



THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS NEWSLETTER

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- ◆ Meet our new members of academic staff
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If you have any comments, or anything you would like to share in the newsletter, please contact Emma Butler by email (eb231@le.ac.uk).

Departmental 'Super Stars'!



Congratulations to Dr Helen Dexter, Dr Jon Moran, Paul Trickett, Haro Karkour, and Paul Stott who have all been nominated by students to receive a SuperStar award for their excellent teaching and support this year. The awards were presented by staff from the Students Union during the final week of teaching.

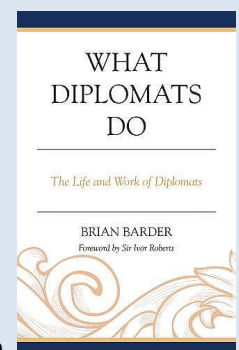
The Students Union Superstar award provides an opportunity for students to celebrate the successes and excellence of staff at the University, and the Department is proud that so many staff have been nominated to receive an award.

All nominated staff are automatically shortlisted for the overall annual superstar award which will be awarded at the end of the year.

Guest Speaker at Final Year Module

In the final week of teaching before the Easter vacation, final year undergraduate students taking PL3137-3337 The Politics of Contemporary British Foreign Policy had the opportunity to listen to a talk given by Sir Brian Barder, an Honorary Visiting Fellow in the Department of Politics and International Relations and the author of *What Diplomats Do: The Life and Work of Diplomats*.

Sir Brian gave a very interesting and informative talk on NATO's military intervention in Kosovo in 1999, including the prominent role played by Britain and its then prime minister, Tony Blair, which elicited lots of questions from students about this case study and also in relation to Brian's experiences during his long career in the Diplomatic Service, covering a variety of posts in different parts of the world. Sir Brian gave the talk as part of a seminar focusing on Britain's role in overseas military interventions in recent years.



Cyber threat to Trident warning from Leicester expert

A Leicester expert on nuclear proliferation has briefed a group of senior politicians in Parliament on the cyber threat to Trident.

Dr Andrew Futter, Senior Lecturer in International Politics, presented to a panel that included the former Secretary-General of NATO, former UK Ambassador to the UN, former Deputy Prime Minister, former First Sea Lord, former Defence Secretary, and the former head of the Defence Select Committee.

The academic was invited to make the presentation after group members had read [a briefing paper](#) on the topic by Dr Futter.

The Top Level Group (TLG) of UK Parliamentarians for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation is a cross-party group of senior British parliamentarians, chaired by former Foreign Secretary Dame Margaret Beckett MP, who share the belief that multilateral nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and nuclear security are critical global issues ought to be addressed, as a priority, by governments worldwide.

Dr Futter, of the Department of Politics and International Relations, said: "The key message to the group was that UK nuclear weapons will never be entirely safe from cyber attack and we must act now to mitigate this growing challenge, but also that the threat is nuanced and varies considerably in implications. I also argued that the nuclear environment of the next 20-30 years when the next generation of submarines is likely to be deployed will be much more challenging and complex, and it remains unclear whether current UK nuclear posture will be able to meet this challenge."

- [More information on the Top Level Group is available here](#)
- [Press release](#)



Staff Profile: Dr Elke Schwarz



In her academic work, Dr Elke Schwarz is interested in the ethics of military drones and autonomous weapons systems, or Killer Robots, in three interlinked strands of research: the first one contributes to the ethical, legal and political debate on the use of drones and examines specifically the ethical aspects at stake in light of future policy, specifically EU policy.

The second strand draws on an interdisciplinary and philosophical approach to explore the role of the human in accelerated contexts of technological developments, with an emphasis on Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS). The third aspect of her research contributes to developing theoretical explorations of the shifting nature of warfare today, focusing specifically on addressing and unravelling just war traditions and the ethics of warfare that have hitherto served as a basis for justifying the use of force.

Elke also writes on Ethics and Improvisation as well as theories of posthumanism.

Her work is broadly situated in critical security studies, political philosophy and international political theory. She teaches on the undergraduate modules Foreign Policy Analysis (PL2022) and a new 3rd year course on Technology, War and Politics. She also contributes to teaching on the MA module PL7095 Human Rights, Ethics and Intervention.

