Welcome to the first PIR newsletter. We aim to provide a digest of the many lectures, workshops and other events being organised in the Department, by both staff and students, as well as let you know what’s coming up. Comments welcome: PIR-Admin@rhul.ac.uk

WHAT’S COMING UP

The Tuesday Seminar – 5:15pm in FW101

21st February 2017 – Syria and Chemical Weapons: Why US Foreign Policy Failed (Michelle Bentley, RHUL)

7th March 2017 – Gendered Knowledge in Demographic Research (Wendy Sigle, LSE)

14th March 2017 – Russia and the Middle East (Roland Dannreuther, University of Westminster)

21st March 2017 – Voting at 16: advantages, disadvantages and consequences of lowering the voting age (Kaat Smets, RHUL)

WHAT YOU’VE MISSED

The Tuesday Seminar – 5:15pm in FW101

This term was kicked off by a Martin Lodge of the London School of Economics, who reported on his project on ‘Colonial Legacies and Public Service Bargains in the Commonwealth Caribbean’. He presented intriguing insights into his field research in Trinidad Tobago and Jamaica, which involved digging through decades of undocumented archives but also having good local beer.

Akil N Awan of Royal Holloway’s History Department introduced us to the 'Nexus between Youth, Radicalism and Media Technologies'. His talk demonstrated the importance of contemporary gaming culture and social media for recruiting young people to radical groupings.

Ivica Petrikova of PIR shared with us her most recent work on the question whether religious people are more altruistic and/or more militant? The answer lied in her fascinating graphs, which it would be worth checking out in case you have missed her talk.

Finally, Licia Cianetti of PIR talked about what Estonia and Latvia can tell us about democracy in ethnically diverse societies. Her presentation went against the common perceptions in the literature and argued that it is important to focus on the (participatory) process rather the (policy) outcomes in order to understand where ethnically divided countries stand.

PIRSoc

PIR Soc delegates have been preparing for two major Model United Nations events this year, in New York where the 24 strong cohort will be representing France, and in London where the delegation is 29 strong, and will be mainly representing Nigeria. We wish both of our delegations tremendous good luck with their respective conferences. We’re sure they will make the society, Department, and Royal Holloway very proud. We also hosted the first ever Royal Holloway Model United Nations conference.

This term also saw the launch of our hotly anticipated and long-overdue political journal, ‘The Despatch Box’ to show that anyone of any political disposition could present their ideas on the same level as everyone else. Our Board of Writers, ably led by Kelli Jones, Editor in Chief, have been working incredibly hard, producing two intriguing and thought provoking articles each week since the Journal’s launch.
Our special series on the US Presidential Election culminated with a live feed on the night. Our Watch Party at Medicine overnight was our biggest event ever, with over 1000 people attending over the course of the evening. Whilst the result was against the obvious majority of those present, it was still a very enjoyable evening.

We have also had fantastic guest speakers ranging from the Israeli Deputy Ambassador to Yannick Oho Bambe, esteemed documentarist, and Phillip Hammond MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer. We were proud to host this term’s Formal Hall dinner with special guests, Andrew Stephenson MP, alumnus of Royal Holloway; Principal Paul Layzell; and SU Vice President Pippa Gentry. We have also thoroughly enjoyed hosting several inter-society debates over the course of the term, and look forwards to making 'The Great Debate’ a regular fixture in the Holloway calendar.

Diplomatic Society

On 18th January, several members from DipSoc were taken on a private tour of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and were even allowed to peek into Boris Johnson’s office!

On 1st February, we hosted the South Korean Ambassador who gave a talk about the North Korea/South Korea dynamic and how the arrival of Trump would affect this. It was an insightful talk followed by a drinks reception which gave members the opportunity to talk freely with the Ambassador.

