



## Politics and International Studies Newsletter



### Term 3: On and Off Campus

The Department's staff and students look forward to the opportunity to enjoy a gradual return to in-person academic and social activities in Term 3, as restrictions are projected to ease in mid-May. Once again, we sincerely thank everyone for their thorough and innovative engagement with online learning and research over the past year.

As the summer approaches, we will be hosting a series of virtual open days, webinars, and taster days for undergraduate and postgraduates, as part of the wider SOAS programme. Our next virtual Open Day events take place in late May: details are [on the SOAS website](#). We look forward to meeting prospective students and researchers, and sharing information on our programmes and projects with them.



### Appointments, Awards, Honours

**Arshin Adib-Moghaddam** has been appointed to the Board of Examiners and the Promotions Panel of the University of Gujrat.

**Yuka Kobayashi** has been appointed Specialist Advisor for the International Affairs and Defence Committee, House of Lords, for their inquiry into UK's security and trade relationship with China.

**Mark Laffey** has been awarded a Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

**Rahul Rao** has been awarded a research fellowship by the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (2021–22).

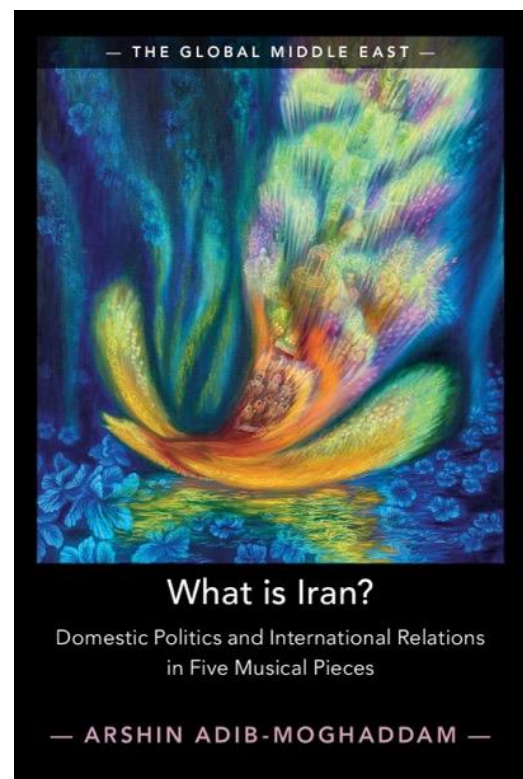
In March, **Rahul** received the International Studies Association's International Political Sociology Best Book Award for *Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

**Mohammad Tarikul Islam** has been appointed an Editor of the Oxford Transitional Justice Research, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford (2021). **Mohammad** has also been awarded a Senior Fellowship of the Youth Policy Forum, Bangladesh.



### New Publications

28 February 2021 was the global release date of **Arshin Adib-Moghaddam's** seventh book and his last on Iran for a long time to come. *What is Iran? Domestic Politics and International Relations in Five Musical Pieces* was published by Cambridge University Press as a part of The Global Middle East book series. It is the first book of its kind to come with a playlist to read by. The cover was painted by the renowned international artist, Lida Sherafatmand. She has also written an endorsement for the book, as have Professor Lubna Abid Ali, Professor of International Relations and Dean at the National Defence University, Pakistan, and Professor Hisae Nakanishi of the Graduate School of Global Studies at Doshisha University.



**Carlo Bonura** published 'The What-Has-Been and the Now of a Communist Past in Malaya in the Films of Amir Muhammad' in *positions asia critique*, 29.1.

**Michael Buehler** published the Year-End article on Indonesia in *Asian Survey* titled 'Indonesia in 2020: Pestilence and Incompetence.' Michael argued that

the Covid-19 pandemic amplified the status quo in Indonesia rather than act as a transformative force.

