Mark Laffey who has taken over the headship of the Department writes, “I am delighted to be taking over the headship from Lawrence Saez, who generously filled in while I was on research leave in the autumn. It is a real privilege to be voted head by my colleagues, and I look forward to repaying their faith in me. The department is in rude good health, with exciting and important work being done by my colleagues in all sorts of areas, a new and very successful undergraduate International Relations degree, and awards and fellowships which represent international recognition of our research. I am routinely impressed by our students, at all levels: their enthusiasm for politics, their creativity and engagement with the wider world. Looking ahead to the next three years, I hope to maintain the department’s external reputation while ensuring it remains a great place to work and study. The department has an important role to play in the future of the School and I look forward to ensuring its long-term success.

Rahul Rao has been awarded a 2016 Scholar Award by the LGBTQA Caucus of the ISA. The award recognises Rahul’s recent work on global homocapitalism and on the relationship between memory and temporality in the politics of sexuality. The award will be presented at the joint FTGS/WCIS/LGBTQA reception at the annual ISA convention in Atlanta, Georgia. Congratulations, Rahul!

Fiona Adamson has been awarded best paper prize of the Council for European Studies Immigration Research Network. The paper was first presented at the Migration, Mobility and Membership Research Cluster at SOAS and BISA workshops. It benefited from comments by SOAS colleagues at those workshops and her attendance at the CES conference in Paris was supported by Faculty funds. The CES Immigration Research Network commended Fiona’s paper, “Sending states and the making of intra-diasporic politics: Turkey and its diasporas in Europe” as follows: The jury awarded the prize for the outstanding quality and originality of the argument, as well as the significant potential of the paper’s conclusions for further advances in this field of study. Through an historically contextualised approach, the paper moves beyond actor-based models of diaspora politics to show how, in the case of Turkey, diaspora politics and state diaspora policies are historically co-constituted. The paper then locates “homeland politics” and “diaspora engagement policies” as part of larger processes of Turkish state- and nation-building. The paper was seen as innovative at both the theoretical and empirical levels through its highly sophisticated account of key concepts and theories in the field of diaspora studies. Many congratulations to Fiona.

In December 2015, Reem Abou-El-Fadl was elected Trustee and member of the Committee of Management of the Council for British Research in the Levant for a four year term.

At the invitation of the British Academy, Rochana Bajpai joined its Area Panel for South Asia in 2015. A book for which Laleh Khalili has written the foreword, Occupied Pleasures by Tanya Habjouqa (FotoEvidence Press) was selected by Time magazine as one of the Best Books of 2015. Tanya is an award-winning photographer living in Palestine, and formerly Laleh’s student.

Many warm congratulations to Indrė Balčaitė, Najia Mukhtar, Anna Rader, Benjamin Schuetze, and Gerasimos Tsourapas all of whom have passed their doctoral vivas.

Benjamin Schuetze has been awarded a 3-year postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Freiburg, starting this April.

Professor Charles Tripp has published Battlefields of the Republic: the Struggle for Public Space in Tunisia in the LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series, no 13.
Leslie Vinjamuri published an article “The International Criminal Court and the Paradox of Authority” in a Special Issue of Journal Law and Contemporary Problems. This Special Issue, on The Variable Authority of International Courts was the culmination of papers presented at workshop meetings that took place at the University of Copenhagen and Duke University Law School. The project was led by Professor Karen Alter (Northwestern University), Professor Laurence Helfer (Duke University School of Law), and Professor Mikael Madsen (University of Copenhagen).


Laleh Khalili published “The politics of pleasure: Promenading on the Corniche and beachgoing” in EPD: Society and Space. The article, research for which was funded by the British Academy and Palestine American Research Center asks if simple pleasures in public spaces – such as beach-going and promenading– are not acts of resistance how are they to be understood as political acts. She also published a review of Jack Shenker’s excellent Egypt: A Radical History in Red Pepper.

Doctoral student Lewis Turner published a short piece in the Policy Monitor section of the Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration. Titled “On encampment and gendered vulnerabilities: a critical analysis of the UK’s vulnerable persons relocation scheme for Syrian refugees” it examined the problematic centrality of refugee camps to the UK’s resettlement program and the notions of vulnerability the scheme employs.

Professor Stephen Chan published with the IDS (Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex) a 10,000 word prognosis of Chinese financial institution-building and the strategic direction they incorporate ahead of the G20 summit in China latest this year.


Beatriz Yubero and Xavier Palacios (MSc Middle East Politics) published a political analysis on the last Turkish general elections. This analysis takes into account the geopolitical and national consequences of the results of these elections, specially focusing on the Syrian crisis. In December, Michael Buehler published a review in Contemporary Southeast Asia of Jamie Davidson’s book Indonesia’s Changing Political Economy: Governing the Roads. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Rahul Rao published an article titled “Recovering Reparative Readings of Postcolonialism and Marxism” in Critical Sociology (2016). The article offers critical readings of work in postcolonial theory that repudiates Marxism and vice versa. It argues that such repudiations are (a) politically disabling in forcing us to choose positions that insist on the priority of some axes of marginality over others, and (b) unnecessary if one pays attention to a tradition of what might be called ‘black Marxism’, which has long been invested in bridging the supposed gulf between postcolonialism and Marxism. Rahul also published a review of Paul Amar’s book The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism in philoSOPHIA 5.2 (2015).


