POLIS News Bulletin

If you have any news you want to submit, be it an event, a special achievement etc please could you email it to Sophie Johnstone, polisnews@leeds.ac.uk the week prior to publication.

POLIS Student Attends Conservative Party Conference!

Emma-Charlotte Welton, BA Political Studies Year 3, last weekend attended the annual North West Conservative Conference—here is what she had to say about it, and how she had her picture taken with David Cameron...

Last weekend the Conservative Party held their annual North West conference aimed at mobilising members and supporters across Northern England before the local elections in May. When I discovered that David Cameron, George Osborne and William Hague would be making speeches I decided that I had to attend.

Despite not being a Conservative party member or having any affiliations with them, in fact all my previous work experience had been undertaken with Labour MPs, I managed to get tickets through continuously begging people in the party office!

My efforts were not wasted, as the conference was a great experience for a politics student. I had the opportunity to listen to speeches from key party members as well as hearing speeches from candidates in my local area back at home in Manchester. Having never before spoken to a member of the Conservative party it was fantastic to hear first hand their opinions on key issues and what they were going to do to try to win the difficult key seats in the North of England at the next election.

Everybody was really friendly despite, as I found out later on in the evening, most party members thinking that I was an undercover journalist not a student!

During lunch David Cameron came over to ask me if I was enjoying the conference, wished me good luck with my studies and more than happily posed for a photograph with me! George Osborne was just as welcoming and even allowed me to ask him in public how the Conservative party were going to ensure that postgraduate education becomes accessible to people of all backgrounds instead of it only being realistically available to the rich, due to the current fees and loan situation. George Osborne responded by pledging to review the current situation but stated that his primary concern was that undergraduate education is still not accessible enough to those from lower income backgrounds. I was pleased that the issues that are important to students were being considered, as too often in politics our views are ignored.

I had a great time at the conference and would thoroughly recommend attending a party conference to other politics students, especially those considering a career in politics, as it is a great way to make future contacts!
POLIS students do Leeds University proud in IBM Business Challenge

POLIS student Patrick Toolan reports on the IBM business challenge:

The POLIS team to the Business Challenge made a valiant and good-humoured attempt to uphold Leeds University pride in making sure that we at least equalled the success of Leeds Met’s team. The morning of the competition we learned that their team had passed through to the final round of the competition, to be held at IBM’s London headquarters, and this information alone was a healthy boost to our competitive edge. The team had to work together in responding to market changes in the simulated business which were all tasked with running, as well as through contributions to ‘fun’ activities such as a ‘Dragon’s Den’ style business-pitch simulation, and the creation of an advertising campaign for event-sponsors BAE Systems.

We didn’t pass through to the Grand Final, to our great disappointment, but participation in the competition alone was an assuredly valuable experience.

The challenge is a great opportunity to learn about some of the decisions businesses must take on a day to day basis as well as a fantastic chance to bring together students into a strong and supportive team. The team at the Careers centre were invaluable to the success of our group and help with innumerable logistical issues. We would advise anyone interested for next year to get in touch with Rebecca Evans of the Careers Centre to find out more.

Teams start being formed late September to early October and students from all year groups can take part. This year’s team comprised myself Patrick Toolan, Rosie Page, Michael Forster, Jack Gardener and Graham Drew (all pictured above).

“The team did really well, gave an excellent account of themselves and were a credit to the University. They were all extremely pro-active and got involved in all of the activities, putting themselves forward to present back to the whole group, which was brilliant. Unfortunately they were not successful in getting through to the finals, but I think they will have all learnt a great deal from being part of the competition. Especially if they go on to be involved in assessment centres as part of the graduate recruitment process.”

Rebecca Evans, Work Placement Project Officer, Careers Centre, University of Leeds

POLIS Students Standing for Student Union Executive

Patrick Toolan, Louise Cobbett and Rowena Skinner are all standing for the Student Union Executive. Danny Adilypour and Helena Houghton are also running for education officer. POLIS would like to wish them all the very best in this highly competitive voting round!

Voting starts Friday 29th February online at www.luuonline.com/vote/ and around the union from 4pm.
NEWS AND EVENTS

Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances Peter Kilfoyle: Crossing Nicaragua, a talk has been postponed until further notice.

BUT we have another new event!

Wednesday 5th March, Rupert Beckett Lecture Theatre (Michael Sadler building), 5.30pm Lord Hannay of Chiswick, British diplomat and Chair of the United Nations Association UK, comes to speak at Leeds University and answer your questions.

Hosted by the International Affairs Forum and the United Nations Association Free and open to all.

