

Founder's West

Politics and International Relations Newsletter – Issue 3

January 2016

Politics &
International
Relations

Welcome from the Head of Department



It's been a busy time for the department over the months since our last newsletter.

We were delighted to welcome another great group of new undergraduate and post-

graduate students to the department in September, and we look forward to working with them during their time in the Department of Politics and International Relations (PIR).

We also welcomed a number of new staff to the team: Dr Jinghan Zeng, an expert on Chinese domestic and international politics, joined us at the start of the academic year as Lecturer in International Relations, as did Mr Alistair Brisbane, Dr David Hughes, Dr Alexis Papazoglou and Dr Tim Stevens as Teaching Fellows. Meanwhile, James Heath and Laura Law have joined the department's administrative team.

Another new member of the team is Dr Joanna Szostek, our new Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow, who is funded by the European Union. Marie has begun working on the nature and role of strategic narratives in Ukraine.

In more news, we had the great pleasure to award an honorary doctorate to Dr Anne-Marie Slaughter in our 2015 summer graduation ceremony. Anne-Marie has had a distinguished academic and policy career, serving as Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton, before becoming the first female Director of Policy Planning at the U.S. State Department. She is currently President and CEO of the New America Foundation and was voted one of the 'Women of 2015' by the *Financial Times* for her contribution to debates on work and family life.

I hope you enjoy reading about our recent activities. For regular updates on what's going on in PIR, please follow us on Twitter and Facebook, and also visit our website.

Dr Alister Miskimmon

Head of Department of Politics and International Relations

New PIRSoc Executive

The Politics and International Relations Society (PIRSoc) started the 2015-16 academic year with their own 'Welcome Week', which included a careers talk and a 'students vs. staff' pub quiz.

The new executive committee (pictured right) also hosted a number of guest speakers over the course of the autumn term, including representatives from the Women's Refugee Charity and the Israeli Embassy in London.

In the New Year, PIRSoc will be sending delegations to the London and New York Model United Nations conferences. ■



ROYAL
HOLLOWAY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

Former Attorney General visits PIR



Former Attorney General the Rt Hon Dominic Grieve MP (pictured left, chatting to staff) visited PIR in September as the guest speaker for the first departmental seminar of the new academic year. His chosen topic was Britain's Human Rights Act and the European Convention on Human Rights.

PIR's departmental seminar is a weekly event in which invited speakers present original political research or talk about significant current affairs. Other topics covered over the autumn term included US-Chinese relations, the International Criminal Court, and the 2015 British general election. ■

Human Rights Film Series

The Human Rights and Conflict Film Series kicked off in October with a screening of *Amazing Grace* (2006), an award-winning film that charts William Wilberforce's effort to abolish the slave trade in the UK. Other planned screenings this year include *Shooting Dogs* (2005), about the Rwandan Genocide, and *Terror's Advocate* (2008), which chronicles the life of controversial lawyer Jacques Vergès who defended Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie. The Film Series was created by PIR's Dr Lara Nettelield to provide an additional way for students to learn about the issues covered in class through the medium of film. ■

PIR visits JFK Memorial

Early in the autumn term, first-year PIR students visited the political memorials in and around Runnymede, including the John F. Kennedy Memorial (pictured right).

Students also visited The Jurors, a set of twelve bronze chairs that were commissioned to mark the 800th Anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta.

The trip was rounded off with pizza and drinks back in the department. ■



ALUMNA PROFILE: Yvonne Jeffery



Yvonne Jeffery (pictured above) graduated from Royal Holloway in 2010 with a first-class degree in BA Politics and International Relations. Here she talks about her involvement with the New York National Model United Nations (NMUN):

In my first year at Royal Holloway, I became part of the delegation for the NMUN conference in New York. I had no idea how much it would benefit me academically or professionally. Gaining

'practical experience' of international relations at NMUN helped me to achieve a first-class degree, developed my interest in public policy, and led me to my current job at Save the Children.

I was part of the Royal Holloway NMUN delegation for two years, after which I joined NMUN's volunteer staff, finally serving as Deputy Secretary-General for the 2015 conference. During this time I honed my research, writing, editing and public-speaking skills; I learned about leadership, management, mentoring, negotiation and problem solving; and I developed a far better knowledge and understanding of the UN and international affairs.