Rafeef Ziadah’s chapter “Palestine Calling: Notes on the BDS Movement” was published in the book Apartheid in Palestine edited by Ghada Ageel.
Bhavna Dave published a Policy Report: Resetting India’s Engagement in Central Asia: From Symbols to Substance (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) in January 2016.

Research Centres, Clusters, & Networks

Centre for Comparative Political Thought

On 20 February the CCPT held the first Graduate Conference ‘New Directions for Political Thought’ at the initiative of the cohort of MSc Comparative Political Thought students who graduated in 2015: Heather Swadley, Nazli Tarzi, Terri Harris, Warda Khokhar, Sadiq Habib, Bilal Ahmed and Johanna Schmidt. CCPT and the London Comparative Political Thought Group hosted a seminar at SOAS on 8 March 2016. Dr Diego von Vacano (Texas A&M University) spoke to his paper ‘Race Empire and Religion: Las Casas and the birth of Racialization in Latin American Political Thought’.

Centre for the International Politics of Conflicts, Rights and Justice

Professor Nancy Sherman, Georgetown University, University Professor and Professor of Philosophy, delivered a lecture on After War: Healing the Moral Wounds of our Soldiers.

Dr. Leslie Vinjamuri interviewed Professor Sherman on SOAS Radio about her research on soldiers, moral injury, and reconciliation after war.

Centre for Taiwan Studies

On 9 Jan, 2016, we held a SOAS Taiwan Studies reunion at the Social Enterprise Hub (former Premier’s Residence) in Taipei.

On 27 Feb, 2016, Dafydd Fell led the SOAS Centre of Taiwan Studies Football Team in the UK Chinese Veterans Cup. We got the 3rd place. (See photos below)

Dafydd Fell and Chang Bi-yu organized the following Centre of Taiwan Studies Seminars since the last newsletter:

10 Nov, 2015: Opportunities and Pitfalls of Cross-Strait Economic Integration, Speaker: Prof Tung Chen-yuan
11 Nov, 2015: Taiwan’s 2016 Elections and Cross-Strait Relations, Speaker: Prof Tung Chen-yuan
18 Nov, 2015: Taiwanese-Language Cinema: State versus Market, National versus Transnational, Speaker: Dr Ming-yeh Rawnsley
19 Nov, 2015: Book Launch of Language, Politics and Identity in Taiwan, Speaker: Dr Chang Hui-Ching
25 Nov, 2015: Book Launch of Place, Identity and National Imagination in Postwar Taiwan, Speaker: Dr Chang Bi-Yu
26 Nov, 2015: Film Screening of Tropical Fish, Co-organised with China-Britain Youth Association
2 Dec, 2015: Pledge, Planning, (In)action: Chiang Kai-shek’s Shelved War Plan of Retaking China, Speaker: Dr Isabelle Cheng
3 Dec, 2015: Book Launch of Environmental Governance in Taiwan, Speaker: Dr Simona A. Grano
10 Dec, 2015: Roundtable on Taiwan’s January 2016 National Elections, Panellists: Dafydd Fell (SOAS), Jonathan Sullivan (Nottingham), Lara Momesso (Portsmouth and SOAS), and Victor Chan (BBC Chinese Service)
14 Jan, 2016: Space of Taiwanese indigenous peoples: How has Taiwanese indigenous people been recognized, constructed, and appropriated?, Speaker: Dr Miki Nakanishi=Tsubota
20 Jan, 2016: Dadoceng: Locating Modernity in Taiwan, Speaker: Dr. Niki Alsford
21 Jan, 2016: Taiwan Election 2016 Roundtable, Panelists: Dafydd Fell (SOAS), Ian Inkster (SOAS), Thomas Costerton (SOAS)
28 Jan, 2016: Studying and Research in Taiwan: Briefing on Scholarship and Research Funding Opportunities, and Youth Mobility Scheme

4 Feb, 2016: Memory and National History in Taiwanese Comic Books and Tourist Souvenirs, Speaker: Dr Adina Zemanek
5 Feb, 2016: Niu Chengze’s Revisions of New Wave Films – Father Figures, Ethnicity and Taiwaneseness, Speaker: Dr Adina Zemanek
8 Feb, 2016: Film Screening of A Place of One’s Own and Q&A with Director Lou Yi-an
9 Feb, 2016: Film Screening of The Losers and Q&A with Director Lou Yi-an
10 Feb, 2016: Unsynchronized Relations between Jakarta and Taipei, Speaker: Rangga Aditya Elias
12 Feb, 2016: Film Screening: Sunflower Occupation and Q&A with Director Chen Yu-Ching
12 Feb, 2016: Film Screening of Civil Disobedience and Q&A with Director Chen Yu-Ching
18 Feb, 2016: Of floating ghosts and red envelopes: Comparing party systems in Northeast Asia, Speaker: Dr Olli Hellmann
19 Feb, 2016: Images of Jolin Tsai - The Structural Characteristics and Star Representation in Jolin Tsai’s Music Video - The Great Artist (2012), Speaker: Mr Liu, Chu-Ying
25 Feb, 2016: Book Launch: Routledge Handbook of Chinese Media: A comparison of public television and international communications between Taiwan and mainland China, Speakers: Prof Gary Rawnsley and Dr Ming-Yeh Rawnsley
26 Feb, 2016: Fighting Corruption in Asia’s Young Democracies: Taiwan and Korea Compared, Speaker: Prof Christian Göbel
2 Mar, 2016: Marginalized in the Region? Taiwan’s Pop Culture and Media Policy, Speaker: Dr Lee Hsiao-wen

London Migration Research Group (LMRG)

The London Migration Research Group (LMRG), which is co-convened by Fiona Adamson and Gerasimos Tsourapas, continued to host its regular seminar series. Kelly M. Greenhill (Tufts) gave a talk on “Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement as an Instrument of Coercion in the European Migration Crisis and Beyond” on 8 December. The LMRG also hosted Mohamed Hassan (Goldsmiths) for a talk on “Transnational Somali Diasporas: Sites and Insights of Communities and Youth Organisations” on 2 February, and Neophytos Loizides for a seminar on “Reversing Forced Migrations: Protracted Displacements and Return Home” on 8 March 2016.

