staff were.

We would very much like to thank all the staff who took part in making this such a successful event.
DR CALI AWARDED GRANT TO EMBARK ON THE FIRST STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES IN THE GULF REGION

The Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) has awarded its first grant in the field of Human Rights to conduct research into the impact of human rights treaties in the Gulf region to a team of researchers, led by one of our own – Dr Basak Cali.

The two-year study’s objective is to investigate the domestic impact of international human rights treaties through the Gulf Cooperation Council’s (GCC) member states – Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The $660,000 grant is a collaboration between Dr Basak Cali, of UCL’s Department of Political Science, with Dr Nazila Gahnea-Hancok, of the University of Oxford, Professor Mehran Kamrava of Georgetown University and Dr Yaser Khalaileh of the University of Qatar.

This research is the first of its kind, there being no previous studies systematically tracing the effects of the ratification of human rights treaties in the Gulf Region through analysis of institutional and discursive pathways of effect.

Given that there is a regional trend in the Gulf favouring the ratification of international human rights treaties, the data collected will also offer insights into the ratification process. It will shed light on dynamics of human rights reform in autocracies and the role that international human rights law plays in that process. The findings will also constitute an important resource and policy-guiding document for a variety of stakeholders, including for the states themselves, national human rights institutions, NGOs in the region and the United Nations.

Basak returned her first fieldwork from the Gulf in November 2012. She says that, as a scholar who has long studied the dynamics of human rights change in the European region, the study of the Gulf countries is a challenge but also an eye-opening experience in understanding the relationship between domestic contexts and international human rights law. The 30 degree Celsius weather in November, she admits, did ease the challenges somewhat.
DEMOCRACY, JUSTICE AND NON-DOMINATION

Guy Aitchison-Cornish, PhD Doctoral Candidate at the Department of Political Science, writes:

A conference on “Democracy, Justice and Non-Domination”, which took place on June 15th, lived up to its promise with an illuminating exploration of the inter-relationships between the two dominant traditions within contemporary political theory - liberalism and republicanism – provided by five leading scholars.

Professor Albert Weale opened with the observation that whilst the liberal tradition has been centrally concerned with justice, the republican tradition has been concerned with freedom as non-domination. He went on to outline a theory that reconciles elements from both traditions, arguing that “democratic justice” results from a situation in which there is a political balance of power in a community and agents can be accommodating to one another’s interests in a way that secures mutual advantage. The dominant approaches to justice, such as that of John Rawls, make too many a priori assumptions about rationality, Weale argued. The empirical method he favours shows how small European democracies have achieved democratic justice. This requires the right to the fruits of one’s labour, with access to common resources and egalitarian access to the means of production. Collective decisions taken under these conditions, says Weale, will produce just obligations.

Professor Ian Shapiro, of Yale, argued for what he calls “adaptive political theory”, grounded in an understanding of human beings as fundamentally reactive creatures who know more about what is unjust in society than what is just. The republican conception of freedom as non-domination, with its reactive dynamic, plays a central role in his theory (rather than more utopian ideals of “justice” or “equality”). Shapiro referred to the famous work of Robert Axelrod on prisoners’ dilemmas which suggests it’s in our psychology to co-operate with others to avoid domination and promote a mutual interest. The conditions under which participants co-operated in Axelrod’s experiments – low stakes and uncertainty – have implications for thinking about what institutional arrangements and behavioural dispositions will secure non-domination in a political society. Not least, they show the importance of a generous hope in the behaviour of others as an energising force in politics.

The pragmatic orientation of the discussion continued with Professor Jeremy Waldron, of Oxford, who noted that philosophers have spilt much ink over whether Rawl’s difference principle (which permits inequalities so long as they benefit the worst-off) is correct with little consideration of how it is to be realised in practice. Rawls himself saw a central role for the legislature in protecting the interests of the worst-off in society but his understanding of how it should go about this task raises the issue of “benign domination”, according to Waldron. Rawls thought the difference principle was best achieved by representatives reflecting on lofty ideals of justice in a deliberative fashion, rather than by “advocacy and noise-making” for the interests of the worst-off within the legislature. Yet no matter how well-meaning representatives are they will never be better guardians of the worst-off groups than those groups themselves, argued Waldron. It follows that we should organise the franchise, the electoral system and legislative politics to promote the vigorous articulation of the diverse interests within the political community.

