



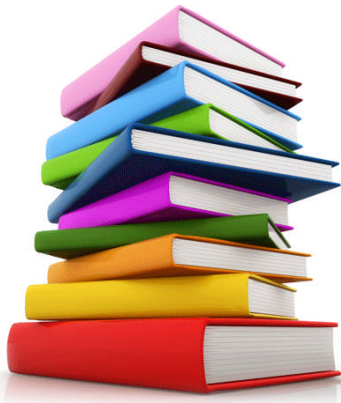
## E-NEWSLETTER

### September 2015

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## Queers Read This!

Are you interested in discussing LGBT and queer themes in a friendly and informal setting? If so, come along to the next session of **UCL's Queer Space Reading Group**.



The group meets around twice a term, usually Tuesdays at 6pm. Participants discuss short pre-circulated texts or hear presentations on work-in-progress. Topics covered in recent sessions include queer representation and visibility; sexual racism; gender and the globalisation of sexualities; and LGBT identities and mobile technologies.

The Queer Space Reading Group is open to **all students and staff** at UCL. It is supported by [qUCL](#), the University's new LGBTQ research network. Readings and announcements are posted on the group's [Moodle Page](#) and anyone with a UCL login can join.

Sessions are usually led by one or two people who select the readings and kick start the discussion. The first session will take place on **27 October** and [Peter Swaab](#) (English Department) will be giving a presentation on Edward Lear's nonsense poetry and his sexuality.

Other provisional dates for the coming academic year are **1 December 2015** and **26 January, 8 March, 3 May** and **7 June 2016**. The group is currently seeking ideas for readings and offers to facilitate sessions on these dates. If you'd like to suggest something, please get in touch with Bob Mills: [robert.mills@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:robert.mills@ucl.ac.uk)

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## Out@UCL Welcome Back Drinks - October 6

Join Out@UCL for the first social evening drinks of the new academic year. We'll be at the **New Bloomsbury Set** on **Tuesday 6th October** from **6pm onwards**. It's Happy Hour until 8pm, so drop in for a drink and say hi!

If you've never been to the NBS before, it's in the basement at 76 Marchmont Street (WC1N 1AG), under the Moreish Cafe. Entrance is on Tavistock Place. <https://www.facebook.com/newbloomsburyset>

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## Out@UCL Networking Lunch - October 27

Professor Anthony Smith, LGBTQ+ champion on the Provost's Senior Management Team, invites you to an informal lunch on **Tuesday 27th October from 12-2pm in the Conference Room, Bloomsbury Theatre Building, 15 Gordon Square WC1H 0AY**.

*"As the LGBTQ champion on the Provost's Senior Management Team, I am looking forward to welcoming new and existing members of staff to the first Out@UCL lunch of the new academic year and I am keen to hear your thoughts and ideas about how UCL can best support staff."*

Please RSVP to Fiona Addison [f.addison@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:f.addison@ucl.ac.uk).

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## UCLU Black History Month LGBT+ Film Night - October 22

October is [Black History Month](#) and UCLU will be hosting a number of events during the month to celebrate UCL's Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community.

There will be a LGBT+ film night on **Thursday 22nd October** at **18:30** in **Chadwick B05 LT**, hosted by UCLU BME Student Network, open to students and staff.

Click [here](#) to register.

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# LGBTI Asylum Seekers and the UK

*Op-ed by [Dr Thibaut Raboin](#), UCL Department of French*



Asylum and forced migration are making the headlines in Europe, and long standing political and ethical questions are resurfacing in the public sphere. LGBTI people have been able to claim asylum on the grounds of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity since 1999 in the UK, and over the past fifteen years, their situation has been subject to many controversies and struggles between the Home Office and supporters of LGBTI asylum seekers. Their fair treatment in the asylum system has been and still is problematic; in 2009 the rate of refusal for LGBTI claimants was 98% at the first decision stage, against 73% for other types of asylum. (UKLGIG 2010) This statistic is not so damning once appeals are taken into account, but still highlights the great challenges that LGBTI people encounter when trying to find safety in the UK.