London Asia-Pacific Centre for Social Sciences

The London Asia-Pacific Centre for Social Science (Co-Chairs: Tat Yan Kong, SOAS and Ramon Pacheco Pardo, KCL) held its launch event on 18 November 2015.

The Centre was awarded USD14,938 for its Korea-related speaker series in 2016-17 by the Academy of Korean Studies (the same amount will be award for each of the following two years subject to satisfactory evaluation).

The inaugural workshop titled Varieties of Capitalism and Democracy in the Asia-Pacific is scheduled for 11 May 2016.

Presentations and Conferences

Department of Politics and International Studies

In the coming months, to celebrate the centenary of SOAS, a number of lectures will be held in different departments. The Department of Politics and International Studies is proud to be hosting two such talks:

On 18 April, Professor Alfred Stepan (Wallace Sayre Professor of Government Emeritus, Columbia University, and Fellow of the British Academy) will be lecturing on “Democracies with Large Muslim Populations: Reflections on Indonesia, India, Senegal and Tunisia”.

London Asia-Pacific Centre for Social Sciences

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The inaugural workshop titled Varieties of Capitalism and Democracy in the Asia-Pacific is scheduled for 11 May 2016.
On 12 May, **Professor James C. Scott**, (Sterling Professor of Political Science and Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Agrarian Studies Program at Yale University) will lecture on “Beyond the Pale: The Earliest Agrarian States and ‘their Barbarians’”.

**Rahul Rao** gave the 11th General K. S. Thimayya Memorial Lecture, with Rohan Narayana Murty, at Bishop Cotton Boys’ School, Bangalore, in November 2015. Titled ‘Academia at Crossroads: Finding and Fostering Creativity’, the public lecture discussed the growing climate of intolerance and threats to freedom of speech in India. Rahul also spoke on the subject of ‘Contesting Conceptions of the Nation’ at a teach-in organised at the University of Oxford on March 8, 2016, to discuss controversies around university campus activism and prosecutions for sedition in India.

In November, **Michael Buehler** delivered a lecture on “Islam and Democracy in Indonesia” at the Aga Khan University in London. Michael also delivered a talk on *Democracy and the Islamization of Politics in Indonesia*, at the Association for International Affairs (AMO), in Prague. In December, he delivered a talk at ”Keele World Affairs - Europe’s Leading Lecture Series on Politics, Economics, and Global Issues” in Stoke-on-Trent. In January, Michael presented “Towards a theory of subnational undemocratic regimes in unitary states: Comparative evidence from Indonesia” at the University of Sussex Workshop *Uneven State Building and Democratization: Discussing the Future Research Agenda on Subnational Politics*, in London. In February, he presented “Election Cycles and the Adoption of Shari’a Law in Muslim-Majority Democracies: Evidence from Indonesia” at the London School of Economics and Political Science Workshop on *Comparative Studies and Subnational Politics: Reports from the Frontier*. Michael also participated in a panel of experts discussing the political changes in Myanmar in an event titled “All change at the top: Myanmar’s new government takes shape”.

**Arshin Adib-Moghaddam** gave a talk about cultural diplomacy and interactions between Europe and Iran at an event organised Institute of Cultural Dialogue in Berlin (with Hamid Dabashi and Amir Hassan Cheheltan), chaired by Ali Fatollah-Nejad.

The Centre for Strategic Research of the Middle East dedicated a day workshop to Arshin Adib-Moghaddam’s work on the international politics of the Persian Gulf. Adib-Moghaddam’s contribution to the seminar was transmitted per video-call.

Doctoral student **Alia Al-Senussi** was invited to participate in Aspen Institute Italia’s annual retreat and seminar on the subjects of Ethics and Values in Leadership. Alia was selected to moderate the roundtable discussion between Council members and international guests of the Saudi Art Council’s opening of their 21,39 show in Jeddah.

**Bhavna Dave** presented a paper “Implications of China’s Silk Road Initiatives and the Eurasia Economic Union for Kazakhstan’s Multivector Foreign Policy” Conference on Central Asian Republics: Economic and Geopolitical Perspectives at Harry S. Truman Institute, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 25 November 2015. Bhavna was invited to give a keynote speech “Connectivity,
Collaboration and Competition Along the New Silk Road," at the conference Silk Road Reloaded at Austrian Chamber of Commerce (Wirtschaftskammer Osterreich, WKO) in Vienna in December. In February, she gave a lecture “Migrants’ Associations in Moscow: Between State Patronage, Ethnic Solidarity and Civil Society” at Department of Conflict and Development Studies Seminar, Gent University, Belgium.

In March, Mike Farquhar served as discussant for a workshop on “Saudi Salafism and Global Shifts” at the University of Oxford. The workshop formed part of a five-year project on Changing Structures of Islamic Authority and Consequences for Social Change, led by Masooda Bano of the Oxford Department of International Development.