Studies in Conflict & Terrorism

Michael Innes has published the following journal article, details as below.

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information: [http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713742821](http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713742821)

Deconstructing Political Orthodoxies on Insurgent and Terrorist Sanctuaries

Michael A. Innes, School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom

Online Publication Date: 01 March 2008

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URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10576100701879646](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10576100701879646)

The next WUN virtual seminar in the South Asian Studies series takes place Tuesday 26 February at 5pm.

'Why are there so many political parties in contemporary India?'

The speaker is Dr Andrew Wyatt from the University of Bristol.

Further information will be available at [http://www.wun.ac.uk/southasianstudies/index.html](http://www.wun.ac.uk/southasianstudies/index.html)

General information on WUN virtual seminars can be found at [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/international/wun/wun_seminars.html](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/international/wun/wun_seminars.html)

Anoushka Kulikowski, International Office Assistant, International Office, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, Tel: +44(0)113 3431733, a.kulikowski@leeds.ac.uk.
EVENTS

LUCAS Spring Seminars 2008

Wednesday 27th February

Wednesday 12th March

All seminars take place on Wednesdays at 2pm. Everyone is welcome.
Enquiries: african-studies@leeds.ac.uk

Theory and Application Research Group Meetings (all from 4pm in the Social Science Building):

- 27 February - Room 13.08 - Dr Derek Edyvane
  'Britishness, Belonging and the Metaphysics of Conflict'
- 12 March - Room 11.14 - Dr Jason Ralph
  'Carl Schmitt, the Laws of War and the State of the American Exception'

JMECE SEMINAR PROGRAMME, FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Date: Friday 7th March, Time: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. Venue: Roger Stevens Lecture Theatre 25
Speaker: Richard Corbett, MEP for Yorkshire and the Humber
Title: The Lisbon Treaty
What happened to the EU’s draft CONSTITUTION? Is it the LISBON TREATY? … or is the Lisbon treaty something else altogether? Should there be a referendum?

Richard will be discussing some of the key provisions and benefits that are expected to be gained from the new Treaty, and will also discuss some of the issues regarding ratification and referenda. ALL WELCOME.

‘Conflict Resolution and the Global Dimension’

28th February 2008 10.30am to 4.00pm to be held at Leeds Trinity & All Saints

Do you want to explore:-

- What is conflict?
- What are the causes and effects of conflict
- Ways of dealing with conflict in the classroom
- How to teach about controversial issues
- The links between classroom and global conflict

The course is free for PSHCE, Citizenship & Geography co-ordinators, teachers, teaching assistants, students & school governors. Participants will receive free resources.

To book a place contact Judy Rogers, Craven DEC, Tennant House, Malham, N Yorkshire BD23 4DA.
01729 830 372 or E-mail JMR10@bigfoot.com
EVENTS

Wednesday 27th Feb 2pm Parkinson 1.08:

DANIEL MENDELSON will speak about his book THE LOST: A SEARCH FOR SIX OUT OF SIX MILLION, and discuss memory, families, and the limits of storytelling.
Chair: Dr Jay Prosser (School of English)

Monday 3rd March 5pm Brotherton Room, Brotherton Library:

RON LESHEM will speak about his book BEAUFORT, a novelistic account of the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, just translated from the Hebrew. The Hebrew original has already been turned into an acclaimed film.
Chair: Professor Clive Jones (POLIS)


COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL MIGRATIONS SEMINAR SERIES, 2007-08

Dr Christopher Murphy, University of Salford
‘SOE’s covert surveillance of its Chinese recruits in India 1945’
4th March 2008, All seminars are on Tuesdays at 515 in room 311, School of History, 3rd Floor Michael Sadler Building. Please contact s.d.doyle@leeds.ac.uk for further details.

Hybrid Black Beauty

Dr. Shirley Tate, Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies

Monday 3 March, School of History, Room 311, 5.15 pm, For more information contact k.m.dossett@leeds.ac.uk

ALL WELCOME NO NEED TO BOOK

MA in Activism and Social Change Seminar Series 2007-08
'Demand the Impossible before It's Too Late'

Peter Marshall, author of 'Demand the Impossible: A History of Anarchism'

To celebrate the publication of a new, updated edition of his classic 'Demand the Impossible: A History of Anarchism', Peter Marshall will examine the most rest developments in anarchist theory and practice, including 'post-anarchism', 'anarcho-primitivism' and the anarchist contribution to the Global Justice movement. He will also suggest a way out of the growing ecological crisis and political impasse gripping the world.