Professor Cecile Laborde offered an analysis of the core conceptual components of non-domination arguing for a “weakly moralised” view, according to which the harm of non-domination is not always constitutively bad (it is possible to have beneficial instances of domination) but instrumentally bad in how it affects people’s basic interests. Some philosophers, such as Philip Pettit, have drawn a too-sharp distinction
between liberalism and republicanism, said Laborde, since they assume that freedom as non-interference is at the core of liberalism. Republicanism, it turns out, overlaps with the dominant school of "constitutional liberalism", though republicans are more likely to emphasise the intrinsic value of democracy in making state power accountable and the importance of making private associations less dominating.

In the final talk of the day, Professor Richard Bellamy made a case for the value of principled compromise in a democracy in the face of the widespread political cynicism amongst the UK electorate over the perceived betrayals of the Coalition government. We’re used to thinking of compromises as pragmatic, yet there are good principled reasons for compromise that follow from the very ethos of democracy, he said. Bellamy distinguished “shallow compromises”, in the mode of economic trade-offs, from “deep compromises” which are necessary in politics where we are dealing with incompatible principles that can’t be traded. Deep compromises take place at a representative level when MPs, who have been chosen by voters because they reason in particular way (as Conservative, Liberal and so on), arrive at a common political agenda within a framework of shared principles. As politics becomes ever-more fragmented and multi-dimensional, Bellamy suggested, such compromises become increasingly necessary, which makes it all the more important that we understand the nature of principled compromise.

Many governments have been inspired by the idea that they should ‘nudge’ citizens to achieve behaviour change; that is, to redesign the information that citizens receive and thus influence the choices they make. But some researchers and government advisors think that ‘nudge’ is too light a touch and is not enough to deal with the scale of current problems - such as climate change or obesity – while yet others involved in the current debate feel that ‘nudge’ interferes with personal liberty and that the government should respect the private lives of citizens.

In November 2012, Professor Peter John (UCL, Department of Political Science) chaired a UCL panel debate that provided a platform for some of the UK’s most distinguished experts in nudge policy and research to meet and explore answers to some of the issues. The audience were invited to comment, ask questions and challenge the experts’ points of views.

**WHERE NEXT FOR NUDGE POLICY? A PANEL DEBATE**

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**CHAIR:**
Professor Peter John  
(UCL Department of Political Science)

**SPEAKERS:**
Dr David Halpern  
(Cabinet Office)
Baroness Julia Neuberger  
(House of Lords)
Professor Aidan Halligan  
(UCL Medical School)
Professor Andrew Dobson  
(University of Keele)
RESEARCH GRANT UPDATE

Congratulations to the following members of staff who have successfully secured the following grants:

Professor Peter John
Professor Peter John has been awarded a two-and-a-half year ESRC grant entitled ‘CITIZEN CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICES: FIELD EXPERIMENTS IN INSTITUTIONS INCORPORATING SOCIAL INFORMATION’.

This research project is in collaboration with the University of Exeter, the University of Southampton and The University of Manchester. The main objective of this research is to assess the extent to which variations in the provision of social information encourage individuals to carry out pro-social behaviour. What are the effects of leadership and other personal endorsements on citizen participation in volunteering compared to a simple appeal? What are the effects of social information on contributions? What is the impact of making contributions visible to others? What are the effects of appeals to injunctive social norms and incentives subsequent to the use of social information on the amount of contribution given by participants? Does the effect of social information diminish over time? What lessons are there for institutional design?

Citizen contributions to public services are regarded as increasingly important by researchers and policy-makers. These include volunteering to make communities better places. A core idea in recent thinking in behavioural economics and the study of collective action is that the way information is presented to citizens matters to their willingness to donate their time. This can include who makes the request, what information there is about what other people do and what feedback people get about their volunteering and the activities of others.

We are particularly interested in whether recommendations from prominent people, such as those in the community sector and politicians, can help promote civic action. We want to know whether varying the form of feedback to citizens matters. Using randomized controlled trials, we will investigate contributions to time-banks and then student volunteering. We will first recruit new volunteers and vary randomly the kind of request. Once participants start to volunteer, we will feed back information about how well they are doing in different ways to find out the impact on their participation and volunteering in local communities.
Accepted or forthcoming publications


Media coverage

Due to the pass of hurricane Isaac through New Orleans, this year’s Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association was cancelled. This decision was made just one day before the beginning of the conference, which meant that several scholars were on their way to New Orleans when they found out. Others, decided not to attend during the previous days and before the APSA leadership made a decision.