The NMUN's youth-led focus and the experience that came from coordinating NMUN staff based all across the world undoubtedly helped me to gain roles with Restless Development in Zimbabwe, Tomorrow's Youth Organization in

Palestine and, most recently, at Save the Children. It's safe to say that I would not have had the personal journey I have enjoyed were it not for NMUN: the experiences and skills from NMUN were the ones that came up most often in all of my interviews and persuaded people to take me on.

I have now been involved with NMUN for almost 8 years, and I am still benefitting and developing with it, whether as a member of the Advisory Group for the New York conference or a staff member for the recent international conference in the Czech Republic.

The chance to attend an NMUN conference opens up a vast range of opportunities for students, and I believe it is one of the best ways in which students can pursue academic and professional development. ■

STAFF PROFILE: Dr Kaat Smets

I joined the Department of Politics and International Relations in September 2013. I was never one of those people who always dreamed of an academic career; my first degree was in journalism, and I worked for a daily newspaper in the Netherlands for several years. One day I received a letter telling me it would be another 44 years before I could retire. At that point I decided to resume my studies, first at the VU University in Amsterdam and then at the European University Institute in Florence, where I completed my PhD. I also spent a further four years at the University of Siena.

Politics is related to almost everything we deal with in our everyday lives, from supermarket opening hours to traffic regulation, and from the global events we read about in the newspapers to the amount of tax we pay. I am interested in all issues that have real-world significance.

My current research focuses on why people participate in politics and how patterns of

political participation change over time. Since the behaviour of young people seems to be most affected by new patterns of political participation, much of my work presently focuses on young people's politics.

As my own research shows, young adults are often less likely to vote because they are in higher education, are occupied with finding a partner or are trying to establish a career. They also tend to be more mobile. At the same time, key events in individuals' transition to adulthood boost engagement. Leaving education, beginning a first job, buying a house, getting married, starting a family; all these things are positively associated with voting in elections.

I also currently teach courses in political behaviour and research methods. Many students seem to fear research methods and especially quantitative methods, but we all deal with numbers on a daily basis, and it is so important to be able to make sense of them. Knowing how to do research



is also vital if you want to answer important questions, such as why many people seem disengaged from traditional politics.

Royal Holloway is a very international university, and I like working with students from very diverse backgrounds. It gives me great satisfaction to guide students and to see them achieve their goals. ■

#RHWomenInspire

The autumn saw the launch of a Royal Holloway campaign to celebrate inspirational women and their achievements. Prompted by the 'Women Inspire' campaign, a number of PIR staff identified the different women who had inspired them:

Mark Limbert, Faculty Administrator: 'I would have to choose **Aung San Suu Kyi**, for her stoical resistance to military dictatorship and her commitment to democracy while under various forms of detention in Myanmar.'

Julia Gallagher, Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations: 'I am inspired by **Hannah Arendt** because of her enormously creative thinking (her work remains difficult to categorise), her commitment to the key political issues of her day (totalitarianism, nuclear technology and the arms race) and the way she remained passionate about politics without suggesting that there were solutions to the problems she posed.'

Nicholas Allen, Reader in Politics: 'I would have to choose **Margaret Thatcher**, who dominated the political scene when I was growing up. Her style of leadership was remarkable, and her premiership remains a fascinating case study in prime ministerial power.'

David Hughes, Teaching Fellow in International Relations: 'I would choose **Rosa Luxemburg**, the German communist revolutionary who was nevertheless critical of Bolshevism. She aimed for nothing less than "the abolition of the rule of capital [and] the realization of a socialist social order." She would not have thought very much of Margaret Thatcher!'

Sandra Halperin, Professor of International Relations: 'I would nominate an academic, **Janet Abu-Lughod**, whose ground-breaking book, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*, represented a long-overdue effort to de-centre traditional area studies and the ostensibly new field of globalization studies. She raised a host of questions concerning the nature of knowledge itself and the value of interdisciplinary research.'

Jayshree Dave, Faculty Administrator: 'I would pick **Benazir Bhutto**. She worked hard to improve and modernize Pakistan, making electricity widely available, building more schools around the country and always addressing the needs of women and children.'

Kaat Smets, Senior Lecturer in Politics (Quantitative Methods): 'My nominee is **Malala Yousafzai**. She is an ambitious young woman who does not let her age get in the way of trying to make the world a better place.'