- **Contact Elke:** es304@leicester.ac.uk

Staff Profile: Dr Rob Dover

Rob has joined the Department as a Senior Lecturer in Intelligence and International Security. He has made the short trip from Loughborough University where he worked for nine years, spending his last two years there as the Associate Dean for Enterprise for the London campus, and Director of the Glendonbrook Institute for Enterprise Development. Prior to that he worked at Kings College London, at their site in the UK Defence Academy, and for the University of Bristol.



Rob's research interests have centred around three themes: 1) the government's use of intelligence, 2) the defence industrial base, and 3) transatlantic power relations, refracted through the prism of trade issues. On this third interest, Rob has recently published a co-written research report for the European Parliament on aggressive corporate tax planning and avoidance, which was used by the Parliament to formulate their legislative response to the problems of base erosion and profit shifting.

Rob is currently seeking to expand the Department's executive education offer, and to introduce a 'professional PhD' programme. This will allow professionals to work on a business or organisational problem at a higher level, to empower them to be internal consultants to their organisations, whilst making an original contribution to knowledge.

- **Contact Rob:** rmd27@leicester.ac.uk

Conference report

EU Contributions to Equitable Growth and Sustainable Development

Dr Mark Langan, in the Department of Politics and International Relations organised a conference entitled "*EU Contributions to Equitable Growth and Sustainable Development in the Post-2015 Consensus*" which took place on Wednesday 21st April.

Academics and researchers from a range of European institutions including York, Ghent and the German Development Institute gathered for a Leicester workshop on EU contributions to Sustainable Development. The presentations predominantly focussed on EU efforts to assist development in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. This highlighted issues surrounding Aid for Trade, private sector development, environmental protection, as well as the position of joint parliamentary initiatives in facilitating deliberative democracy. It also raised competing theoretical frameworks in the context of EU-ACP relations – from dependency theory to historical institutionalism. Joana Cruz-Schilling from the European Commission's representation in London kindly gave closing remarks. She expressed the European Commission's ongoing commitment to Sustainable Development as part of Agenda 2030. Additionally, she explained that workshop participants' papers had been distributed to colleagues in Directorate General Trade and Directorate General Development in Brussels. Participants are now finalising their papers based on workshop discussions, with a view to common publication in a special issue.

Evidence to House of Commons Committee on Arms Export Controls published

The Committee's inquiry sought to examine the size of arms sales to the Gulf region and to ask questions about the role the trade plays in advancing UK interests there. It will also look at whether weapons manufactured in the UK have been used by the Royal Saudi Armed Forces in Yemen, if any arms export licence criteria have been infringed.



Dr Dover and Prof Phythian argued in their evidence that the UK defence industries were increasingly dependent on trade with the Gulf region and that this was having the effect of skewing government policy towards a predisposition to export even when it is not clear that the export criteria has been met. They further argued that the strategic importance of the Gulf to UK national interests, including intelligence interests, has caused the government to take a very pragmatic approach to allowing the export of sophisticated weaponry to a volatile region.

Finally, Dr Dover and Prof Phythian made the case for adopting some of the Blakett principles, which would have the effect of opening up export licensing to expert open source challenge, although they were sceptical about whether the government has many incentives for doing so.

Staff Profile: Dr Zakia Shiraz

I joined Leicester in January 2015 from Warwick's Institute of Advanced Study. My research interests are Latin American security (violent conflict, organised crime, insurgency) and intelligence in the Global South. My most recent project examined the world's longest running civil conflict in Colombia. I have a forthcoming monograph with Edinburgh University Press based on this project entitled, *Conflict in Colombia, 1946-2016*. As the Colombian government and the country's largest insurgent group, the FARC, inches closer to a historic signing of a peace agreement, it is anticipated that this book will offer a timely and comprehensive 70 year history of the conflict.



My research uses an Area Studies approach. It argues that the security of Latin America, and much of the Global South, is understood through the lens of US foreign policy or external grand narratives such as the Cold War, War on Drugs or the Global War on Terror. Accordingly, my research has involved extensive fieldwork and data collection in Latin American countries to explore the internal dynamics of violence and security. This has allowed me to provide a 'bottom-up' perspective to some of Latin America's most pervasive security dilemmas.