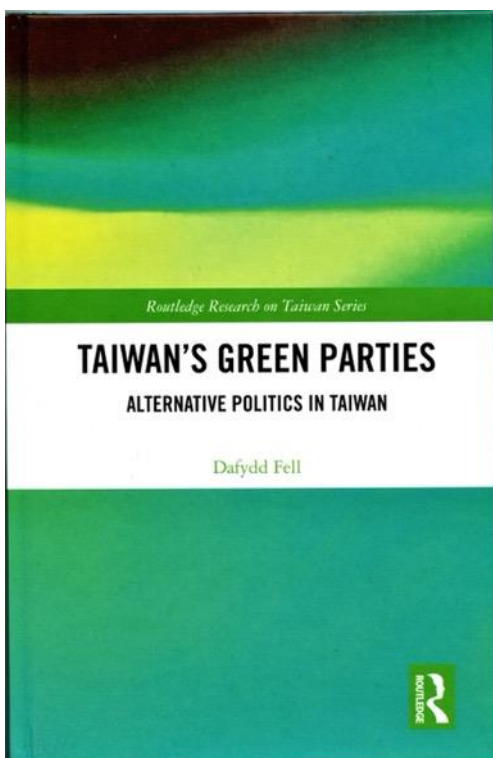
**Michael** also published a review of Carlos Gervasoni's book *Hybrid Regimes within Democracies: Fiscal Federalism and Subnational Rentier States* in *Publius - The Journal of Federalism*.

**Phil Clark** published a chapter, 'The International Criminal Court's Impact on Peacebuilding in Africa' in T. McNamee and M. Muyangwa, *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2021.

**Phil** also published a chapter, 'The UN Security Council and Transitional Justice: the Democratic Republic of Congo' in a United Nations University volume examining the role and impact of the UNSC's engagement with transitional justice processes around the world.

**Catherine Craven** published an article entitled 'Networks do not float freely: (Dis)entangling the politics of Tamil diaspora inclusion in development governance' in *Global Networks* (online).

**Dafydd Fell's** book *Taiwan's Green Parties: Alternative Politics in Taiwan* (Routledge) was published in March. The book examines the first 25 years history of Taiwan's most important movement party. The book launch was held at SOAS on 19 March. It has already received a very positive review in the Taipei Times.



**Mark Laffey** and Tarak Barkawi's article 'The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies,' originally published in 2006, has been translated into Spanish and republished in Chile as 'El momento poscolonial de los estudios de seguridad' in *Diversidad.net Intercultural* 2019 10(6).

Former SOAS Politics PhD student **Neil Loughlin**, currently a postdoctoral researcher in Political Science at KITLV, published an article on authoritarian linkage politics and its relationship to regime stability, entitled 'Chinese linkage, leverage, and Cambodia's transition to hegemonic authoritarianism,' in *Democratization*.

**Rahul Rao** published a short response piece entitled 'The Terror of Invulnerability' in *Vulnerability and the Politics of Care: Transdisciplinary Dialogues*, edited by Victoria Browne, Jason Danelly and Doerthe Rosenow, and published by Oxford University Press.

**Behar Sadriu** published 'Narratives in International Studies Research' for the *In ISA / Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*.

**Julia Strauss** has two new publications: 'Ambivalent successes, magnificent failures and historical afterlives: a postscript to Marx and Lenin in Africa and Asia,' in *Third World Quarterly*, and 'Scripts, Authority and Legitimacy: The View from China and Beyond' in Shirin M Rai, Milija Gluhovic, Silvija Jestrovic and Michael Saward, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Politics and Performance*, Oxford University Press, 2021.



## Research Centres, Clusters, & Networks

The flagship series of the **London Asia Pacific Centre** (SOAS and King's), *Studies of the Contemporary Asia Pacific* (Series Editors: **Tat Yan Kong**, SOAS and Ramon Pacheco Pardo, King's) has been formally approved by Hong Kong University Press. The first volume is due out in 2022.

**Dafydd Fell and Chang Bi-yu** organised several **Centre of Taiwan Studies** events in Term 2, including in January Marriage on the Road to Equality: A Taiwan Story with Chen Chao-ju 陳昭如 and in February, a book talk on *Language, Society, and the State: From Colonization to Globalization in Taiwan* by Gareth Price.