There has undoubtedly been gradual improvement, especially in the way cases are handled in recent years, with for example a favourable Supreme Court decision in 2010 (albeit with its limitations) putting an end to the Home Office's ability to send back asylum seekers in their countries of origin and asking them to be 'discreet' about their sexual orientation. Other advances can also be noted, including specific training for Home Office decision makers, and current debates on the issue of detention and the temporary suspension of the use of the detained fast-track system in 2015.

Now the challenge is to address a number of persistent issues: at the administrative level, the way credibility is assessed (based on both hetero- and homo-normative assumptions) harms the chances of asylum seekers to see their claims recognised. Likewise, the Home Office still shows a certain level of bad faith by focusing on minor inconsistencies to cast doubt on claimants' overall credibility. At a cultural and social level, LGBTI asylum seekers are still predominantly represented in the public sphere as powerless victims with little agency, preventing them from broadcasting their own voices in public arenas, and effectively obfuscating the many ways in which they actually express themselves, are part of communities and of the social fabric where they live.

*LEAG will be supporting the [UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group](#) in a one-off charity event next year. Details below.*

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# CALLING ALL PERFORMERS!

## Out@UCL Variety Show - February 2016

Out@UCL has a number of exciting events planned for LGBT History Month in February 2016, one of which will be its **1st Annual Variety Show**, an opportunity to showcase some of the fabulous talent within our network!

Whether you are a musician, actor, dancer, poet, juggler, hula hooper or dog trainer(!), we would like to see it all!

We will be using the evening to fundraise for the [UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group](#). Further details to follow but please do contact [Sandy](#) if you would like to participate, either on or off stage.

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## 20 Questions With...

### Vicki Baars, Representation and Campaigns Coordinator (Liberation), UCLU

**L, G, B, T, Q or +?**  
Q for Queer

**What was your first job?**  
I was an Avon lady, 'Avon Calling'.

**Which languages can you speak fluently?**  
Only English and barely that!



**Who has been your biggest inspiration?**  
My mum, she's not had an easy life and she's the most caring/self-sacrificing person I know and I wouldn't have had the opportunities I've had in life if it wasn't for her.

**Favourite quote/saying?**  
*"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."* —

Audre Lorde

**What is the best advice you have ever received?**

Wear sunscreen.

**If you could have dinner with anyone from history, who would it be?**

I'm never sure how to answer this question... I think it would depend on what I wanted from the dinner advice/support/inspiration. Perhaps some of the people involved in the Stonewall riots?

**Which working achievement or initiative are you most proud of?**

I'm pleased to say I have a few but at present I'm super proud that the students I work with at UCLU have won 3 national awards this year. Including one for this mini documentary [UCL: Access Denied](#) that I produced.

**If you could be Prime Minister for a day and could implement one policy, what would it be?**

Socialism

**Favourite music/musician?**

I've been listening to a LOT of Beyoncé recently but it changes all the time. Largely strong female vocalists.

**What is your favourite travel destination and why?**

I love Greece and the Greek Islands, I was there this summer.

**If you were given £1m what would you spend it on?**

£1m isn't actually an awful lot of money in the long term. Maybe a bit to some activist causes, then a house, a holiday and would try to make my friends & families lives a bit easier financially.

**Favourite book?**

Half a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

**Who do you admire as a leader?**

Harvey Milk, he encouraged so many people to come out of the closet which was terrifying at the time but was the only way for people to see that people who aren't straight exist.

**What is your favourite movie of all time?**

Hocus Pocus or Fifth Element, hmmm can't pick between them!

**What one word would you use to describe yourself?**

Ridiculous

**What one word would your friends use to describe you?**

Ridiculous

**What would be on the menu for your last supper?**

Bacon, Avocado, Egg – I think what I'm getting at is breakfast.

**If happiness was the national currency, what kind of work would make you rich?**

Creating things with interesting people who challenge and inspire me.

**What will you never do?**

I never say never...

*We are keen to showcase more of Out@UCL's members - fill in the following [questionnaire](#) and tell us your story!*

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**If you have an exciting news story or event you would like to share with Out@UCL, please [contact Sandy!](#)**



[Twitter](#)



[Website](#)