Introductions

Reem Abou-El-Fadl writes, “I have just joined SOAS as Lecturer in Comparative Politics of the Middle East. From 2013 to 2014, I was Lecturer in the Politics and International Relations of the Middle East at the School of Government and International Affairs at Durham University. From 2010 to 2013, I was Jarvis Doctorow Junior Research Fellow at St Edmund Hall and the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. I completed my doctorate in Politics at St Antony’s College, Oxford, in 2010. My research interests include contemporary Egyptian politics and history, the foreign policy of Middle East states, as well as nationalist movements in Turkey and the Arab world. I am just completing an edited volume with Routledge titled Revolutionary Egypt, with contributions from several SOAS colleagues, and am also co-editor of the Egypt page at jadaliyya e-zine.”

Michael Farquhar has joined the department as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow. He will be using the three-year fellowship to undertake research on the politics of crime and policing in Egypt, in the context of broader processes of economic liberalisation and privatisation, from the beginning of the Sadat presidency to the present day. Before moving to SOAS, Michael held an LSE Fellowship at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Prior to that, he completed his doctorate in the LSE Department of Government, focusing on the history and politics of Saudi state-funded Islamic missionary work since the mid-twentieth century. He taught in the LSE Department of Government and on an inter-departmental course introducing LSE undergraduates to social science research.

Caroline Strickson provides an overview of the Department Admin Team for 14/15:

Rafid Mahdi and Yvonne Henry are the Department Student Officers (DSOs) and are available to support and guide students through any issues they may be facing throughout their degree programmes, the DSOs work closely with the department’s welfare tutors, programme convenors and student representatives, as well as welfare departments across the School, to provide specialised support to all students within the Politics Department. Current students and academic colleagues can contact the relevant DSO for information and guidance on class attendance, course work deadlines and submission as well as mitigating circumstances. Marina English is the Department Academic Officer (DAO) and has taken over from the role I had during 13/14. The DAO inputs and processes fractional contracts & ad hoc payments, manages timetable requirements and the exam scrutiny process, as well as being the main contact for web updates. I am still learning what it means to be a Department Manager and hope to give a much better explanation at the end of the year! So far, I have been involved in: teaching planning, recruitment, grant applications amongst many other things. My main role is to work closely with Prof Salwa Ismail to support the work she does as HoD as well as establish an effective admin team to provide specific support the staff and students of the Politics Department.
Rafid Mahdi introduces himself: “Hello everyone, my name is Rafid Mahdi and I am the new Undergraduate Student Support Officer for the Department. I studied Politics at the University of Warwick before moving to SOAS for postgraduate study, graduating in 2010. I have always had a keen interest in International Politics, relating in particular to the Middle East. Outside of work I am a keen traveller (when I get the chance), am passionate about a wide variety of music and an avid reader of all kinds of literature, fiction and non-fiction. I’ve also been told I play a mean game of ping pong and am always open to challengers.”

And also Marina English: “My name is Marina and I have just joined SOAS as the Departmental Academic Officer for Politics. Before SOAS I have worked in FE and HE doing Admissions, Welfare and Financial Support. I have always lived in London (was born in Brixton) and love it here. My hobbies definitely lean towards the arts, especially textiles and photography. And I love surprises.

It’s great to be here!”

**Appointments, Awards, Honours**

The Department is going from strength to strength and is recognised in a variety of for a and media. The NSS results show Politics students’ satisfaction with teaching at 94% and overall student satisfaction also at 94%

(www.soas.ac.uk/news/newsitem94488.html). The results show significant improvement throughout, and place the Department in the top 15 UK universities.

The Department has maintained a good standing in the QS World Universities Rankings for 2014-15 (www.soas.ac.uk/news/newsitem95278.html).

The latest published university ranking league tables show a notable rise in the Department’s ranking. The Department has moved up to 13th in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2015 League Table. You can find the full rankings here: http://www.soas.ac.uk/news/newsitem94488.html

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Many warm congratulations to our (former) doctoral students Igor Rogelja, Priyadarshini Singh and Felix Conteh, all of whom are newly minted doctors!

Congratulations to Lewis Turner and Jack Joy who have been awarded ESRC doctoral studentships through the Bloomsbury DTC. Lewis will be working on the production of humanitarian masculinities in Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, while Jack’s project concerns Hezbollah’s discursive practices and strategies of subject formation.

In September, Kristin Surak was awarded a £550 Meiji Shrine Research Grant to support travel to an author-meets-critics session at the Social Science History Association’s annual conference that will spotlight her book Making Tea, Making Japan: Cultural Nationalism in Practice.

Michael Innes’ research and advisory firm, Thesigers, was recently awarded a second year of grant funding to continue digitising and translating a large private collection of Taliban documents. The collection includes newspapers, magazines, government documents, oral histories, and other previously inaccessible primary sources from the 1979-2001 period. On completion, the project’s processed physical and digital archives will be donated to the Afghanistan Center at Kabul University (ACKU).

PhD Student Atta Barkindo has been made a Fellow of the Global Initiative on Civil Society and Conflict (GICSC), University of South Florida, Tampa, USA. In September, Phil Clark joined the advisory board of the Somaliland Journal of African Studies.

