Georgia exit poll

Oliver Heath helped to design, analyse and present the results of an exit poll on the Georgian parliamentary elections for Maestro TV. The results of the poll showed a clear victory for Georgian Dream, the principal opposition, and defeat for the incumbent United National Movement, who had ruled the country since the Rose Revolution of 2003. Despite widespread concerns about vote rigging and electoral malpractice in the build up to the election, the President was quick to concede the election, thus heralding the first democratic transfer of power in Georgia.
Philosophy researchers join PIR

We welcome our philosophy colleagues to the department.
The incorporation of Philosophy into PIR has been one of many exciting recent developments in the department. Philosophy programmes were introduced to the College in 2007 with the development of a series of ‘with Philosophy’ minor degrees, followed in 2009 with a number of Joint Honours degrees, including one with PIR. An MA in Modern Philosophy was developed in 2011 and followed by a PPE degree in 2012. Plans are now underway for a BA History and Philosophy degree for 2013 and a Single Honours Philosophy degree in 2014, and the group is part of a Royal Holloway-led bid with several other London institutions for Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) recognition that would bring in significant PhD studentship money through the AHRC Block Grant.

PIR’s political theorists have been involved in philosophy teaching since its inception and the College’s decision to bring Philosophy and PIR together has opened further opportunities for teaching and research collaboration. We are now able to explore important synergies between the two groups in the areas of modern and contemporary European philosophy and political theory, pragmatist philosophy, and the history of Western thought. Nathan Widder and Henry Somers-Hall are leading the organisation of the 2013 ‘London Conference in Critical Thought’, which will be held at Royal Holloway, and a one-day ‘Philosophy at Royal Holloway’ conference is also planned for next year.

The four core members of the Philosophy team are:

Andrew Bowie
Andrew’s research is concerned with core issues in modern philosophy, particularly those explored by the German tradition from Kant to the present. He does not see the philosophical issues in question as separable from other key cultural responses to the problems of the modern world, and has written extensively about music and literature as well as philosophy. His forthcoming book, *Adorno and the Ends of Contemporary Philosophy*, looks at Adorno from the point of view of his published and unpublished lectures, seeing him as a vital voice in contemporary debates about the aims and nature of philosophy. This project is part of a long-standing concern with mediating between the European and analytical traditions of philosophy.

Recent and forthcoming research activities
- ‘The Music of German Idealism’ (2013)
- *Adorno and the Ends of Contemporary Philosophy* (Polity, 2013)

Neil Gascoigne
Neil’s main interest is in how different sorts of philosophical debates shed light on the nature of both philosophical inquiry and the sorts of creatures that undertake such inquiry. Scepticism (as an historical and conceptual phenomenon) and pragmatism have been and continue to be sources of inspiration, though more recent work has concerned the view of knowledge (and the knower) that best makes sense of expertise (know-how) and learning. He is also interested in the philosophical significance of ‘celebrity’ for democratic culture. Forthcoming projects include a book on atheism and one on the history of sceptical thought.

Recent and forthcoming research activities
- *Tacit Knowledge* (Acumen, 2013)
- Member of the KCL expertise group
Anne Sheppard

Anne works primarily, though not exclusively, in ancient philosophy. Her research interests centre round the interaction between philosophy and literature. She has a particular interest in the literary theory of the pagan Neoplatonists of late antiquity (3rd – 6th century AD), as well as in Neoplatonist psychology and philosophy of mind. She has published on both ancient and modern aesthetics, as well as on Neoplatonism.

Recent and forthcoming research activities

- Interview on ancient aesthetics with Prof. Peter Adamson of LMU Munich and KCL for his series of podcasts on ‘The History of Philosophy without any gaps’, posted on 23 September 2012 at www.historyofphilosophy.net/aesthetics-sheppard.
- “‘To see a world in a grain of sand’: Proclus’ literary theory and aesthetics’. University of Catania, Sicily, on 8-9 November 2012
- Anne’s inaugural lecture at Royal Holloway, entitled ‘Philosophy, Politics and Education: the significance of Plato’s *Gorgias*’ will take place on Thursday 24 January 2013 at 6.15pm in the Windsor Building Auditorium