Geography Lecture Theatre. Geography East Building. University Road. directions: http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/info/school/contact.html. More info: p.chatterton@leeds.ac.uk

As part of the ‘democratic legitimacy of international law’ series, the Centre for International Governance is pleased to announce the following seminars.

Thursday 28th February, 4 pm (Law Building, LSR1)
Holly Cullen, Reader in Law, University of Durham.
'Moving beyond the justiciability debate: Drafting an Optional Protocol on the right of individual petition for the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights'

All welcome. For further details, please contact Steven Wheatley, Co-Director Centre for International Governance (s.m.wheatley@leeds.ac.uk).
**Brushes with Peace at Gallery II, University of Bradford**

Gallery II at the University of Bradford will be hosting a special exhibition of the Quaker radical and artist, Margaret Glover. In 1989 the Department of Peace Studies at the University acquired a unique and valuable collection of over 100 paintings and sketches by the artist which document the British and international peace movement, particularly during the 1980s. The exhibition, entitled Brushes with Peace, will be the first time the collection has been exhibited in its entirety.

The art work provides a fascinating glimpse of contemporary social and political history with portraits of well known figures such as Billy Bragg, Billy Connolly and Robin Cook and central figures in the Peace Movement such as Sean MacBride and Fenner Brockway. This exhibition coincides with the University’s annual PeaceJam event, which brings together teenagers, students and Nobel Peace Prize winners.

‘My initial impetus for these pictures’, Margaret Glover comments, ‘was to record an older generation of socialists, and peace campaigners to whom I believed we owed so much. And to pay a kind of personal tribute…’Brushes with Peace’ was originally the title of talks I gave around the country, linking disarmament and development and illustrated by projected slides of my paintings and sketches of British and overseas movements: portraits, conferences, marches etc, all done from life’.

Brushes With Peace opens Friday 29 February and runs until Friday 11 April 2008. The Gallery will be closed on Friday 21/Monday 24 & Tuesday 25 March for Easter Holidays. Gallery opening times are Monday – Friday, 11am – 5pm (until 6pm on Thursdays) and at other times by arrangement. Admission is free.

**SCHOOL OF FINE ART, HISTORY OF ART & CULTURAL STUDIES University of Leeds**

Research Seminars March-April 2008, All staff and students are welcome!

Wednesday 5 March, 2.00-3.30, Old Mining G19 James Siegel, Professor of Anthropology, Cornell University
"Garbage...Ellipses" (on post-tsunami trauma in Aceh)

Thursday 6 March, 2.00-4.00, Old Mining 206A Anne Berger, Professor of French Literature and Women's Studies, Centre de Recherches en Etudes Féminines, Université de Paris 8
"From Mother to Other: Politics of the Mother(tongue) in National and Postnational Contexts"

Thursday 13 March, 12.00-2.00, Old Mining 206A John Mowitt, Professor of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, University of Minnesota
"Stations of Exception"

Wednesday 16 April, 3:00-5:00, Old Mining G19 Richard Checketts, Leverhulme Research Fellow, School of Fine Art, History of Art & Cultural Studies, University of Leeds
"Shaftesbury, Painting, and the Uncertainty of Substance"

Wednesday 30 April 30, 3.00-5.00, Old Mining G19 Nir Arielli, PhD Candidate, School of History, University of Leeds
"Discovering Fragments of the Holocaust: the search for the secret archives of the Warsaw Ghetto"

**Guest lecture by Aishih Wehbe, Universidad de la Laguna, Spain and Nominated Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh**

"The Mestiza Way, the Chicana Way": Analysing Chicana Feminism at the Turn of the 21st Century

Thursday 6 March 2008, 2-3pm, Roger Stevens LT 7

All welcome
EVENTS

School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies

March 6, 2008 - 2:00pm, 206A, Old Mining Building

Anne-Emmanuelle Berger, Professor of French Literature, Cornell University

Director, Centre de Recherches en Etudes Féminines, Université de Paris 8

From Mother to Other: Politics of the Mothertongue In National and Postnational Contexts

Reflecting on the gendered underpinnings of [militant] monolingualism in modern nation-states from revolutionary France to the postcolonial states of the Maghreb, this talk explores connections between language politics and gender politics. While questioning assumptions underlying the notion of the "mothertongue" in the wake of Derrida's thought, it considers the political genesis and historical prospects of this very notion. In particular, it strives to imagine, with the help of literature, what would happen to the mothertongue's concept and experience if the latter were to no longer rely on political oppositions between dialect and national language, the vernacular and the vehicular, and ultimately the domestic and the public spheres.