Over reading week the **Centre of Taiwan Studies** held its annual Taiwan Book and Film Week on the theme of ‘Environmentalism in Taiwan’. Events included the following online film screenings: ‘The Scenery Through the Smog 風從哪裡來’; ‘Eleven Meinong Conversations 美濃的 11 段對話’; and ‘County Road 184 縣道 184 之東’; as well as a SOAS Student Research Panel entitled ‘Gender and Environmentalism in East Asia’ with Olivia Chollet and Lizzie Frost; a Director’s Q&A Session with film director Shih Ho Feng 施合峰 on ‘The Scenery Through the Smog 風從哪裡來’.

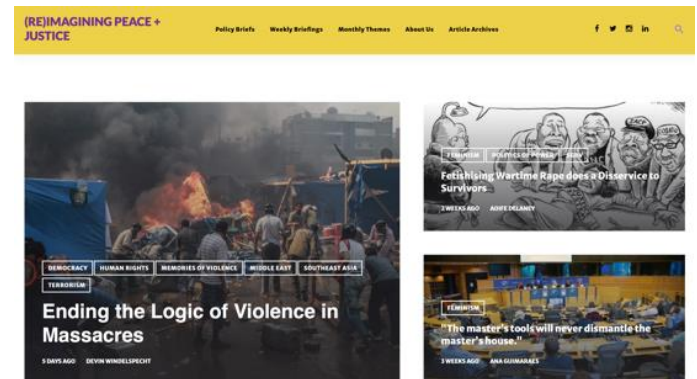
The Centre also held a book launch event on *Civil Society and the State in Democratic East Asia: Between Entanglement and Contention in Post High Growth* with Simona Grano, Mary Alice Haddad, Tobias Weiss, Tommy Chung Yin Kwan, and **Dafydd Fell**. The Centre also held a Director’s Q&A Session with film director Ho Chao-ti on ‘County Road 184 縣道 184 之東’; and a Director’s Q&A Session with film director Wing 羅文裕 on ‘Eleven Meinong Conversations 美濃的 11 段對話’.

The Centre also held an event entitled ‘The Meinong Anti-Dam Movement and its Legacy: A Conversation with Community Organizer Sung Ting-tung’, and a discussion on “‘Greening Taiwan Communities’’: Narratives from the new volume, *Greening East Asia: the Rise of the Eco-Developmental State*’, with Stevan Harrell, Lin Hui-nien, Chiu Hua-mei and Ashley Esarey.

Since reading week, the Centre has held three more book launches. These were on *Dynamics of Democracy in Taiwan: The Ma Ying-jeou Years* with speakers Kharis Templeman, Min-hua Huang, Mark Weatherall, Eric Chen-hua Yu, Jia-sin Yu, and **Dafydd Fell**; *China’s Influence and the Centre-periphery Tug of War in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Indo-Pacific*, with book editors Andrew J. Nathan and Wu Jieh-min; and on *Taiwan’s Green Parties, Alternative Politics in Taiwan* with **Dafydd Fell**.

Since the start of the academic year, the **MSc Politics of Conflict, Rights and Justice** student editors have curated two blog series on Islamophobia (in the UK, US, France, Myanmar and India) and Terrorism (including post-Trump US policies on the Houthis in Yemen), as well as Weekly Briefings commenting on pressing contemporary issues at <https://reimaginingpeacejustice.com/>

The editors – all members of the **Centre on Conflict, Rights and Justice (CCRJ)** – are **Eugénie Devevey, Hanna Uihlein, Imran Khan and Ferdusara Begum Ali**.



Three **CCRJ** research associates, **Ana Guimaraes, Sarah Smith** and **Aoife Delaney**, have also created a student policy brief section on the blog, creating a space for MSc students to give policy recommendations on current issues, here: <https://reimaginingpeacejustice.com/policy-team/>

As the **African State Architecture project** reaches its half-way mark, the team has produced a short film about its research activities. The film explores the ideas behind the project, the activities of its team members and describes some of the early findings.



## Presentations and Conferences

**Fiona Adamson** presented ‘The Migration State in the Global South’ at University of Southern California (USC) on 24 February 2021.