Professor Lawrence Saez was selected to be one of the team members of the Good Judgement Project, a US government (IARPA) funded international research project for improving aggregated probabilistic economic and political forecasts. He also co-authored a Department for International Development (DFID) briefing report titled “Meso-level political economy analysis of economic corridors and proposed interventions.”

Professor Lawrence Saez assisted in negotiating a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between SOAS and the Electoral Integrity Project (EIP), a global research project administered by the University of Sydney and...
Harvard University. Professor Saez was named the EIP’s country representative for India and will be spearheading a survey of perceptions of electoral integrity in India’s state legislative assembly elections starting from 2015 until 2020. The MoU between SOAS and the EIP was signed in October 2014.

New Publications


Rochana Bajpai’s essay on minority rights in India appeared in the Italian magazine India/indie (in Italian).


In October, Phil Clark published an article, “Negotiating Reconciliation in Rwanda: Popular Challenges to the Official Discourse of Post-Genocide National Unity,” in the Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding.

Rahul Rao published an article titled “The locations of homophobia” in the London Review of International Law 2(2).

The article explores what is at stake in contemporary practices of locating homophobia, as expressed in debates surrounding the Ugandan Anti Homosexuality Act. Problematising both neo-Orientalist representations of homophobia in Uganda and critical responses thereto, it draws on materialist, postcolonial and queer approaches to offer an account of the transnational production of homophobia that nonetheless accounts for its local resonance and resilience. He also published a book chapter titled “The elusiveness of “Non-Western cosmopolitanism” in Politics and Cosmopolitanism in a Global Age, edited by Sonika Gupta & Sudarsan Padmanabhan (New Delhi: Routledge). Additionally, Rahul’s article titled “Re-membering Mwanga: same-sex intimacy, memory and belonging in postcolonial Uganda” has been published by the Journal of Eastern African Studies. The article maps contemporary Ugandan memory of an episode in the late 19th century history of the kingdom of Buganda, when the then Kabaka (king) Mwanga is believed to have put to death a number of his male courtiers as punishment for their refusal to have sexual intercourse with him. Curating the many conflicting accounts of this historical episode that survive to this day, the article explores how the commemoration of these events as a founding myth for Christianity in the country can coexist with the vehement insistence that same-sex intimacy is alien to Ugandan culture.

Kristin Surak published the review article “Re-Selling Japan” in the New Left Review (July/August: 139-49) which takes apart Financial Times correspondent David Pilling’s recent writings on the country.

Michael Buehler published a review essay on the ‘conservative turn’ in Indonesian Islam in Democratization, a book review of Michael Feeney’s “Sharia’s and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia” in Indonesia, as well as a book review of Hal Hill’s “Regional Dynamics in a Decentralized Indonesia” in the ASEAN newsletter.

In July Dafydd Fell published a book chapter: “Taiwan’s Party System in the Ma Ying-jeou era” in Political Changes in Taiwan under Ma Ying-jeou edited by Jean-Pierre Cabestan and Jacques deLisle (London: Routledge). In October he published two co-authored journal articles with his former PhD students. The first was with Isabelle Cheng (SOAS Politics PhD 2013): “The Change of Ruling Parties and Taiwan’s Claim to Multiculturalism before and after 2008” in Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, 43(3). The second was with I-hsin Charles Chen,(SOAS Economics PhD, 2014), and was titled “Lessons of Defeat and Success: Taiwan’s 2012 Elections in Comparative Perspective” published in Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, 43(3).

Research Centres, Clusters, & Networks

Centre for Comparative Political Thought

On 28 September 2014 the CCPT held its first AGM. Charles Tripp was elected chair of the CCPT and plans were drawn up relating to the CCPT website, the external speaker series, development of research grant applications and the organization of a department CPT reading group. The Centre will host a public lecture on 11 November. Prof Niraja Gopal Jayal (JNU, Delhi and King’s College, London) will be presenting “Citizenship and Its Discontents: An Indian History” and Prof Engin Isin (Open University) will act as discussant. The event will take place on Tuesday 11 November, 2014, 5-7pm in the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre.

Centre for the International Politics of Conflicts, Rights and Justice

The Centre for the International Politics of Conflict, Rights and Justice (CCRJ) partnered with the European Council on Foreign Relations to host a private round-table discussion of the ECFR Report on International Justice and the Prevention of Atrocities. CCRJ co-director Leslie Vinjamuri chaired this meeting. Anthony Dworkin (ECFR), Payam Akhavan (Oxford University), and David Bosco (American University) each spoke on
this panel. Participants included individuals from the Foreign Office, the United Nations, leading NGOs, and the Ditchley Foundation.

CCRJ, the London Transitional Justice Network, and the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy hosted a panel discussion on “Rough Justice: Power Politics and the International Criminal Court” at SOAS. Panelists David Bosco (American University), Anthony Dworkin (ECFR), Leslie Vinjamuri (SOAS) and Phil Clark (SOAS). CCRJ co-director Stephen Hopgood chaired this panel.