Henry Somers-Hall

The main focus of Henry’s research is the nineteenth century German philosophical tradition and the 20th-century French tradition. He is particularly interested in questions about the accounts of the nature of thinking developed in these traditions. To date he has worked primarily on the philosophies of Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel and Gilles Deleuze, and their attempts to provide an account of the foundations of judgement, but his next work will broaden these concerns to look at the development models and images of thinking during the twentieth century French tradition more generally. Provisionally entitled *Judgement in Twentieth Century French Thought*, the aim will be to show that much work of French philosophy in the twentieth century is concerned with providing an alternative to the model of thinking as judging, the model which formed the basis of much of the nineteenth century tradition. The work will explore the accounts of thinking put forward by several French philosophers, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Alain Badiou, with the aim of showing the continuities between these philosophers’ approaches.

Recent and forthcoming research activities

- Organised several workshops and conferences, including a conference on the political philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy, a two day conference on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze co-organised with the English department, and the biggest annual conference on European philosophy held in the UK (SEP-FEP)
- Hegel, Deleuze and the Critique of Representation (State University of New York Press, 2012)
Whose NHS? Citizens and Public Service Reform

On Thursday 8 November, leading experts on the NHS gathered at Royal Holloway to debate some of the key controversies surrounding the Government’s radical health service reforms. The ‘Whose NHS?’ event, organised by the Centre for Social Sciences, was open to members of the public, staff and students and included Professor Julian Le Grand, a former senior policy advisor on the NHS to Tony Blair, Andrew Liles, Chief Executive of Ashford and St Peters NHS Foundation Trust, and Professor Mark Exworthy, Professor of Health Policy and Management at Royal Holloway, on the panel. It was chaired by Dr Oliver Heath, Director of the Centre for Social Sciences at Royal Holloway.

As expected, the topic fuelled a heated debate with questions asked about proposed mergers, clinical commissioning groups and greater competition with the private sector.

Kicking off the debate, Professor Le Grand outlined his belief that the Government’s proposals were a “debacle” and said there is a “real danger that the system, after a while, will grind to a halt”. Countering his argument, Mr Liles said that his Trust was in fact in a good position, having gained Foundation Trust status two years ago. He found “co-operation” was the default position within the NHS and stressed that too much private competition in his catchment area would not be the best way forward.

One member of the public challenged Mr Liles about targets to reduce the number of emergency cases arriving at hospitals, arguing that it was wrong to talk about patients in terms of “supply and demand.” This was in light of the fact that the Ashford and St Peters NHS Foundation Trust treated eight per cent more emergency patients than it had planned to this year, resulting in financial penalties totalling £4m. He also said NHS Trusts should be more vociferous when lobbying the Government over funding. Mr Liles responded to the question by saying “short of chaining myself to the front of the hospital and demanding more money for the NHS, I’m not sure what you think we should be doing.”

Mr Liles also spoke about his Trust’s proposed acquisition of Epsom Hospital, which it recently had to halt for financial reasons. At this point, Professor Exworthy waded into the debate with research by social scientists, which showed that mergers can disrupt organisations for between 18 months and two years. “Mergers are a distraction that probably could be done without”, he said.

A member of the audience then raised the controversial issue of GPs and other clinicians being given much more responsibility for spending NHS budgets, asking the panel: “Are clinical commissioning groups likely to increase the postcode lottery?” In response, Candace Imison, Deputy Director of Policy at The King’s Fund, a charity that works to improve healthcare in the UK, agreed that there was a danger of varying levels of care being provided in different areas. “On the one hand I think there are some phenomenal GP commissioners out there that bring in a new perspective,” she said. “But they are taking on a very different role to the one they’ve had previously. There’s a potential risk of them not knowing what they need to.”

In his closing comments, Professor Exworthy said he hoped that the debate had given the audience a deeper understanding of the issues facing the NHS and its patients. He said: “Two-thirds of the public in a recent poll said they knew nothing or very little about the NHS reforms. If we’ve done anything, we’ve hopefully reduce that percentage by a few points.”
HARC Workshops on Youth Participation in British Democracy, 8 and 15 March 2013

British democracy today is marked by crisis and transition. This is perhaps most obvious amongst young people (15-25 year olds). Over the past 20 years, trust in government and political parties has collapsed. Youth turnout in general elections has declined equally rapidly. Yet low levels of social mobility, high youth unemployment and frustration with public policy (particularly since the onset of the global financial crises) point to a broader marginalisation of younger citizens. This was illustrated by turbulent student demonstrations that took place in December 2010 and the rioting and looting that shook England in August 2011.