**Ali Alavi** presented his paper on Palestine and Iran for the annual conference of Middle East Dialogue, organised by the Policy Studies Organisation.

In March, **Phil Clark** presented on ‘The International Criminal Court’s Impact on Peacebuilding in Africa’ at a workshop hosted by the Woodrow Wilson Center Africa Program.

**Sarah El-Kazaz** was invited to present on ‘The Politics of Middle Eastern Exceptionalism and the Spatial-Materiality Turn’ at a workshop convened by the New Regionalisms working group of the Arab Council for the Social Sciences.

**Dafydd Fell** spoke in December at Nottingham University’s Taiwan Studies Programme Conference on Democracy in an Age of Globalisation and

Populism: Taiwan, UK and USA. His paper was titled 'Populists, Splinters, Rebels and Movements: Challenges to Mainstream Parties in Taiwan'.

**Tat Yan Kong** participated in a panel discussion entitled *US-China and Asia Pacific Policy Policy* at the Global Diplomatic Forum on 19 January.

**Rahul Rao** was invited to deliver a keynote address at GLAMSLAM 2021 (a day for those working in and with Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) hosted by the Australian Centre for Public History.

**Meera Sabaratnam** gave a presentation at the two-day SOAS-UKZN symposium 'Contested Spaces', entitled 'The Structure-Agency Problem in the Context of Decolonizing Knowledge' in February.

**Meera** also spoke on 'Forced Migration and Colonial Legacies' at the Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities (TORCH) on 24 February on a panel organised by the student group Common Ground.

**Meera** discussed her book *Decolonising Intervention* at the University of Malmö on 5 February.

**Dara Salam** was invited to join the Rising Kurdistan webinar, on 'How can young people contribute to social and political change in Kurdistan?'

In February, **Julia Strauss** gave webinars on her book, *State Formation in China and Taiwan: Bureaucracy, Campaign, and Performance* at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Washington, Seattle.

In March, **Manjeet Ramgotra** joined her co-editors in a panel on their forthcoming book, *Decolonising Curricula and Pedagogy in Higher Education Bringing Decolonial Theory into Contact with Teaching Practice* at the CHERTL Higher Education Studies Doctoral Programme 'Doc Week' at Rhodes University.

In December, **Rafeef Ziadah** was a plenary speaker at the SOAS Palestine Studies Centre conference 'The Palestinian Right of Return: The 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the UNGA Resolution 194'.

In January, the King's College London Gender Studies network hosted **Rafeef** and Brenna Bhandar discussing their co-edited book *Revolutionary Feminisms*.

In March, for International Women's Day programming at King's College London, **Rafeef** delivered a 'Poetry, Gender and Conflict' workshop.

The Department was pleased to reconvene its **Politics Department Research Seminar Series** for Spring Term 2021, organised by **Michael Buehler** and featuring several members of the Department.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

## ONLINE WEBINAR SERIES, 2021

TERM 2, WEDNESDAYS 15.00-17.00 GMT

3 February

Urban Displacements: Governing Surplus and Survival in Global Capitalism  
Susanne Soederberg (Queen's University, Ontario)

*This webinar examines how historical and geographical configurations of monetised power, including landlords, employers, and inter-scalar state practices have served to reproduce rental housing insecurity and silence its gendered, class and racialised underpinnings.*

10 February

Thinking the Border Otherwise: Survival and Solidarity  
Nivi Manchanda (Queen Mary University, London)  
Discussant: Rahul Rao (SOAS)

*This talk addresses the question of whether, and in what ways, the border matters beyond its physical infrastructure by excavating the foundational political thought of Gloria Anzaldúa, Temsula Ao, Jean Genet, and Huey Newton.*

3 March

Building Politics: Urban Transformation and (Un)Making Markets in Istanbul and Cairo  
Sarah El-Kazaz (SOAS)  
Discussant: Matt Eagleton-Pierce (SOAS)

*This webinar argues that neoliberalisation has shifted rather than decimated the terrain upon which redistributive struggles are unfolding.*