In October CCRJ hosted “Human Rights in Motion,” the launch of a special edition of the online human rights journal SUR, published by Brazilian NGO Conectas Human Rights, whose executive director Lucia Nader was a guest panelist alongside Maggie Beirne, Phil Bloomer and CCRJ co-director Steve Hopgood (who has a chapter in the volume).

Centre for Taiwan Studies

On July 5 Dafydd Fell again organized a large sports team to join the Annual Taiwanese Sports. The 30 person team included staff from the SOAS Taiwan Centre, and students and alumni from our Taiwan Politics courses, and staff and students’ children. We joined many events and for the first time had two tug of war teams, and two men’s and two women’s relay teams. This year the team won men’s 100 meters relay, men’s 100 meters, men’s 200 meters and came second in the tug of war.

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

July 28, 2014. Film Screening: Super Citizen Ko [超級大國民] and Q&A with Film Director Wan Jen 萬仁. Event video available.


July 30. Film Screenings: Puppet Angel [傀儡天使] and It Takes Two to Tango [車拼] (11 min. Trailer) and Q&A with Film Director Wan Jen 萬仁. Event video available.


October 22. Measuring and Explaining the Impact of Small Parties in Taiwan; Cases of the Taiwan Solidarity Union and the Green Party Taiwan. Speakers: Theodore Kai Yue Charm (SOAS MA Taiwan Studies), Dafydd Fell (SOAS).

London Migration Research Group (LMRG)

The London Migration Research Group (LMRG), which is co-convened by Fiona Adamson and Kristin Surak, will be hosting three seminars in Term 1.

When: Tuesdays, 17.30 – 19.30
Where: New York University in London, 6 Bedford Square, Room TBC
4 November 2014

Ruben Andersson (LSE)
Rescued and caught: the humanitarian paradox at Europe’s maritime frontiers

18 November 2014

Nadia Jaworsky (Yale/Masaryk University)
A Cultural Sociology of Cyberactivism: The U.S. Immigrant Rights Movement Online

2 December 2014

Gregor Noll (University of Lund)
Junk Science: The Politics of Age and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

Please note: To attend any of the seminars, please join the respective event on our Facebook page.

The London Asia Pacific Centre

The London Asia Pacific Centre is to be established as a joint centre of SOAS and King’s College London. The Coordinating Committee consists of 8 colleagues from SOAS and KCL (Dafydd Fell, Tat Yan Kong, Costas Lapavitsas, Ulrich Volz and 4 KCL colleagues). The initial Co-Directors will be Tat Yan Kong (SOAS) and Ramon Pacheco Pardo (KCL). The launch date is likely to be early 2015.

Presentations and Conferences

Professor Julia Strauss gave her inaugural lecture “Theatres of Land Reform: Performance and State Building in Su’nan and Taiwan, 1950-53” on 16 October to an audience of around 90. The lecture was introduced by Pro-director Nirmala Rao, with preface and conclusion by Professors Stephen Chan and Stephen A. Smith from All Soul’s Oxford. The SOAS Events and Marketing department did a terrific job in organizing the event, which included wonderful Chinese music and tasty treats afterward. Julia’s inaugural lecture can be watched on the SOAS YouTube channel.

In August, Kristin Surak presented the co-authored paper “The Political Sociology of Regional Variation: Family Immigration in North America, Europe, and East Asia” at the American Sociological Association’s annual meeting in San Francisco.


In September, Gerasimos Tsourapas presented a paper titled “Nasser’s Educators and Agitators across al-Watan al-Arabi: The Development and Politics of Regional Egyptian Migration, 1952–1970” at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the German Middle East Studies Association [DAVO] in Cologne. In October, he presented a policy paper titled “Paying the Piper, Calling the Tune? Assessing the Impact of Emigration on Egypt’s Foreign Policy” at a conference organised by the WAFAW [When Authoritarianism Fails in the Arab World] Network in Tunis. The conference, directed by François Burgat, was titled “The Role of Diasporas, Migrants, and Exiles in the Arab Revolutions and Political Transitions.”

In September, doctoral student Najia Mukhtar presented a paper titled “Approaching Religious Difference Differently in Contemporary Pakistan?” at the ECPR General Conference held at the University of Glasgow. Also in September Najia was invited to present her work on religious actors in Pakistan at a workshop focused on
Islamic Authority Figures in Changing Contexts at Oxford University.

Rochana Bajpai travelled to Bielefeld, Germany in August for a job fixe for the group Balancing Religious Accommodation and Human Rights in Constitutional Frameworks, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research (ZfF). She presented on secularism and group rights in India, as well as her long-standing research on Indian constitution-making and its relevance for comparative theory.

In August, Rochana presented a paper “On the scope of Comparative Political Thought” at APSA, Washington D.C. The paper was part of a panel “Theorizing the Empirical: Qualitative Research Methods and the Subjects of Political Theory” (Normative Political Theory division).

Dr Dafydd Fell gave the following presentations:
“‘The Electoral Fortunes of the Taiwan Green Party” (paper given at European Association of Chinese Studies, July 2014, University of Coimbra, Portugal); “Space for Small Parties and the Taiwan Green Party” (talk given at Taiwan Green Party Seminar, Taipei, August 2014); “Continuity and Change in Taiwan’s Party System” (Talk given at book launch for Political Changes in Taiwan under Ma Ying-jeou, SOAS, September 2014); “Measuring and Explaining the Impact of Small Parties in Taiwan” (talk given at the Centre of Taiwan Studies, SOAS, October 22).