The workshops, organised by James Sloam as part of his HARC scholarship, will address three main questions (from a multidisciplinary perspective):

1. How and why do young people participate (or not participate) in British 'democracy' (in its broadest sense)?
2. To what extent is there a growing participatory gap between rich and well-educated and poor and less well-educated young people?
3. How might youth participation in democracy be strengthened (in an adverse economic climate)?

Confirmed speakers for the two events include: Professor Andy Furlong (Glasgow); Professor Helen Haste (Bath/ Harvard); Professor Matt Henn (Nottingham); Professor Jonathan Neelands (Warwick); Professor John Street (UEA).

Workshop on Youth, Citizenship and Politics in Europe, 7-8 February 2013

In almost all established democracies engagement in traditional political institutions has declined. Whilst this trend is most striking amongst young people, there is overwhelming evidence to show that they are not apathetic about ‘politics’ – they have their own views and engage in democracy in a wide variety of ways relevant to their everyday lives. Young Europeans are today faced by a particularly tough environment – austerity budgets that reduce spending on public services and a hostile labour market for new entrants. In this context, the rise and proliferation of protest politics amongst young Europeans is hardly surprising: from the Occupy movement, to mass demonstrations of the ‘outraged young’ (the ‘indignados’), to direct action by ‘hactivists’ working for the Anonymous collective.

The workshop, organised by James Sloam as part of his Research Strategy Fund grant, will address three main themes in young people’s politics:

- how young people participate in ‘politics’;
- why they choose to engage in different modes of political action; and,
- who participates – rich or poor, well-educated or less well-educated – in this diverse generation.

It will also explore ways in which youth participation in democracy might be strengthened within the context of an adverse economic climate. Confirmed speakers include: Erik Amnå (University of Obredo); Henrik Bang (University of Copenhagen); Wolfgang Gaiser (German Youth Institute); Marc Hooghe (Catholic University, Leuven); Anne Muxel (Sciences Po, Paris); Ben O’Loughlin (Royal Holloway).

Nathan Widder and Henry Sommers-Hall will convene the ‘London Conference in Critical Thought’ (6-7 June 2013, at Royal Holloway).
Conference papers


Yasmin Khan, ‘Soldiers and Subjects in India’s Second World War’, Centre for War Studies, University College Dublin, 29 November 2012


Articles and book chapters


Tsering Topgyal, ‘The Securitisation of Tibetan Buddhism in Communist China’, Politics and Religion

Tsering Topgyal, ‘Security and the Tibetan Resistance Against Chinese Rule’ paper accepted for publication in the peer-reviewed journal Pacific Affairs

Nicholas Allen and Oliver Heath, ‘Reputations and research quality in British political science: the importance of journal and publisher rankings in the 2008 RAE’; The British Journal of Politics and International Relations. doi: 10.1111/1467-856X.12006


Chris Rumford, ‘Towards a Multiperspectival Study of Borders’ ‘Geopolitics’ (Volume 17, No.4) - as part of a themed issue on ‘Critical border studies’ (ed. N. Vaughan-Williams and N. Parker)

Chris Rumford and Didem Buhari-Gulmez contributed an entry on ‘The European Union’ to the recently published five-volume Encyclopedia of Globalization (Wiley-Blackwell) edited by George Ritzer


Books


Book contracts

Anne Sheppard signed a contract with Bloomsbury Academic for the publication of her book entitled The Poetics of Phantasia. Imagination in ancient aesthetics

Tsering Topgyal signed a book contact with Hurst/Oxford University Press, NY, to be published in late 2013. The book will be titled the The Insecurity Dilemma and the Sino-Tibetan Conflict

Michelle Bentley signed a contract with Routledge to publish a book entitled Weapons of Mass Destruction and Foreign Policy: The Strategic Use of a Concept

Julia Gallagher has been offered a contract for her edited collection, Images of Africa: creation, negotiation and subversion, with an introduction by V Y Mudimbe, by Manchester University Press

Book series edited at PIR