On 10 February Julia Strauss gave a talk at Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service, ”Frames, Repertoires and Performances: Land Reform Campaigns and State building in Sunan and Taiwan, 1950-1953”. On 11 February, she gave the same talk at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

In January, Rochana Bajpai travelled to Ottawa, Canada to participate in a think-tank organised by the Global Centre for Pluralism. She presented the India case study for the initiative ‘Changing Conversations about Diversity and Pluralism’. Rochana was an invited speaker at a conference on Democracy and Religious Pluralism’ held at Columbia University, in February, led by Prof. Karen Barkey at IRCPL. Rochana’s paper outlined a typology of state approaches to religious pluralism in India. The conference brought together academics, journalists and politicians from India, Pakistan and Turkey. Also in February, Rochana was a speaker at a panel discussion ‘Erosion of Democracy? Rise of Illegalisms in South Asia & Europe’ hosted by King’s College London India Institute on 18 February. The discussion was chaired by Prof. Christophe Jaffrelot (Sciences Po and KCL India Institute) and focused on India and France.

In December, Dafydd Fell gave a talk on Taiwan’s Political History 1945-2000 in Eleven Advertisements at Mahidol University, Bangkok, and his National ChengChi University’s talk compared Taiwan Studies Teaching in Europe and the United States. Dafydd also delivered a Talk on Small Parties in the 2016 election at National Sun Yat Sen University.

In January, Dafydd Fell joined the International Symposium on the Political and Economic Impacts of Taiwan's 2016 Elections, organised by the Institute for National Policy Research.

In March, Dafydd gave a lecture at Durham University about Taiwan’s Political History in Eleven Advertisements. The podcast of Manjeet Ramgotra’s paper on postcolonial republicanism at the Reclaiming Republicanism Conference, University of Oxford (June 2015) can now be found here.

Shirin Shafaie gave a lecture at The Iran Society in London on “Iran’s ‘Sacred Defence’ and the Politics of Visual Remembrance” in February.

Meera Sabaratnam was invited to present her research at the University of Warwick’s Politics and International Studies Seminar in January. Her work, entitled ‘Why Status Anxiety is Not Enough: Subjects, Structures and the new Hierarchies Debate’ discussed the contribution that theorists of race such as W.E.B. Du Bois could make to our understanding of international hierarchies. Meera also presented a paper to the Politics Department Research Seminar at SOAS, and later at the Barcelona Institute for International Studies (IBEI) on contrapuntal analysis entitled ‘Bringing Up the Bodies: A Contrapuntal Analysis of the Great War’.

In November, doctoral candidate Emanuelle Degli Esposti presented a paper entitled “Living Najaf in London: Diaspora, Identity, and the Sectarianisation of the Iraqi-Shi’a Subject” at the ERC-funded workshop Diaspora Mobilisation for Conflict and Postonflict Reconstruction at Warwick University.

In November, Charles Tripp co-organised and led two British Academy sponsored events on Research Methods in Social Science at the British Institute in Amman, Jordan: a 1-day seminar with colleagues from universities across the Middle East and North Africa to assess the state of social science research in higher education in the region, and a 2-day training workshop on social science research methods for early career researchers from universities and research institutes across the region. In December, Professor Tripp gave a seminar on “Performing the political: the drama of violence and nonviolence in political struggle” at the Sociology Department, University of Cambridge.
In November 2015, Dr Enze Han gave a talk on ethnicity and public goods provision at the Center for Contemporary China, Princeton University. In December, he gave a talk on foreign policy choices for Myanmar and Thailand in the context of Sino-US geo-strategic competition at Fudan University, China. He also gave the same talk at the China and World Program at Princeton University in February 2016.

In January, Yuka Kobayashi presented her research on China and climate change at Kings College, London and Birmingham University. In February she gave a talk on China’s role in the Paris Agreement on climate change and also took part in a panel discussion alongside Danny Quah (LSE) and Kerry Brown (Kings College London) on the Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank (AIIB) at Warwick University.

Leslie Vinjamuri was one of 30 experts who participated in a conference in Mexico City on “Broadening Constituencies for Transitional Justice + Elevating the Focus on Historical Grievance: Step One” in Mexico City, Mexico, December 4 and 5, 2015. This meeting was hosted by The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE).

In February, Leslie Vinjamuri delivered a keynote lecture, “Power, Inequality, and the Challenge of Global Governance” at the Model United Nations Conference at Westminster School in London. Student delegates participated from across London, but also included teams from Norway and Brazil. 60% of delegates were from the schools in the state sector, and 40% from schools in the private sector.

In November, Phil Clark held advisory meetings in Kigali with 24 Rwandan researchers as part of a DFID-funded project at the Aegis Trust. The project is designed to support local researchers working on a wide range of conflict-related themes, with the objective of publishing peer-reviewed journal articles. As part of this project, Phil also organised two public workshops, “Publishing and Publication Strategies” and “Research for Policy and the Media”. In December, Phil gave a seminar on the politics of the International Criminal Court in Africa to the Politics Department at Royal Holloway, while in January, he presented a paper at the “Pluralist Approaches to International Criminal Justice” conference at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Also in January, he gave a lecture on justice for low-level atrocity perpetrators at Peterhouse College Cambridge and presented at a workshop on connecting academic research to the media, hosted by the SOAS Communications Office and SOAS Impact. In February, Phil Clark gave a talk on causes of, and responses to, genocide at the Dwight School London and a seminar on the politics of the International Criminal Court in Africa at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University. In March, Phil presented on the topic of transitional justice and the legacy of guilt at a workshop hosted by the Faculty of Law at Warwick University.