Matt Nelson presented his paper, “Is Impunity a Democratic Good? Postcolonial Theory Conceptual Innovation, and Comparative Democracy Ressearch” at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (ZfF) in Germany (September) as well as the London Comparative Political Theory Group (October). Matt Nelson also presented 2Religious Freedom and Public Order: Tracing a Familiar Tension in Two Islamic States” at the SOAS Politics Department Seminar in October.

Michael Buehler gave presentations at the ‘Roundtable on President Joko Widodo and the Future of Indonesian Politics’, organised by the Southeast Asia Program at The London School of Economics and Political Science in London, and at ‘The 2014 presidential elections in Indonesia’ organised by The Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S. Department of State and The National Intelligence Council in Washington D.C.


Leslie Vinjamuri presented a paper on “The Politics of International Justice and Backlash” at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Washington D.C. She also chaired a panel on Navigating Careers in International Relations. In September, she delivered a presentation on a panel titled American purpose after Obama at the conference on US Foreign Policy at the London School of Economics. Other panelists included Barry Posen (MIT), Jeffrey Legro (University of Virginia) and Peter Trubowitz (LSE).

Doctoral student Indré Balcaïtė took part in the Royal Anthropological Institute Postgraduate Conference “Whose Anthropology is it anyway?” at Brunel University on September 3-4th where she presented a paper “Why are you interested in our simple lives? Narrating ethnographic research to the informants amidst cultural and social differences.”

James Eastwood, doctoral student in the department, presented a paper titled “Keeping a human image: the ethics of Israeli militarism and the humanity of contemporary warfare” at the RGS-IBG annual conference in London on 28th August 2014.

Meera Sabaratnam contributed to a conference in September organised by the LSE Theory and History group titled, ‘Whither Modernity?’ She was also invited to discuss Professor Patrick Jackson’s keynote address at the annual conference of Millennium: Journal of International Studies in October on the question of International Studies as a ‘science.’ In November Meera presented her work on ‘Decolonising the subject’ at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland.

Manjeet Ramgota presented a paper on ‘India’s Republican Moment: Freedom in Nehru’s Political Thought’ at the MANCEPT Workshops in Political Theory in September 2014.

Bhavna Davé presented a paper “India’s Image in Central Asia: From Symbols, Stereotypes to Strategic Partnership?” as part of a panel on India in the Eyes of Others at European Conference on South Asian Studies in Zurich in 23-27 July 2014.

Doctoral student Michael Innes gave talks in early June at Ertegun House, University of Oxford, and at the Defence Academy of the UK, Shrivenham, on the practical and ethical challenges of archival preservation and “forensic heritage” in distressed environments. He also sponsored and co-convened a workshop at St. Antony’s College, Oxford. The workshop, held on June 6th in cooperation with the Asian Studies Center at St. Antony’s, focused on the work of the Taliban Sources Project, a two year grant-funded effort to transform a large collection of Taliban documents into an accessible resource for researchers working on Afghanistan.

In September, Charles Tripp spoke on “World War I in the Middle East: moment of disruption and opportunity” as part of the roundtable on The Global Colonial 1914-1918 at SOAS. Later in the same month, he gave a talk on “Battlefields of the Republic: cities, public space and public agency” with particular reference to the Tunisian revolution as part of the workshop organized at SOAS on Walls, Barricades, Borders, Gates: Political Negligence and the Twenty-First Century City by the Citizen Academia Network, together with the Centre for Cultural, Literary and Postcolonial Studies, and gave a talk on “Iraq: the rentier caliphate” as part of the panel on Beyond Religion: ISIS and the crisis in the Middle East, organized by SOAS Students Union.
In October, **Charles Tripp**, with the British Academy, organized a one-day workshop on *Reinforcing Academic Independence and Excellence* at the Council on British Research in the Levant’s British Institute in Amman, Jordan. It brought together participants from Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan and Palestine, as well as the UK, to discuss common concerns around questions such as the setting of research agendas, maintaining spaces for independent research, institutional and financial obstacles, training and language needs, as well as the challenges of public engagement. Also in October, Prof **Tripp** gave a talk on “Theatres of Blood: Violent and Non-violent Resistance in the Middle East” at the CBRL’s British Institute in Amman, Jordan.

![Jaber al-Azmeh (Syria) 2012 [from the Wounds series]](image)

Later in October, **Charles Tripp** gave a seminar paper at the Department of History, University of Sheffield on “Creative performances: violence, nonviolence and the struggle for public space in the Middle East and North Africa.”

**Konstantinos Tsimonis** presented a paper on “The Communist Youth League and Chinese university students: A case of abortive adaptation” at the annual conference of the British Association of Chinese Studies in Newcastle, September 2014. Also in October, Konstantinos was invited to give a presentation titled “Keep the Party Assured and the Youth [not so] Satisfied: Causes, consequences and lessons from the Communist Youth League’s abortive attempt to adapt” as part of the Lau China Institute Research Seminar series at King’s College London.