Philosophy Society

Philosophy Society talks this term have attracted undergraduates, postgraduates and staff. There have been two successful talks so far:

On Wednesday 18 January Prof. Raymond Geuss from Cambridge spoke on ‘Nietzsche’s Philosophical Ethnology’, discussing the way in which Nietzsche takes Herodotus as a model for a new way of doing philosophy.

On Wednesday 8 February Henry Somers-Hall spoke on ‘Throne of Blood and the Metaphysics of Tragedy’, asking how Hegel’s theory of tragedy could apply to Kurosawa’s film which presents the plot of Macbeth within the conventions of Noh theatre.’

WHAT’S COMING UP

PIR Soc

22nd February 2017 - Government and Politics Careers and Networking event (click here)

28th February 2017 - Pancakes and Politics film night, watching ‘The Dictator’ (click here)

15th March 2017 - ‘Staff versus Student’ Pub Quiz

We’re excited to launch the first Annual Emily Davison Memorial Lecture, with this year’s special key-note speaker Baroness Catherine Ashton, arguably our university’s most celebrated alumna and a fantastic embodiment of the values and legacy of the College and the suffragette movement. To keep up-to-date with the society’s exciting events, like our Facebook page.

For our brand-new politics journal, ‘The Despatch Box’ and to keep up-to-date with new articles and possibilities of joining the team click here.
Diplomatic Society

23rd February 2017 | Ceilidh in aid of Syria Relief | Founders Dining Hall | 8:30pm - late
This event is a type of traditional Scottish dancing that is taught to you as you go along by the band. There will be Scottish themed cocktails, a raffle with prizes such as SU tickets, prosecco, chocolates, and more, and other games such as “Pin the tail on the Haggis”. This is in aid of the charity ‘Syria Relief’ which provides first-response humanitarian aid on the ground in Syria. Tickets can be bought from committee members, or online.

27th February 2017 | Yvonne Newman, Vital for Children | Founders Lecture Theatre | 6-8pm
Yvonne Newman, Founder of ‘Vital for Children’, a charity aims to make sustainable difference to children in need in India, will be visiting the university to talk us through the causes and the effects of child trafficking and poverty in India. This will be followed by a short Q&A sessions, and a drinks reception.

March (TBC) | Wesley Eyley, Civil Servant – Home Office | Founders Lecture Theatre
Wesley Eyley, a junior Civil Servant and Private Secretary in a Govt. Minister’s Office, inter linking between the Home Office and the Dept. for Communities and Local Govt, has graciously offered to talk to us about the civil service competencies and ways in which you can gain experience and display this to potential employers.

Weekly Model UN Training | Bourne Laboratory 2 | Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 6-8pm
If you would like to see how MUN works, or would like to practice your public speaking skills then come along to our weekly MUN sessions, every Tuesday and Wednesday!

More details on our Facebook page.

WHAT’S COMING UP

New Political Communications

22nd February 2017 - Dave Whiteland from UK-based civic tech pioneer NGO MySociety will be speaking about their new initiative, EveryPolitician.

8th March 2017 - Dr Shelley Boulianne, Associate Professor of Sociology at MacEwan University, Canada, will be speaking about her new large scale meta-analysis project on digital media and engagement

Further details here.

Centre for Research in Islamic and West Asian Studies (CIWAS)
CIWAS is a new research base that brings together scholars of the Islam and West Asia at Royal Holloway. There will be film screenings on 2 March, 23 March and 11 May, all in the FLT at 6pm. CIWAS talks will be on 16 March, 4 May and 18 May in FW101 at 5pm. Further details here and on Twitter.

Centre for Politics in Africa, Asia and the Middle East (AAME).
AAME is a new research centre in the Department, further details here.

We will be hosting a talk by Dr Xin Sun from the University of Oxford, entitled ‘Post-Election Governance and Land Expropriations in Rural China’ at 5pm in FW101 on 1 March. We will then have another talk on 15 March by Dr Yasmin Khan, also from the University of Oxford on Politics and History of South Asia, at 5.0 pm in FW101.