Unlike previous years, political scientists from all around the world started to discuss about the options of coming to the conference, the decision to cancel it and all the logistic problems that the hurricane presented for the conference. They did so using a particular hashtag on Twitter: #APSA2012

Javier Sajuria, PhD student from the Department and who was due to present at APSA conference this year, decided to collect the data from all of those conversations. Then, he tweeted a simple social network graph with the conversations taking place around the topic, providing a clear picture of the clusters and an overall assessment of the metrics of the network. The well-known US political science blog “The Monkey Cage” picked out his graph and shared it to their readers under the title “Science out of chaos” – http://themonkeycage.org/blog/2012/08/28/science-out-of-chaos-network-analysis-of-apsa2012-hashtag/

The purpose of the graph is, firstly, to describe the structure of the network of conversations. From there, it is possible to analyse the clusters, the topics of conversation of each group of users and how do they connect to each other. Graphs like these allows us to observe how online conversations can anticipate decisions (in this case, the cancellation of the conference) or even pressure for them. Relevant questions can be raised from this work, such as: did these conversations affect the APSA leadership decision? Are senior scholars more relevant than junior academics on Twitter? Do their opinions matter more? This and other issues can be analysed through the use of social media data.
Awards and Recognition

Melanie Garson-Sweidan was awarded the Runner Up prize in the Cedric Smith Prize for Peace and Conflict Research with an essay titled “Has reconciliation activity really failed? The impact of Israeli-Palestinian joint activities.”

Sofia Collignon won the Mexican Council of Science and Technology (CONACyT) scholarship to fund MPhil/PhD research

Employment

Javier Sajuria was hired during April to June 2012 as a research assistant in a project of the United Nations University World Institute for Economic Development Research (UNU-WIDER). The project consisted on a systematic review of experimental and quasi-experimental studies on government performance. After the end of the assistantship, Javier has been recently asked to co-author a paper with two researchers from UNU-WIDER, describing the methodology and the results of the project. The article is intended to be published during 2013.

Course in Selection and Strategic Models at the Essex Summer School

Janina Beiser, PhD Candidate, UCL Department of Political Science, reports how she spent her summer:

In August 2012, I attended a two-week course on Selection and Strategic Models with Curtis Signorino from the University of Rochester at the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis. The course was about the statistical estimation of game-theoretic models. Fees were covered by the department’s Research Methods training fund.

The course provided a good mixture of theory and hands-on programming exercises in R. The theoretical part was presented in a very compelling way but was at the same time easy to follow, especially as the teacher made sure to start by refreshing everyone’s knowledge about maximum likelihood models, game theory and R. The actual programming part of the course was very interesting and by the end of the course students had all skills necessary to program models themselves. I had barely used R before the course but it was still possible to keep up, even though it may have been a bit more work than for others more proficient in R.

The Essex Summer School is also a great social experience and a good place to meet graduate students from all over the world. I would definitely recommend the course as well as the Summer School more generally.
The paper “Has Reconciliation Activity Really Failed? The Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Joint Activities” attempts to respond to the widely held belief that People-to People programmes in the Israeli-Palestinian context were ineffective as they failed to prevent the outbreak of the Second Intifada. In an environment in which the Palestinian leadership in Gaza has prohibited participation in joint contact activities, the question of the effectiveness and the contribution of these activities to conflict resolution processes is critical. The paper draws upon data gathered as part of the qualitative analysis of a PhD thesis that attempts to trace the process by which a reconciliation programme or activity can transform the attitudes of individuals towards the other party in the conflict and towards the conflict itself thus contributing to the stabilisation and entrenchment of the peace agreement.

Based on the assumption that the only way to bring a lasting end to these conflicts, following resolution of the tangible issues, is to transform conflict identities through removing the negation of the other, the central hypothesis of this research is that settlements in protracted identity conflicts that incorporate commitments to reconciliation will be more stable than those which do not. Ultimately, it aims to show that conflicts that actively embrace and institutionalise a culture of reconciliation are more likely to be able to move towards a life of stable peace and co-existence. The qualitative analysis is being conducted in three cases: Israel-Palestine, Bosnia, and Northern Ireland, based on a two phases of survey research. The first phase surveys participants of joint activities immediately before and immediately after participation in a joint activity to gain a measure of the short term impact of participation in the programme. In the second phase, former participants of joint activities similar to those of the short term survey, complete an online survey.

The PhD thesis as a whole aims to contribute to the literature on creating durable settlements in protracted identity conflicts through examining the role of reconciliation in supporting a peace settlements and sustainable peace-building. There have been many recommendations as to the critical components of a lasting peace settlement, yet there has been little exploration of the impact of building comprehensive reconciliation provision into a peace settlement. It also hopes to contribute to the thorny issue of evaluating the trickle up or ripple effects of grass roots programmes in protracted conflicts.