**Salwa Ismail** presented a paper titled “Hama 1982 in Memory and Narrative” to the *Hama Day*, organised by Professor Jakob Skovgaard-Peterson, Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen, September 17, 2014. Professor **Ismail** also presented a paper titled “The Reassertion of Police Government Egypt” to the international Workshop *The Arab Thermidor: The Resurgence of the Mukhabarat State*, organised by the Middle East Studies Centre at the LSE in conjunction with the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) at George Washington University, London, October 10, 2014. On November 3, Professor **Ismail** was an invited speaker at the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation. She spoke on “The Politics of Violence and Sectarianism in Syria: A Critical Perspective”.

![Image](image)

**Politics Department Seminars for Term 1**

8 October 2014, **Matt Nelson** (SOAS), ‘Religious Freedom and Public Order: Tracing a Familiar Tension in Two Islamic States’

15 October 2014, Timothy Hildebrandt (LSE), ‘Negotiating Invisibility: The Political Economy of Lesbian Activism in Asia’

22 October 2014, **Manjeet Ramgotra** (SOAS), ‘Commerce, Progress and the State of Nature in Montesquieu and Rousseau’

12 November, 3-5pm, 4426MB, Franziska Zanker (German Institute for Global and Area Studies), ‘The Local Arena of Power-Sharing: Extracts from Burundi, DRC, Liberia and Kenya’

18 November 2014, 5-7pm, 4426MB, Holger Albrecht (American University in Cairo, Egypt), ‘The Sudden Fall of Autocrats: Coup d’etat in Consolidated Leadership Regimes, 1945-2014’


26 November 2014, 3-5pm, 4426MB, Ayse Zarakol (Cambridge University), ‘Waiting for the Barbarians: Imagining a Future with Rising Powers’

10 December 2014, 3-5pm, 4426MB, **Michael Buehler** (SOAS), “Old State, New Society” revisited: The direct elections of local government heads in Indonesia, 1998-2013’

**Sameen A. Mohsin Ali** (PhD candidate) participated in a panel titled “Elections and Democratic Transition in South Asia” at the 23rd European Conference on South Asian Studies held at the University of Zurich (Irchel Campus). **Sameen’s** paper was titled “Election Management and Party Decision Making in Pakistan.”

In October, **Phil Clark** gave a lecture to the Conflict, Security and Development Research Group at King’s College London titled “Community-Based Approaches to Transitional Justice and Peace-Building in Africa’s Great Lakes.” Also in October, **Phil Clark** gave a lecture on the impact of the gagaca genocide courts in Rwanda at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. Also in October, he presented “Distant Justice: The Politics of the International Criminal Court in Africa” at a seminar hosted by Oxford Transitional Justice Research at the University of Oxford.

**Tat Yan Kong** chaired a Centre of Korean Studies seminar presentation by Mr Sungnam Lim (Republic of Korea) and Ayse Zarakol (Cambridge University) on ‘The State of the Kurds: 2012-2014’.

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**Politics Department Seminars for Term 2**

8 November 2014, 5pm, 4426MB, Manjeet Ramgotra (SOAS), ‘Belonging and Inclusion: Cross political contexts in Africa’

12 November, 3-5pm, 4426MB, Manjeet Ramgotra (SOAS), ‘Negotiating Invisibility: The Political Economy of Lesbian Activism in Asia’

20 November 2014, 3-5pm, 4426MB, Ayse Zarakol (Cambridge University), ‘Waiting for the Barbarians: Imagining a Future with Rising Powers’

2 December 2014, 3-5pm, 4426MB, Ayse Zarakol (Cambridge University), ‘Waiting for the Barbarians: Imagining a Future with Rising Powers’

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**Politics Department Seminars for Term 3**

4 December 2014, 5pm, 4426MB, Manjeet Ramgotra (SOAS), ‘Belonging and Inclusion: Cross political contexts in Africa’

8 December 2014, 7pm, 4426MB, Manjeet Ramgotra (SOAS), ‘Negotiating Invisibility: The Political Economy of Lesbian Activism in Asia’


26 December 2014, 5pm, 4426MB, Ayse Zarakol (Cambridge University), ‘Waiting for the Barbarians: Imagining a Future with Rising Powers’

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**Politics Department Seminars for Term 4**

2 January 2015, 5pm, 4426MB, Ryan Jablonski (LSE), ‘The Tortuga Curse: How Illicit Capital Creates a Resource Curse in Somalia’


Korea Ambassador to the UK titled “Security Challenges in Northeast Asia” on 31 October 2014.

Current Research

Professor Stephen Chan conducted research in Zimbabwe for a new book with Cambridge University Press.

In July and August, Meera Sabaratnam was travelling in Mozambique to undertake research for her forthcoming book on public perceptions of international assistance since the end of the war (picture below). She also conducted some preliminary research on the effects of recent changes in DfID policy on development aid.

Dafydd Fell spent most of the summer in Taiwan for fieldwork. He was hosted by the Faculty of Social Science, National Sun Yat Sen University, Kaohsiung. He continued to work on his research projects on party switching and also on the development of Taiwan’s Green Party. He also organized a SOAS student alumni meeting of his former politics students based in Taiwan.