10 March

Book Discussion on 'Aid Imperium: United States Foreign Policy and Human Rights in Post-Cold War Southeast Asia'  
Salvador Regilme (Leiden University)  
Discussant: Steve Heder (SOAS)

*Does foreign aid promote human rights? As the world's largest aid donor, the United States has provided foreign assistance to more than 200 countries. This seminar presentation discusses the key arguments and findings from the forthcoming book Aid Imperium.*

24 March

Agrarian Change in the Chao Phraya Delta (1950-2020)  
François Mollé (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, France)  
Discussant: Jonathan Rigg (University of Bristol)  
Co-Sponsor: Department of Development Studies, SOAS

*This seminar will discuss how particular patterns of agrarian change in the Chao Phraya Delta, also known as Thailand's rice bowl, result from a multiplicity of drivers.*

All webinars can be joined via Google Meet at [meet.google.com/mf-zobs-boo](https://meet.google.com/mf-zobs-boo)

Web: soas.ac.uk/politics  
Email: mb107@soas.ac.uk  
Twitter: @SOASpolitics



## Current Research

From January to April 2021, **Phil Clark** has been conducting fieldwork in Rwanda for a forthcoming book on post-genocide welfare, inequality, and socio-economic change. This has included ethnographic research into how two communities – one in Kigali and one in rural southern Rwanda – have handled the Covid-19 pandemic. He has also been attending the terrorism trial of 'Hotel Rwanda' hotelier Paul Rusesabagina in the Supreme Court in Kigali.

Following the publication of *Taiwan's Green Parties* **Dafydd Fell** is now working with two Taiwanese scholars on a revised Chinese language book that will build on the topic of Taiwan's movement parties.

**Mohammad Tarikul Islam** is currently researching the Politics of Rohingya Repatriation amidst the military coup in Myanmar.



## Outreach

In March, **Reem Abou-El-Fadl** delivered a workshop on ‘Translating Political Satire from Egypt’ at Channing School in London as part of Shadow Heroes’ programme of creative translation in schools.

In February, **Phil Clark** gave briefings on Central African politics for new Irish Embassy staff in Tanzania and for the UK Ministry of Defence’s ‘Defence Cultural Specialist Unit’.

**Mark Laffey** wrote ‘Report of a Home Office Fact-Finding Mission to Sri Lanka: Assessment of Methodology, Data, Narrative and Summary,’ for the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants submission to the UK Upper Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber Country Guidance Case for Sri Lanka.



## Media and Blogs

**Arshin Adib-Moghaddam**’s new course ‘Artificial Intelligence and Human Security’, the first course of its kind on AI has been featured in the national and global press including The Conversation.

Among over a dozen exclusive interviews with the global press, **Arshin** wrote a major feature about the ethics of Artificial Intelligence for *The Conversation*.

**Arshin** gave several preliminary interviews about his new book *What is Iran?* including to the frontpage editors of the Tehran Times, Iran’s largest international daily.

**Ali Alavi** was interviewed by Slovenia’s National TV on the anniversary of the Arab Spring and its implications for global politics.

**Michael Buehler**’s research on the politicization of religion in Indonesia was mentioned in The Economist. **Michael** was also quoted in El Tiempo on the military coup in Myanmar.

In February, Deutsche Welle interviewed Phil Clark about President Felix Tshisekedi’s push for full control of the Congolese parliament. Also in February, Monocle24 interviewed Phil about the Ugandan elections (26:13), and **Phil** was a panellist on Rwanda TV’s ‘The Square’ discussing elections in the US and across Africa.

PressTV interviewed Phil for a documentary on agribusiness and deforestation in the conservation areas of western Uganda.

**Phil** also did the newspaper review for Monocle 24’s ‘The Globalist’ programme: social media unblocked in Uganda; World Bank pledges \$500m Covid recovery fund to Rwanda; UK mathematician says the world’s 2 quintillion Covid particles can fit in a Coke can (36:56).