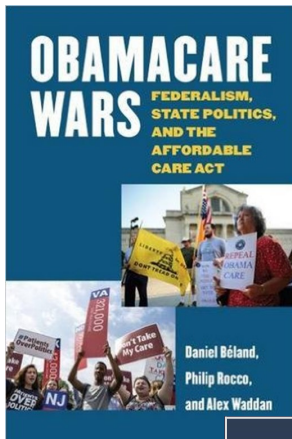
I hold an Associate Research post at Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos (CERAC) in Bogotá and will continue to use this link for developing a new research project on kidnapping and hostage taking in Latin America.

During the course of this academic year I have been teaching an MA module - American Interventionism in 1993. From September 2016, I will be starting two new UG modules - Latin American Politics (2nd year) and Politics of the International Drug Trade (final year). I have thoroughly enjoyed myself at Leicester so far and look forward to moving here for the next academic year.

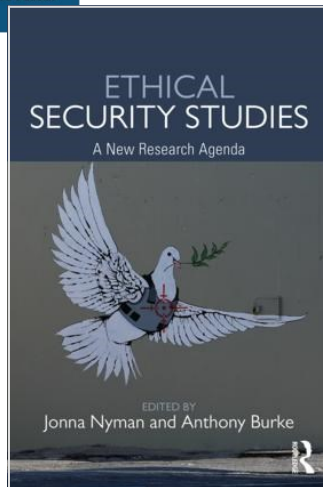
Contact Zakia: zs108@leicester.ac.uk

Recent Staff Publications

The Department is committed to research-led teaching, and here are some of the recent publications by our Academic staff. If you're reading this electronically, you can click on the pictures for links.



- Andrew Futter, Ben Zala, and George Moore, [“Conventional Prompt Global Strike: Arms Racing and Strategic Stability in a Post-unipolar World”](#), in *The Nonproliferation Review*.
- James Hamill, [“Limited Détente: The Challenges to Repairing South Africa—Nigeria Ties”](#), in *World Politics Review*.
 - K. Pilati, and L. Morales, [“Ethnic and Immigrant Politics vs Mainstream Politics: The Role of Ethnic Organizations in Shaping the Political Participation of Immigrant-Origin Individuals in Europe”](#), in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.
 - Stephen Hopkins, [“Our Whole History has been Ruined! The 1981 Hunger Strike and the Politics of Republican Commemoration and Memory”](#), in *The Journal of Irish Political Studies*, Special issue: Commemoration in Transition: Navigating Memory in Contested Societies.



Study by Distance Learning

There are currently around 260 students enrolled on our seven Distance Learning programmes, including those completing their dissertations, in suspension of studies, or awaiting results.

Among our new students starting in March 2016 were four police officers on bursaries provided by the West Midlands Police Force. After a fairly rigorous selection process the officers started their MA in Intelligence and Security, which will help them in their future careers.

As part of the continual improvement in support services to students the Mitigating Circumstances process has been moved onto Blackboard, to give students a 'one stop shop' for help and advice if they start to fall behind in their studies.

The monthly Distance Learning Live Chats, with members of staff from the department and the DL Hub answering questions from potential students, have proved successful with increasing numbers of participants each month.

DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE MASTERS PROGRAMMES

- MA Diplomatic Studies
- MA Human Rights and Global Ethics
- MA International Relation and World Order
- MA Intelligence and Security
- MA International Security
- MA Politics in the EU
- MA Politics of Conflict and Violence

Out and About: Departmental Staff Presenting Papers at ISA and PSA Conferences

Several members of the Department of Politics and International Relations presented papers at the International Studies Association Conference in Atlanta, and at the Political Studies Association Conference in Brighton in March 2016.

Political Studies Association Conference:

Luca Bernardi and **Dr Ben Clements** both presented at the 2016 PSA Conference. Luca Bernardi, PhD student in the Department presented using new and unique data from the ResponsiveGov Project, a comparative project of more than 20 western democratic governments' reactions to various types of pressure from the public on a wide range of policy issues – they investigate the effectiveness of 'online' and 'offline' protest on regulation of copyright protection on the Internet. They focus on the governments' decision to sign or not the Anti-counterfeiting Trade Agreement, an international trade agreement that came hot on the heels of the US's Stop Online Piracy and Protect Intellectual Property Acts, and was seen to contain clauses of equal danger to digital rights. The paper contributed to the literatures on the consequences of social movements and government responsiveness.