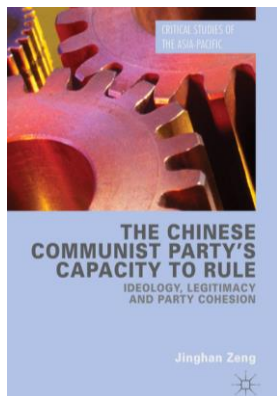
Neil Gascoigne, Reader in Philosophy: 'I would have to choose **my sister**. After graduating she went to work with the homeless and is now CEO of a charity that supports vulnerable young mothers and their children across South Yorkshire. She's both profoundly caring and a hard-headed businesswoman, and if people like her were running the country it would be a far better place!' ■



OUR RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Chinese Communist Party's Capacity to Rule: Ideology, Legitimacy and Party Cohesion (2015)

Jinghan Zeng



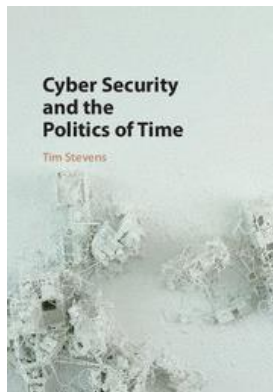
Dr Jinghan Zeng's new book, published by Palgrave Macmillan, explores the survival strategies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and how ideological reform and the institutionalization of power succession account for the party's retention of power. At the heart of the analysis are the problems created by China's economic success: if a communist party does not deliver communism and class victory, why is it there at all? The book shows how the apparent contradiction between the goal of delivering a communist society and the means of using quasi-capitalism has generated a crisis of beliefs in Chinese society and ideological battles within the party. This book further shows how the CCP has remained in power by continually revising the ideological programme that justifies its rule. ■

Cyber Security and the Politics of Time (2015)

Tim Stevens

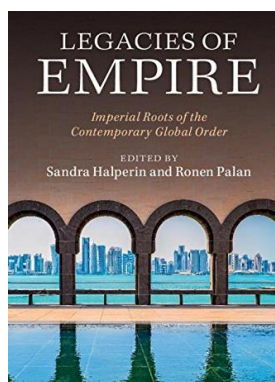
'Cyber security' is variously concerned with protecting states and citizens from the misuse of computer networks for war, terrorism, economic espionage and criminal gain. Dr Tim Stevens' new book, *Cyber Security and the Politics of Time*, draws on critical literature in international relations, security studies, political theory and social theory, to show how these different visions of cyber security are sustained in the

communities that articulate them. More specifically, it shows that conceptions of time and temporality are foundational to the politics of cyber security. It explores how cyber security communities understand the past, present and future, thereby shaping cyber security as a political practice. ■



Legacies of Empire: Imperial Roots of the Contemporary Global Order (2015)

Sandra Halperin



This new book edited by Professor Sandra Halperin (with Ronen Palan) explores the imprint that imperial institutions, organisational principles, practices, and logics have left on the modern world. It shows that many features of the contemporary world—modern armies, multiculturalism, globalised finance, modern city-states, the United Nations—have been profoundly shaped by past empires. It also applies insights about the impact of past empires to contemporary politics and considers the long-term institutional legacies of the American 'empire'. ■



Researching politics and social media

PIR is home to several specialist research centres, including the New Political Communication Unit, which was founded by Professor Andrew Chadwick in 2007.

The Unit brings together expertise in three related areas: in new media and communication technologies, particularly the internet, global digital television and mobile technologies; in the political behaviour, institutions and policy challenges that shape and are shaped by the new information and communication environment; and in the theoretical dilemmas and methodological concerns that arise from the need to investigate these phenomena.

Three of the department's staff, Dr Cristian Vaccari, Professor Chadwick and Professor Ben O'Loughlin, recently collaborated on a study into how people used social media to discuss the broadcast election debates between Nick Clegg and Nigel Farage ahead of the 2014 European Parliament elections. Their findings, published in the highly-ranked *Journal of Communication*, show that individuals who commented on the debates live on social media and who followed the conversation through Twitter tended to become more politically engaged during the campaign.

The study is part of an ongoing project on 'dual screening', the complex bundle of practices that involve integrating, and switching across and between, live broadcast media and social media. ■

 royalholloway.ac.uk/PIR

 @RHULPIR

 www.facebook.com/rhulpir

Royal Holloway, University of London
Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX
T: +44 (0)1784 434455
royalholloway.ac.uk