Also in February, **Phil** was a guest on KTRadio’s ‘Rwanda Beyond the Headlines’ programme, discussing decolonising knowledge in Rwandan universities. He was also a panellist on the TRT World current affairs show ‘The Newsmakers’, discussing the start of the terrorism trial against Paul Rusesabagina of ‘Hotel Rwanda’ fame (starts at 05:30). Some of **Phil**’s quotes from that TRT panel were featured in the Rwandan daily Igihe.

In March, The New Times and Igihe – both Rwandan newspapers – quoted **Phil** on the controversy over Arsenal’s ‘Visit Rwanda’ sponsorship deal. Also in March, KT Press (also in Rwanda) quoted Phil on Hotel Rwanda hotelier Paul Rusesabagina’s request for a 6-month delay to his terrorism trial.

**Dafydd Fell** was quoted in a piece in Nikkei Asia on Confucius Institutes and Taiwan’s international education diplomacy.

**Dafydd** also published the essay ‘Why The Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) Conflict Should Matter To Taiwan?’ for Taiwan Insight.

**Mark Laffey** moderated a discussion of Laura Doyle’s *Inter-Imperiality: Vying Empires, Gendered Labor, and the Literary Arts of Alliance* (Duke University Press, 2020), curated by the Security in Context research network.

**Manjeet Ramgotra**’s talk on Annelien de Dijn’s book *Freedom: An Unruly History* was published as part of the Independent Social Research Foundation Symposium in January 2021. **Manjeet** was featured in the PSA News October 2020 Edition.

**Rahul Rao** was interviewed about his recent book *Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality* by SOAS Politics alumnus **Arash Sedighi** for the Mansplaining Feminism podcast.

**Rahul** was also in conversation about his recent book *Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality* with Aggie Hirst (King's College London) to mark LGBT+ History month.

**Meera Sabaratnam** was interviewed by E-IR for International Women's Day on how scholars can respond to gendered inequalities.

**Dara Salam** published an opinion piece on Aljazeera Opinion titled 'It is time for a system overhaul in Iraq's Kurdish region.' **Dara** was interviewed for L'Orient-Le Jour daily newspaper based in Beirut.

**Julia Strauss** was featured in 'Regime Consolidation on Mainland China and Taiwan', an interview with Felix Wemheuer for YouTube channel 'Studying Maoist China'.

**Mohammad Tarikul Islam** was interviewed by the Khabarhub, English News Portal of Nepal on Bangladesh-China Bilateral Relations as well as on Bangladesh-Sri Lanka Bilateral Relations. He has also written an article for the Khabarhub.

**Mohammad** has recently contributed to the Oxford Political Review. He has recently written articles for the Daily Star and The Business Standard, popular English dailies of Bangladesh respectively.

On 12 January, *The Independent* carried an op-ed by **Rafeef Ziadah** on B'Tselem's research briefing describing Israel as an apartheid regime.



## Announcements

In January 2021, **Reem Abou-El-Fadl** secured an AHRC/CHASE Collaborative Doctoral Award PhD studentship along with colleagues at Birkbeck College and partners at the Arab-African Research Centre in Cairo, Egypt. Proposals are invited on the theme of 'Transnational Solidarity in the Global Cold War: Egyptian-South African Relations'.

The call for applications is now open, with a deadline of noon on 7 May. Further details can be found here: <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/job/CFC202/phd-studentship-transnational-solidarity-in-the-global-cold-war-egyptian-south-african-relations>. Please email **Reem** with any questions on [ra47@soas.ac.uk](mailto:ra47@soas.ac.uk).

**Hang Zhou** was awarded a pass with minor corrections for his viva on 'Seeing from the Roads: Institution Building, Organizational Restructuring, and Everyday Negotiations in Uganda'.

**Hang** has since been offered a three-year postdoctoral position within the ECR-supported TransOcean Project in Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen, which examines the connections and actions behind the transoceanic expansion of fishers from the South China Sea to West Africa. Congratulations to Dr Zhou!

The Department of Politics and International Studies is one of the most cutting-edge departments of Politics 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

This newsletter is produced three times per academic year by Reem Abou-El-Fadl. Please send any announcements to [ra47@soas.ac.uk](mailto:ra47@soas.ac.uk). Please continue to follow the Department's news and get in touch using the links below.