In the early part of September, Charles Tripp was in Tunisia carrying out fieldwork research for his project on ‘The Republic in Contention: reclaiming public space in Tunisia’. He was interviewing political activists, demonstrators, participants in sit-ins, trades unionists, journalists, activists in various civil society associations, and members of the Constitutional Assembly, as well as academics to gain insights into the ways in which different ideas of the republic are both formulated and acted out in various public sites of contention.

Tunis, September 2014: demonstration of supporters of the Popular Front outside the Ministry of the Interior protesting against arbitrary arrests and violence against citizens

Hount Souk, Djerba, September 2014: graffiti illustrating the ongoing protests against plans to build a large rubbish incinerator on the island

In September, Laleh Khalili travelled to the UAE and Lebanon as part of her current research on the politics of transportation in the Middle East. She visited Khor Fakkan port in Sharjah, and conducted interviews in both countries. Some of her reflections on these interviews can be found on her blog at http://thegamming.org/2014/09/30/the-bloody-business-of-war/ and http://thegamming.org/2014/10/07/shipping-containers-
In October, MPhil student Alia Al-Senussi spoke at the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute conference in London discussing periods of transitions within cultural institutions as well as issues pertaining to Libya. Alia also lectured this term at the Sotheby’s Institute on the subject of patronage of the arts.

In August, Matt Nelson joined former US Ambassador to Pakistan Cameron Munter, former Pakistan Ambassador to the US, and Dr Venda Felbab-Brown from the Brookings Institution for a series of meetings in New Delhi focusing on current trends in Pakistan. The meetings were sponsored by the National Bureau of Asian Research (US) and the Observer Research Foundation (India). Dr Nelson’s paper was titled “Informal Agencies of Influence: The Interdependence of Social, Religious, and Political Trends in Pakistan.” Further meetings will be held in Washington, DC in December.

In Mozambique, at an education outreach project titled Project Oceano in Ilha de Moçambique in the north of the country, Meera Sabaratnam held a seminar and discussion group for secondary school students interested in studying Politics and International Relations at university (picture below). Her assistant Celestino Silva, a recent IR graduate from the capital Maputo also gave advice on how to manage the application system and study for the exams.


Leslie Vinjamuri has been reappointed as an Associate Fellow at the Royal Institute for International Affairs, Chatham House, on the US Programme. She participated in the first session of the Transatlantic Strategy Group on the Future of US Global Leadership (a collaboration between the German Marshall Fund and Chatham House), a one day meeting on ‘Responding to a Revanchist Russia’. Leslie also participated in the fourth meeting of the Working Group convened by Robin Niblett, Director of Chatham House on Challenges and Choices for the UK after 2015. This meeting focused on the future of the UK-US relationship and brought together a small group of parliamentarians, journalists, think tankers and academics. Leslie also chaired a Roundtable discussion for Chatham House on The Future Declassified: Megatrends that will undo the World Unless We Take Action by Mathew Burrows.

In August, Laleh Khalili was invited to lecture at the 2014 quadrennial congress of the International Transport-Workers’ Federation (ITF), Sofia. She presented “Alternatives to liberalism in the Middle East.” Her discussant was Nermin Sherif, a Libyan woman trade unionist.

Professor Stephen Chan advised and debriefed the new British Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Catriona Laing, acting as a Track Two foil to her Track One mission, and again debriefed her on her first visit back to the UK. He was also invited to give evidence to the Parliamentary Committee on the National Security Strategy.

In September, Steve Hopgood spoke at a conference in Syracuse, Sicily organised by Prof M Cherif Bassouoni at which the future of international criminal justice and human rights in a globalising world was discussed.

Lucas Robinson (PhD candidate) broke ground on the ecododge that he’s involved with in the Simien Mountains National Park, in Ethiopia; Limalimo Lodge is expected to be open in September next year.
In July, Phil Clark taught on a genocide prevention summer course hosted by the Aegis Trust at the Kigali Genocide Memorial in Rwanda, and in August he taught a course on transitional justice during the joint University of Johannesburg-SOAS School of Leadership, held at the UJ Soweto campus. In November, he went back to Kigali to continue advising the Aegis Trust on the establishment of a digital archive of files from the gacaca court process in Rwanda and a research agenda relating to these materials. The archive currently comprises more than 20 million handwritten pages gathered during community-level genocide trials between 2002 and 2012.

In September, Phil Clark took part in a UNDP experts consultation in Johannesburg on reconciliation as a mechanism of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The purpose of the consultation was to reconceptualise reconciliation for the various UN agencies working on conflict-related issues. In September, he addressed the Colombian government on lessons learned from peace and justice processes in central Africa. Phil was invited to give advice in the context of the current peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC rebels taking place in Havana, Cuba. He presented to a public gathering of 400 government officials, senior civil servants, journalists and victims of the 40-year civil war, followed by closed-door meetings at the President’s Office, Ministry of Justice, Attorney-General’s Office and the Office of the Public Prosecutor.