This essay set out some initial findings of the first phase of survey research in the Israeli-Palestinian case which indicate that these activities bring about an immediate positive benefit to the participants and participants demonstrate a certain level of commitment to on-going participation in such activities. Participants indicate a strong willingness to participate again in similar activities and would recommend others to participate. Further, the fact that participants indicate an interest in expanding the model to their own area, indicates some trickle-up or transfer potential, in that participants become leaders on a micro-level and that constituencies could be built around the reconciliation activities leading to potential to impact political process. The activities definitely indicate some impact in helping participants re-evaluate their cognitive and emotional attitudes towards the other party and propel them in the direction of reframing the other as an individual with emotions, intellect and positive characteristics. The change that emerges may not be sufficient to prevent an intifada but evidences a more subtle and nuanced process of change that is an integral part of the reconciliation process.

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CEDRIC SMITH PRIZE

Melanie Garson-Sweidan, Teaching Fellow in Conflict Resolution and PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science was recently awarded the runner up prize in the Cedric Smith Prize for Peace and Conflict Research. Melanie writes:
Since June 2012, I have been based in Dakar, Senegal, as the Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Adviser for World Vision’s West Africa Regional Office. World Vision is the largest privately funded NGO in the world, operational in relief, development and advocacy activities across Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America. My role is to shape and advise the organisation’s position on key humanitarian issues facing the Sahel and to lead our engagement and strategic representation with various external stakeholders, mainly governments, UN agencies and other NGOs.

A typical day could include attending an inter-agency meeting at OCHA on Disaster Risk Reduction, preparing a briefing on child protection for Sahelian government ministries or facilitating a context-analysis workshop on nutrition programming in insecure environments. I am fortunate enough to regularly travel out of the office to visit our projects and have just recently returned from a cash-for-work programme in northern Mali – where households affected by drought receive a monthly monetary distribution to temporarily boost their income.

I initially came out to support the response for the hunger crisis in the Sahel, which put 18.7 million people at risk this year, with countries the most affected including Chad, Mauritania, Senegal and Niger. The critical concern of humanitarian actors has been how to help communities better prepare for food emergencies, which here are both chronic and cyclical. Improving household resilience looks likely to be the main agenda for development in West Africa over the next six to twelve months as practitioners try to make the institutional and programmatic changes needed to address this.

However, as the 2012 food crisis is now coming to an end, more recently my work has focused on deteriorating security in Mali. With a military intervention to reclaim the North of the country looking increasingly likely at the beginning of 2013, NGO advocacy staff like myself are working together as part of the international community to make sure that the humanitarian consequences of any military action are mitigated as far as possible. For example, ahead of the UN Security Council’s decision on the proposed concept note for ECOWAS action, we will lobby for all national and international forces to be trained in the Secretary-General’s 2003 bulletin on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse with a strong monitoring, reporting and disciplinary system enforced and we will be rapidly scaling up contingency planning to meet the additional displacement needs of increased IDPs and refugees.

I have no doubt that my Masters at UCL in International Public Policy was a key factor for me being offered this position – I have even been told so directly on one or two occasions. Much as I had to do a lot of learning on the job and thinking on my feet, the knowledge I gained in my studies of how multilaterals and governments interact with each other has been invaluable. Having a broad theoretical and analytical insight into policy-making has made the successes and frustrations of its practical application much easier to understand and the successes are really rewarding when they come. Being able to witness the direct impact of my day-to-day work on humanitarian issues I care about is why I chose to study IPP in the first place and although I am not quite sure yet where my next contract will take me, I feel very lucky to be starting a career in this industry.
I was part of the MSc course in Global Governance & Ethics (2010–2011) and after finishing the MSc Programme I moved to Ethiopia.

For about half a year I volunteered at a school in Addis Abeba, where I taught some of the youngest children, mainly between the ages 5–7. My main duty though was to audit classes and assess the education standards of the school in addition to consulting the principal on a number of matters.

At the same time I was assisting the volunteer psychologist of the orphanage that functions under the school’s umbrella.

After that I started an internship with the International Labour Organisation's Regional Office for Africa, where my work mainly deals with research and reporting. At first I worked on the issue of domestic workers’ rights, particularly the ones migrating from Ethiopia and the Somali region to Arab States; in a number of cases the traces of these women get lost and very often they fall victims of abuse and exploitation. The ILO is developing a comprehensive plan to protect these people and by implementing the international labour standards the Organisation has established.

At the moment I am working on a research project regarding the financial inclusion of women in Nigeria and Zambia. Since I have been here I also had the opportunity to participate in a number of conferences on issues ranging from Education in Africa to Climate Change and Development. I would highly recommend to anyone wishing to work in development to visit and work in Africa for a while as it is a very interesting and enlightening experience.