In December, Matt Nelson presented a paper concerning ‘The Islamic State in South Asia’ at the National University of Modern Languages in Islamabad (Pakistan) and also a paper (with Dian Shah) titled ‘Operationalising Human Rights: Religious Freedom and Administrative “Reasonableness” in Malaysia and Beyond’ at the National University of Singapore. In January, Matt presented a paper for the launch of a new Brookings Institution initiative titled ‘Reconstituting Local Orders’ (Washington, D.C.). (Matt’s latest paper for Brookings will be published later in the year.)


In February, Najia Mukhtar presented a paper on Islam in the Pakistani Media at the Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud (CEIAS). She also presented her work on the notion of love in contemporary Sufi music at Institut d'études de l'Islam et des sociétés du monde musulman (IISMM). Both centres are affiliated with the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) in Paris.

In December, Doctoral student Mathilde Zederman presented a paper in Tunis at the international conference The Maghreb in International Relations, titled “Le champ politique diasporique tunisien en France: conversions du capital militant et migrations de pratiques politiques”. In March, Mathilde presented a paper in the Cambridge Muslims in Europe Postgraduate Forum (University of Cambridge), entitled Islamic Opposition Movements in diasporic contexts. The cases of Solidarités tunisiennes and CODE Égypte in France.

Graffiti in Zabadani, Syria: ‘If the country has become a jungle, that is no reason for you to become an animal’ October, 2013
In November/December, Doctoral student Marwa Mamdouh Salem, PhD candidate (Politics) participated in the Capacity Building Program for New Afro-Asian Strategic Partnership held by the Indonesian Foreign Ministry. Ms. Salem presented on “The Future of Afro-Asian Solidarity from Egypt’s Perspective” at the end of the program. The program also included a field visit to Bandung City where Non-Aligned leaders (Tito, Sukarno, Nehro, Nasser and others) participated in the Bandung Conference 60 years ago.

Marwa also participated in the seminar held by the Near East & South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) in Jordan on Encountering Violent Extremism in the Levant and Beyond. The seminar was held in Amman-in February and included a visit to the Royal Institute of Inter-Religious Studies and an open discussion with Prince Al-Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan.

In January, doctoral student Lewis Turner presented a paper on “Engaging men and boys’ in sexual and gender-based violence prevention among Syrian refugee communities in Jordan” to a conference on Masculinities, Violence and (Post-)Conflict hosted by Ulster University. The following day he participated in a workshop that brought together academic researchers and peace building NGOs working on topics relating to masculinities and violence.

Reem Abou-El-Fadl was invited to discuss Professor Joseph Sassoon’s keynote address at the University of Manchester conference, Political Parties in the Middle East: Past, Present and Future Perspectives, in January. The lecture was titled “Party and Governance in the Arab Republics”. Reem also chaired a panel to celebrate the launch of edited volume Diasporas of the Modern Middle East: Contextualising Community (EUP, 2015) with editors and former SOAS staff members Sossie Kasbarian and Anthony Gorman as well as contributors May Farah, Maria Holt and Haris Rigas. The launch took place on 4 March 2016.

Rafeef Ziadah presented a paper at the Academia and Social Justice conference of the Asfari Institute at the American University of Beirut in March. In March, Matthew Eagleton-Pierce presented “On Individualism in the Neoliberal Period” at the Political Studies Association Conference in Brighton. In November 2015, he presented a paper titled “Neoliberalism as Analytical Starting Point: Problems and Possibilities” at a workshop on Neoliberalism, Employment, and Law at the University of Oxford.

Politics Department Seminars for Term 2

6th Jan:
Jus Pecuniae: Elite Mobility and the Codification of Economic Migration Schemes
Kristin Surak, SOAS

13th Jan:
Small States Foreign Policy Choices in the Face of Great Power Competition in Southeast Asia
Enze Han, SOAS

20th Jan:
The Politics of sameness and otherness: pan-Africanism, nationalism and recognition in postcolonial Africa
Julia Gallagher, Royal Holloway

27th Jan:
Bringing Up the Bodies: A Contrapuntal Method for Global Historical Sociology
Meera Sabaratnam, SOAS

3rd Feb:
Governing Borderless Threats by Transforming States in Southeast Asia
Lee Jones, Queen Mary University of London

17th Feb:
Sankara’s Children: The Praxis and Legacies of Thomas Sankara
Amber Murrey, Jimma University

24th Feb:
The Rise of What? Rethinking China: Disciplinary Objects, the Agrarian Question and the Internationalization of the State
Mark Laffey, SOAS
9th Mar:
The Outsider Advantage: Why Liminal Actors Rise to System-Wide Domination
Dan Nexon, Georgetown University

16th Mar:
Going to the Ground (or Astroturf): A Grassroots View of Regime Resilience
Meredith Weiss, University of Albany

For abstracts and speaker bios, see https://www.facebook.com/PoliticsDeptSOAS/events?key=events

The Department research seminar podcasts are also available here

Current Research

Rafeef Ziadah continued her field research on infrastructure and logistics in the Gulf Cooperation Council with a trip to Dubai, visiting Jabal Ali Port and Free Zones.

Outreach

In January, Laleh Khalili was invited to participate in Jaipur Literature Festival. She was on three different panels: a conversation with graphic artist Molly Crabapple on Laleh’s book, Time in the Shadows; a panel on Gaza, alongside Crabapple and Omar Barghouthi; and a third panel on the “Arab Spring” alongside Vali Nast, Mona El-Tahawi, and novelist Sulaiman Addonia.