In October, Phil Clark and Nicola Palmer (King’s College London) broadcast a radio documentary titled, “Finding It within Ourselves”, on reconciliation and forgiveness in central Africa at the Internazionale media festival in Ferrara, Italy. The annual event, held in a 14th-century castle, is one of Italy’s largest festivals of ideas and attracts journalists, filmmakers, writers and artists from around the world. This year’s programme included Nigerian-American novelist, Teju Cole, the Kenyan commentator, Binyavanga Wainaina, and the British author and critic, John Berger. In the same month, he also gave a presentation at a Foreign and Commonwealth Office roundtable on the politics of the International Criminal Court in Africa.

**Media and Blogs**

Bilal Ahmed published an article in Souciant Magazine, where he is an Associate Editor, called “Sex and the Peshmerga.” Focusing on the meme of female Peshmerga fighters engaged in combat with Islamic State, it explored the use of female fighters as propaganda in the War on Terror, and was eventually featured by Steven A. Cook of the Council of Foreign Relations.

In August, Meera Sabaratnam appeared on Al Jazeera to discuss the significance of the recent peace deal in Mozambique between Frelimo and Renamo.

Doctoral Student Atta Barkindo published an article, “Boko Haram, Islamic Ideology, Kanuri Identity or Historical Narrative of the Kanem-Borno Empire?” on the Tony Blair Foundation website. He also published an article on “Foreign Intervention or Local Peacebuilding in Nigeria?” in the August 2014 issue of Insight on Conflict.

He also published an article, “Boko Haram and the Truce to Release Kidnapped Schoolgirls,” in The Conversation.

Atta Barkindo was interviewed by France24 News Channel, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio Hausa Service (Abuja-Nigeria) on various aspects of the Boko Haram conflict. He also co-authored op-ed pieces for CNN International and for the Toronto Star. Atta was also interviewed for World Mic, Abuja, Nigeria, about the nature of documentation with regards to victims of conflict in Nigeria and the Sahelian region.


In October, doctoral student Gerasimos Tsourapas was interviewed by Voice of America on the 2014 Tunisian Parliamentary Elections.

On October 21st, PhD student Mohammad Ali Shabani participated in a debate on CNN entitled “Understanding the dynamics of Iraq and Iran.” On October 14th, Mohammad provided expert comment to a Reuters article on Saudi Arabia and Iran. On August 25th, Mohammad was cited in another Reuters article on the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister’s visit to Riyadh. On August 22nd, Mohammad was quoted in an Economist article on domestic Iranian politics. On August 15th, Mohammad provided expert commentary to “Viewpoints: How to Defeat ISIS” on BBC World News. On August 1st, Mohammad commented on the Iranian economy in a clip aired on CNN. On July 14th, Mohammad participated in a discussion on obstacles in the Iran nuclear talks on CNN.

Arshin Adib-Moghaddam’s edited book A critical introduction to Khomeini (Cambridge University Press, 2013) has been widely reviewed by the Persian speaking press including by BBC Persian and Fars News Agency in Tehran.
Arshin Adib-Moghaddam has given several feature length interviews on modernity, culture and world politics which have been widely published in the Iranian Press including on the front-page of Tehran Times and Mehr News Agency. Arshin has also authored an opinion piece on Iran and the nuclear issue for Europe’s World, the EU’s premier policy magazine.

Salwa Ismail was interviewed by Orient XXI on police practices of government in Egypt following the July 2013 coup.

Steve Hopgood’s The Endtimes of Human Rights was reviewed in the New York Review of Books by Human Rights Watch executive director Ken Roth in October. http://www.nybooks.com/shared/66d4db66a3d16a042d519e725438eba

In September Dafydd Fell published a newspaper essay, ‘Alternative Politics offers Choices’ in Taipei Times, that looks at the opportunities and challenges for non-mainstream parties in Taiwan.

On the confluence of neoliberal and neonationalist trends in Japan, Kristin Surak published the blog piece “The New Japanese Nationalism” at Jacobin Magazine and “Abemania” at openDemocracy. She also appeared in an Al Jazeera television program on freedom of the press in Japan, and commented on Japanese cabinet changes, women's employment, and foreign policy for Deutsche Welle and Monocle 24 Radio.

Manjeet Ramgotra recently published a blog post titled ‘When I read Machiavelli, Marx rang true’ on the Berghahn Blog.

In October Peter Brett reviewed Karen Alter’s New Terrain of International Law for E-International Relations. In May Professor Alter had presented the findings of this research at an event organised by Leslie Vinjamuri for the CISD International Relations Speaker Series.

PhD student Seyed Ali Alavi conducted a live Radio interview with Voice of Russia on 9 October about the ISIS and the battle for Kobani.

Rahul Rao published a blog titled “Staying positivist in the fight against homophobia” in the Sexuality Policy Watch Newsletter 14 on the use of science and economics in arguments against homophobia in Uganda and India.

He was interviewed by Voice of America for its recent coverage of an Amnesty International report criticising state repression in Uganda.

Michael Buehler published the op-ed “The reassertion of the state” in New Mandala and was quoted by the Financial Times on the changes in Indonesia’s electoral laws. Michael was also interviewed by the Wall Street Journal on what Indonesia’s move to abolish direct elections means for the country’s democratization process.