Ben Clements presented a paper entitled "Surveying Non-Religion in Britain: Historical Trends and Contemporary Analysis", at one of the panels organised by the Specialist Group on Politics and Religion (of which he is a co-convenor). The paper, firstly, reviewed the historical survey data pertaining to levels of non-religious affiliation in post-war Britain; and, secondly, analysed the social basis of groups with non-religious/secular identities (such as atheist or agnostic) compared to those who affiliate with a religion in contemporary British society.'

International Studies Association Conference

In Atlanta for the ISA, **Dr Andrew Futter** gave a paper on '*Nuclear Strategy in the Cyber Age.*' **Dr Elke Schwarz** also gave a paper, entitled '*Flesh vs Steel: the antithetical materialities of (counter)terrorism warfare*', in which she explored the relationship between suicide bombing and drone warfare.

Dr David Strachan-Morris presented several papers, including a paper entitled '*The North Vietnamese use of intelligence in the Second Indochina War,*' which looked at how the North Vietnamese intelligence services were structured and the role intelligence played in their campaigns. It also discussed the lessons for contemporary intelligence studies. The paper entitled '*Teaching intelligence studies for the 21st Century: Issues and approaches*' (with **Prof Mark Phythian**) addressed the difference between training and education, making the point that education should play a key role in the continuing professional development of practitioners. This paper also discussed the particular approach taken by the University of Leicester through Distance Learning. Dr Strachan Morris also spoke at Roundtables entitled '*Does Britain still have a place in the world?*' and '*The use of intelligence in the private sector*'.

Dr Zakia Shiraz also presented multiple times at ISA: firstly '*Globalising Solidarity: Non-Violent Resistance in Colombia*' which explored the dynamics between globalisation and non-violent resistance in conflict conditions. Taking the case of Colombia - the world's longest running conflict - it provides a critical analysis of 'globalised solidarity' that illustrates the most effective means of international support of non-violent resistance and the implications of this for future peace in Colombia along with other conflict ridden zones of the Global South. Secondly, '*Intelligence Governance in Colombia: Lessons Learnt and Challenges for the Future*' explored challenges to intelligence governance in Colombia. It argues that firstly, in the context of a violent conflict, the country's intelligence services have historically operated on an independent basis with little coordination. Secondly, executive orders have often redefined intelligence functions under various presidencies. Finally, the intelligence services have historically functioned under vague control mechanisms. The paper illustrates how in light of the disbandment of the country's leading intelligence agency, the DAS and current peace negotiations between the government and the country's largest armed groups, the FARC, intelligence reform remains a democratic imperative.

Staff Promotions

The Department would like to congratulate the following staff on their achievements:



Congratulations to Dr Simona Guerra who has been promoted to the position of Senior Lecturer in the Department.

Congratulations to Dr Helen Dexter who has been made a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).



Congratulations to Dr Stephen Hopkins, who was successfully awarded his PhD by published work.

Parliamentary Studies Module

The University of Leicester is one of only a select group of universities in the UK chosen in a competitive process to deliver the Parliamentary Studies module, approved and co-taught by the Houses of Parliament. This project has the support of the Speakers of the House of Commons and House of Lords. The module has been taught at Leicester since 2013.

The module gives students a detailed knowledge of how the UK Parliament works, through seminars delivered by senior Parliamentary staff, as well as Dr Richard Whitaker of the Department of Politics and International Relations. It is designed to be of particular value to those considering a career in Politics. This year we have had sessions with Liz Kendall MP (a former candidate for the Labour leadership) (pictured) as well as Lord Bruce Grocott, former Chief Whip in the Lords and the Chancellor of the University of Leicester. Students on the module take a trip to Westminster which this year included a talk from Chris Bryant MP, Shadow Leader of the House of Commons.

Feedback from students on this module has been consistently excellent.



Students with Liz Kendall MP for Leicester West



“All Hail our Robot Overlords: Killer Robots in Human Warfare”

Research seminar by Dr Elke Schwarz

A research seminar by Dr Elke Schwarz entitled “All hail our Robot Overlords: Killer Robots in Human Warfare” will take place on Wednesday 11th May, at 4pm, in the Garendon room, 4th floor, Charles Wilson Building.

The Department of Politics warmly invites you to attend this research seminar where there will be opportunities afterwards for questions and answers on this exciting topic.

This seminar has been organised by the ISSS Politics Research Cluster.