Laleh was immensely happy to catch up with a number of former students, including recent department alumnus Disha Mukherjee. She was also interviewed by a number of different Indian media outlets, including Hard News Media.

In February, Charles Tripp gave a presentation at a roundtable at the FCO with participation of the British Embassy, Baghdad on “Building National Identities in Divided States – the Implications for Iraq”.

In January, Matt Nelson joined Ambassador Cameron Munter and Dr. Tamara Wittes in Washington, D.C. to launch a new Brookings Institution initiative led by Shadi Hamid, Vanda Felbab-Brown, and Harold Trinkunas entitled ‘Reconstituting Local Orders’. (Matt’s latest paper for Brookings will be published later in the year.)

In January, doctoral student Jack Joy participated in the 15th Beirut Exchange, a two-week programme of lectures and colloquia given by Lebanese political leaders, academics and public intellectuals from across the country’s civic spectrum. He is very enthusiastic about the project and found it very useful in meeting policymakers and politicians.

In March, Leslie Vinjamuri moderated a discussion with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the US role in the world, women in foreign policy, and human rights.

In February, Leslie Vinjamuri chaired the Sir Isaiah Berlin Lecture at Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs. This lecture “US Elections 2016 and the Future of Liberal Democracy” was delivered by Governor Howard Dean. It was jointly hosted by Chatham House and Liberal International. Also in February, Leslie met with Y10 girls at the City of London School for Girls to talk about the prospects and pitfalls for international engagement in Syria. Finally, she moderated a discussion on Transitional Justice in Libya with Melinda Taylor, formerly from Office of the Public Counsel for Defense at the International Criminal Court, and Elham Sahdi, Director of Lawyers for Justice in Libya. This event was sponsored by the SOAS Policy Forum and London Middle East Institute.

Doctoral student Atta Barkindo was selected to design a programme, Countering Violent Extremism in Christianity, as part of the Nigerian project for the Deradicalization of Violent Extremists in custody.

In December, Tat Yan Kong participated in an FCO-organized roundtable briefing for Mr Alastair Morgan, the new UK Ambassador to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, while in February, he participated in a roundtable titled “South Korea’s ‘middle power’ role in the changing security dynamics of East Asia” at Chatham House.

In February, Mike Farquhar took part in a round table in London on policing and security sector reform in Egypt, organised by the NGO Saferworld.

In January, Phil Clark appeared as an expert witness in the trial of Rwandan genocide suspect, Claver Berinkindi, in the Stockholm City Court.

Meera Sabaratnam spoke at an event co-organised by the Royal African Society and Calvert 22 on ‘Red Africa:
Power, Liberation and the geopolitics of the Soviet Union’ on 1st March. She discussed the relationship between the Mozambican liberation front (Frelimo) and the Soviet Union.

Meera Sabaratnam spoke to the Warwick Anti-Racism Society in January on the question of ‘Selective Empathy’, looking at the overlap of various imperial projects in the Middle East. Meera also participated in the SOAS event organised by the Decolonising Our Minds Society, alongside Rahul Rao and Kerem Nisancioglu, on ‘Decolonising the University’. She also took part in a podcast on this subject at The Distortion of Things.

Shirin Shafaie developed, directed, and produced a TV game-show called Democrazy Live UK. Think of this as ‘Total Wipeout meets Live prime-ministerial debates’! Politics masquerading as entertainment in a bid to engage young Brits and encourage them to vote. The show involves a range of bizarre and brilliant UK political parties in a highly interactive format. Viewers tune in for 8 weeks to watch 12 aspiring politicians challenge each other in an amalgamation of politically-inspired games and pseudo-serious TV debates. The fate of the politicians is wholly dependent on their popularity rates that is measured during the Live TV debates. The winning party leaves with £100,000. Watch the Pilot episode (Balance the Budget) here.

Media and Blogs

Laura Cretney (MSc Middle East Politics and Arabic) wrote an article titled ‘Fire in the Desert: Nimr al-Nimr and the Future of Saudi Arabia’ for the politics and current affairs blog, Pink Jinn, in January.

In January, Salwa Ismail was a guest panelist on the BBC World Service’s Weekend Programme.

Dafydd Fell appeared on Singapore’s Channel News Asia’s documentary Ground Zero discussing Taiwan’s elections.

On Jan 16 Dafydd joined the BBC Chinese Service’s Panel Show discussing Taiwan’s election results, was interviewed on Reuters TV about China-Taiwan relations and was quoted in the Swedish press on Taiwan’s election campaign. He was quoted extensively in the Geographical article on Taiwan’s 2016 elections, and was interviewed by SET TV in Taipei about Taiwan’s election results.

Dafydd was also quoted in Foreign Policy article on the gay marriage issue in Taiwan.

In November, Yuka Kobayashi was interviewed by the BBC on Paris COP 21 for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

On the morning of Super Tuesday, Leslie Vinjamuri was interviewed about the US Elections on CNN International.

In November, doctoral student Atta Barkindo was interviewed by Al Jazeera on Boko Haram bombings in Yola and Kano, northern Nigeria and the implications for regional security. He was also interviewed by the BBC on the Islamist attack on Radisson Blu hotel in Mali and the links with Al-Qaeda or ISIL.

Arshin Adib-Moghadam published several opinion pieces in the global media including for CNN, The Independent, and two for Times Higher Education.