In addition, Michael was quoted in the International Business Times on the challenges president Joko Widodo faces with regard to his reform agenda, and quoted in The Edge Review on Indonesia’s new cabinet. He was also gave a radio interview to Monocle24 on Indonesia’s new cabinet.

Laleh Khalili wrote a blogpost on Gaza for the Stanford University Press in July, drawing on her book on counterinsurgencies.

Laleh also gave a long interview to Doug Henwood of KPFA’s Behind the News also on the subject of Israeli counterinsurgency in Gaza (30:30). She also wrote a review of Deborah Cowen’s The Deadly Life of Logisticians for Environment and Planning D: Society and Space blog.

In July, Phil Clark was a guest on Monocle 24’s “Midori House” programme, discussing Ukraine, the ICC in Libya, anti-corruption measures in China and the Indonesian elections, was quoted in an Institute for War and Peace Reporting article about the new African Court of Justice and Human Rights, which will give immunity to African heads of state, did the Monocle 24 “Globalist” news review, discussing Israel and Gaza, Ebola in Nigeria and famine in South Sudan (45:35).

In August, Phil Clark appeared on Monocle 24’s “Midori House” to discuss the Mubarak trial in Egypt, the US military response to the Islamic State, anti-gay legislation in Uganda and protests in Pakistan. In September, he appeared on Monocle 24’s “The Globalist” to review the news on counter-terrorism measures in Australia, the Colombia peace talks, the anniversary of the Westgate mall attack in Kenya, and Grace Mugabe’s PhD (46:27); was a guest on Monocle 24’s “Midori House” (with Mary Dejevsky from the Independent), discussing the US air strikes on Islamic State, anti-war protests in Russia, David Cameron’s meeting with Hassan Rouhani, and Norway paying Liberia to stop deforestation (06:30). In October, he appeared on Monocle 24’s “Midori House” to discuss the Hong Kong student protests and anti-corruption policies in China and Africa, and was interviewed by Monocle 24 about the role of the Rwandan genocide in the development of the UN’s responsibility to protect (R2P) principle (24:00). He also appeared on Monocle 24’s “The Globalist” to review the news about Rwanda’s ban on the BBC Kinyarwanda service and the death of President Sata of Zambia (44:30) and was quoted by Time.
Weekly in China about China’s reaction to the US-Africa summit in Washington DC.

In October, Phil Clark was among a group of Rwanda specialists who wrote an open letter to the BBC Director General, protesting the recent BBC2 documentary, “Rwanda’s Untold Story”, on the grounds of various historical inaccuracies and giving grounds to genocide denial. Press coverage of the letter and its fallout is here: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/tv-radio/bbc-accused-of-promoting-genocide-denial-in-rwanda-documentary-9792170.html and http://allafrica.com/stories/201410150348.html

Events

The Department-sponsored event on ‘The Global Colonial 1914-18’ took place on September 18th, looking at the effect of colonialism on the historical period around WW1. A video of the public roundtable, featuring Charles Tripp and Meera Sabaratnam is available. The Disorder of Things blog is hosting a follow-up series of posts.

The Global Colonial 1914-18

What was the significance of colonialism, empire and race for this period?

What does this mean for our remembrances today?

September 18th 2014
18.00 - 20.15
followed by reception
Khalili Lecture Theatre, IOAS
All welcome

Empire, Faith and War
First exhibition: The British Empire and the First World War
3rd - 26th September
Four exhibitions: The British Empire and the First World War

http://www.ioas.ac.uk/empire
http://www.spektrumfoundation.org

Notices

THE NEW SOAS BA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Department has welcomed almost 100 new undergraduate students to its new BA degree in International Relations. The degree is carried by staff from all sections of the Department and benefits from several new recruitments that have been key to conceptualising a range of new courses that form an integral part of the programme. Interdisciplinary in scope, the SOAS BA International Relations degree is structured around a combination of disciplinary, regional and specialised courses, with opportunities to take other Politics option courses (e.g. Political Theory, Government and Politics of the Middle East, Islam and Democracy) or a language. Given that students have the option of taking ‘open’ courses offered by other departments, the success of the SOAS BA International Relations degree is bound to have knock-on effects throughout the School. With its focus on sources of conflict and cooperation among states, shifts in the international economy, as well as the roles of culture, identity and ideas in world politics, the SOAS IR degree is embedded in the School’s unique academic culture and its distinct global appeal.
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**
Prof Salwa Ismail

**Undergraduate Admissions Tutor**
Dr Meera Sabaratnam

**Undergraduate Programme Convenors**
Dr Michael Biechatr (BA Politics)
Prof Arshin Adib-Moghaddam (BA International Relations)

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

**Postgraduate Tutor**
Dr Dafydd Felt (Term 1)
Dr Kristin Surak (Terms 2 and 3)

**Postgraduate Admissions Tutors/Programme Convenors**
Dr Phil Clark (African Politics)
Dr Enze Han (Asian Politics)
Dr Mark Laffey (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 Rahul Rao (Comparative Political Thought)
Dr Phil Clark (MRes in Politics with a Language)

**Research Tutor**
Dr Felix Berenskoetter

**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