Arshin’s interviews were published on the front page of the Tehran Times, Mehr News Agency, the Washington Review and the Iranian Labour News Agency. Tehran Times published Adib-Moghadam’s response to former US National Security Advisor Dr. Gary Sick in an...
exclusive front-page piece. Arshin called for a Council of Philosophers for the European Union in an invited opinion piece about the future of Europe. Arshin also featured in a major BBC Four documentary on the lavish party thrown by the Shah of Iran in 1971, which marked the break between the so-called ‘king of kings’ and the people of Iran he reigned over. ‘Decadence and Downfall: The Shah of Iran’s Ultimate Party’ focuses on the 1971 celebration of 2,500 years of the Persian monarchy where money was no object. The documentary has been translated into several languages and is now being aired in Europe.

In November, Michael Buehler talked about the ageing population in Vietnam and the political challenges this creates for the government on Monocle24 The Daily. He was also quoted in the Myanmar Times on the challenges the country is facing during the transition period to a new government over the next few months. In December, The Times Higher Education Supplement ran a story on the smear campaign and public attacks against Michael Buehler in Indonesia after he published a story on covert lobbying activities in the context of the Indonesian president’s visit to the USA in October. The same month, Michael was quoted in a Bloomberg News story on rent-seeking activities in Indonesia’s mining sector and the alleged ‘shake-down’ of mining giant Freeport McRowan.by the speaker of the Indonesian parliament. He was also interviewed on Monocle24 on the role of the government in illegal Rosewood trade in Laos. Furthermore, Michael Buehler discussed Indonesia’s fight against corruption with Philippa Thomas on BBC World News. In December, Michael Buehler’s article on covert lobbying activities became the most read article on New Mandala in the year 2015. New Mandala editors called it “an important contribution on politics in Indonesia and the region, and more than a worthy winner for 2015.” In January 2016, Michael was interviewed on Monocle24’s “The Monocle Daily” on the presidential race in the Philippines. Also in January, Michael Buehler commented on the Jakarta terror attacks on Sky News, BBC World Service, BBC Radio 5, BBC “Mornings with Adrian Goldberg” and the Islam Channel as well as Monocle24’s “The Monocle Daily”. Michael Buehler’s research on the politicization of Islam in Indonesia was mentioned in the Financial Times in the context of the Jakarta Attacks. Michael was also quoted in a separate Financial Times article on the Jakarta bombings. Furthermore, Michael Buehler was mentioned in a Jakarta Post article on Indonesia’s foreign policy strategy vis-a-vis China. In addition, Michael Buehler was interviewed on a social media clamp-down in Cambodia on Monocle24’s “The Monocle Daily”.

Michael Buehler also spoke on State-Religion Relations in Indonesia by CFRU Radio in Guelph, Canada. Michael was also interviewed on the Islam Channel over on Najib Razak being cleared of corruption over $681 mio Saudi “gift”. In February, Michael Buehler was interviewed by The Monocle Daily on the 1mdb scandal corruption scandal in Malaysia. A week later, Michael Buehler was interviewed on Monocle’s ‘The Globalist’ on on Indonesia’s plans to boost growth by deregulation the economy. At the end of February, Michael Buehler was interviewed on the Monocle Daily on the Arms Trade in Southeast Asia. In March, Michael spoke on The Monocle Daily on what a Donald Trump presidency would mean for Asia. He also discussed on The Monocle Daily how private sector investment may shape the peace process in the Southern Philippines.

In December, Phil Clark published an op-ed on JusticeInfo.net on the role of international human rights groups in the Colombian peace talks, and was interviewed by the International Business Times on President Kabila’s attempts to delay the 2016 elections in DR Congo. Newsweek interviewed Phil Clark twice about attacks by ADF rebels in eastern Congo, and the Financial Times and the International Business Times interviewed him about the Rwandan referendum to allow President Kagame to run for a third term. Also in December, Phil published articles in The Africa Report and the Huffington Post on President Kagame’s push for a third term in Rwanda, the Global Information Network quoted Phil Clark on President Kagame and his critics after the third term referendum in Rwanda, and Phil gave a video interview for International Business Times on elections and human rights in DR Congo. Also in December, Phil appeared on Monocle 24’s “Midori House” programme to discuss Donald Trump, Malcolm Turnbull and the Venezuelan elections, was interviewed on BBC Newsday (3300) about Rwanda’s referendum on a third term for President Kagame, and Deutsche Welle interviewed him about possible EU sanctions against the Burundian government. Further, International Business Times and the Global Information Network quoted Phil on the Kagame third term issue in Rwanda and he was quoted in a JusticeHub piece on the future of the International Criminal Court. Reuters, IRIN News and Slant News interviewed him, about plans to send African Union peacekeepers to Burundi, Newsweek quoted him on various central African presidents running for 3rd terms, and he gave an interview to Arte.fr on the situation in Burundi. Also, International Business Times interviewed Phil Clark two more times on the 3rd term referendum in Rwanda, the Politicoscope website quoted Phil Clark on the broader issue of African presidents seeking to extend their term limits, and the Citizen newspaper in Tanzania quoted Phil on the African Union’s strategy to end the Burundi crisis.

In January, the Herald in Scotland quoted Phil Clark about ongoing violence in Burundi, Reuters interviewed him about Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto’s final showdown at the International Criminal Court, he was a studio guest on the BBC Weekend morning programme discussing a range of international issues, Newsweek interviewed him on the three main Ugandan presidential candidates, JusticeInfo.net and The Times in South Africa quoted him on the chances of Paul Kagame remaining President in Rwanda until 2034, International Business
Times quoted him on Kagame’s lambasting of the US over its criticisms of a 3rd presidential term.

In February, International Business Times interviewed Phil Clark on the likelihood of President Joseph Kabila running for re-election in the Democratic Republic of Congo, he was a guest on Monocle 24’s “Midori House” programme to discuss, among other topics, the ICC prosecution of former Ivorian president, Laurent Gbagbo, and the Syrian peace talks in Geneva, Deutsche Welle quoted him on accusations that Rwanda is arming and training Burundian rebels, and Phil was interviewed for a BBC World Service documentary on the political and cultural significance of boda boda (motorcycle taxis) in Uganda. Also in February, the Islam Channel and Newsweek interviewed Phil Clark about anti-Kabila protests in the DRC, Phil took part in a Guardian Development Network panel on “Democrats vs. Autocrats in Africa”, appeared on the Monocle 24 “Midori House” programme to discuss the Ugandan elections, Jeb Bush and new taxes in the Gulf states and FM4 in Austria interviewed Phil Clark about the Ugandan elections. Phil did the morning news review on Monocle 24’s “Globalist” programme, discussing the Ugandan elections and the national strike in DR Congo, and the Guardian posted a transcript of an interview with Phil Clark on “Big Men” leaders in Africa.

Meera Sabaratnam participated in a new online TV series called ‘The Fix’ on Novara Media, discussing the possibility of a leftist foreign policy.

Manjeet Ramgotra published a blog post ‘On Teaching Political Theory’ at the PSA Women’s Specialist Group Blog.

In February, PhD student Neil Loughlin published an article in the Guardian: “Weddings from hell: the Cambodian brides trafficked to China.”

In March, SOAS Politics MA student Dyana Sofya Daud published an op-ed on the current Malaysian popular protest movement in the Malay Mail.

Events

In February, Rafeef Ziadah released her long-awaited spoken word album We Teach Life, featuring new poems along with her popular “We Teach Life” and “Shades of Anger” recorded in her signature performance style with original music compositions.

She held a launch event at Rich Mix in Shoreditch, where her poetry reading was followed by music by a number of musical acts, including Z the People, Boikutt, and Eljehaz.

For those that didn't make the last meeting of 2015, Lawrence Saez’s revolutionary interim leadership of the Department was celebrated with a canvas print of the following image, which we are assured will receive prominent display.

Notices

Politics Summer Courses and Scholarship Opportunities

This summer 2016, SOAS will be offering eight politics focused summer courses, co-convened by leading academics in the field. Through a mixture of lectures, readings, discussions and activities, the courses will explore contemporary issues such as migration, gender, global politics and international relations. For a full list of the courses on offer visit the course listing page.

There are a range of different scholarship opportunities on offer for current students as well; it’s a great opportunity
to try out a topic before committing to study at post graduate level.

For further information contact the summer school team on summerschool@soas.ac.uk.

Are you a graduating Politics student or one of our alumni? Let us know what you will be doing or have done after graduation. Email Laleh Khalili at lk4@soas.ac.uk!

The Department of Politics and International Studies is one of the most cutting edge politics departments in the United Kingdom, and uniquely positioned for the study of the politics of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

There are at present nearly 500 students studying for degrees (BA, Certificate, MSc and MPhil/PhD) in the Department. The Department also hosts visiting students who are here as part of their work towards degrees in other countries (notably the United States, EU, Korea and Japan).

Apart from providing students with a firm grounding in the discipline, the department has particular strengths in the following areas:

- Regional Politics: Middle East, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and Africa
- International Relations: IR theory, security, human rights, transnational justice, international migration, IPE
- Comparative Politics: comparative political sociology, comparative political economy, comparative political thought
- Political Theory: political Islam, non-western political thought, multiculturalism

The current officers of the department are:

**Head of Department**
Dr Mark Laffey

**Undergraduate Admissions Tutor**
Dr Meera Sabaratnam

**Undergraduate Programme Convenors**
Dr Michael Buchler (BA Politics)
Dr Meera Sabaratnam (BA International Relations)
Dr Michael Buchler & Dr Meera Sabaratnam (BA Politics and International Relations)

**Undergraduate Tutors**
Dr Carlo Bonura (Student Welfare Tutor)
Dr Reem Abo El-Fadl (First Year Tutor)
Dr Tom Young (Second Year Tutor)
Dr Matthew Eagleton-Pierce (Third Year Tutor)

**Postgraduate Tutor**
Dr Dafydd Fell

**Postgraduate Admissions Tutors/Programme Convenors**
Dr Alastair Fraser (African Politics)
Dr Enze Han (Asian Politics)
Dr Kerem Nisancioglu (International Politics)
Prof Charles Tripp (Middle East Politics)
Dr Yuka Kobayashi (Politics of China)
Dr Tat Yan Kong (State, Society and Development)
Prof Stephen Hopgood (Conflict, Rights and Justice)
Dr Matt Nelson (Comparative Political Thought)
Dr Phil Clark (MRes in Politics with a Language; Research Tutor)

**Research Tutor**
Dr Felix Berenkoetter

**Research Admissions Tutor**
Dr Bhavna Davé

This newsletter is produced three times per academic year by Laleh Khalili. Send any announcements or notices to lk4@soas.ac.uk.

Department of Politics is on twitter; please follow @soaspolitics
On Facebook, you can find and befriend us at SOASPolitics