Anne-Emmanuelle Berger's research and teaching interests include the Enlightenment, modern poetry and poetics, psychoanalytic theory, deconstruction, feminist criticism, the politics of language, and the cultural politics of the Maghreb. She has authored a book on Rimbaud and orality (Le Banquet de Rimbaud, ChampVallon, 1992), another on modern poetry and modern poverty (Scènes d'außône. Misère et Poésie au XIXe s., Champion, 2004) and has edited several volumes (En plein soleil, special issue on the Théâtre du Soleil, Fruits, Paris, 1984; Lectures de la différence sexuelle, Des Femmes, 1994; Algeria in Others' Languages, Cornell U. Press, 2002). She has published over 40 articles on 19th-century poetry, women writers, 18th-century philosophy and literature, Derrida, the politics of the Islamic veil, as well as language and nationalism. She is currently preparing a manuscript on the Franco-American scene of Gender studies.

“Memories of 1968. International Perspectives”
University of Leeds 17th-18th April 2008

Keynote speakers: Janette Habel (Paris); Marco Antônio Guerra (San Paulo, Brazil); Martin Klimke (Heidelberg/Washington D.C.); John Foot (London)

Sponsored by: School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Leeds; Association for the Study of Modern & Contemporary France (ASMCF), Ambassade de France, Italian Cultural Institute, Goethe Institute, Brazilian Embassy, Universities’ China Committee; Leeds Humanities Research Institute.

The events of 1968 continue to generate widespread interest and controversy among scholars, nearly forty years after student and worker movements erupted across an international stage. In the West, 1968 was associated with the coming of age of the baby boomers, the growth of the New Left, protest against authoritarian attitudes and practices in society, as well as opposition to the Vietnam War. In the Soviet block, on the other hand, it was associated with the Prague Spring, and in China with the Cultural Revolution of Mao’s Red Guard.

Perhaps more than any other moment in post-war history, 1968 has been consecrated within different national cultures and elevated to the realm of the mythical. Yet, the events of 1968 are nowadays inseparable from their subsequent representation through the media of literature, cinema and theory. While the 1968 events themselves have been the subject of extensive international comparison, and important work has been done on representations of 1968 in literature, film and theory in a number of countries, few if any scholars have compared the subsequent representations of 1968 within these different national settings.

The purpose of this conference is therefore to compare and discuss representations of 1968 within different national contexts. How has 1968 been (re-)produced and/or contested within different national cultures and how do these processes reflect national preoccupations with order, political violence, freedom, youth, authority, self-expression? How has the memory of 1968 been constructed in different media (film, literature, biography, monuments, etc.) and theoretical frameworks (philosophy, sociology, historiography)? Is there a collective social memory of 1968 and does this memory cross different national cultures?

For registration details, please contact Mercedes de Birch (m.c.debirch@leeds.ac.uk).
EVENTS

On Saturday 1st March 2008, 10am-4pm (lunch included!):

Asia Today: Politics, the Environment, and Globalisation.

Our event of the year is coming up, and it's your chance to hear four thought-provoking talks on some of the burning issues in East Asia - with topics as diverse as 'Localism in Southeast Asia' (how communities are reacting to globalization and the fast pace of change it brings), and the intensified scrutiny of China's human rights records in the run up to the Olympic games, especially looking at Xinjiang, China's massive and mainly Muslim Western province. There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion after each talk.

The Conference is open to everyone. We will need to know numbers, so please let us know in advance if you'd like to buy a ticket - they're £7 including lunch. There will also be an exhibition on in the Parkinson court on Friday Tuesday 26th February, with more details about the speakers, the issues, and our society.

Cleo Paskal – 'How Climate Change is Pushing the Boundaries of Security and Foreign Policy'
Associate fellow, Energy, Environment and Development Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs

Dr. Michael Parnwell - 'Localism in South East Asia'
Lecturer in South East Asian studies at Leeds University

Christian Tyler – 'Olympic Games and Human Rights: China's Uighurs on a Political Tightrope.'
Writer, who's most recent book is entitled 'Wild West China: the Taming of Xinjiang'.

Jon Sullivan – 'Taiwan's 'UN Referendum''
PhD researcher on China-Taiwan relations.

For more information contact Clare, Anna and Denise-Georgina at ears_soc@yahoo.co.uk / 07841826555

Notice regarding Library Resources over the Easter Period and the British Library

The British Library welcomes researchers from all backgrounds to use its Reading Rooms for academic, commercial or personal research.

During the Easter vacation (mid March to mid April) however, the Library experiences very high levels of use. This culminates in delays in the delivery of collection items to reading rooms, a lack of seating in reading rooms and long queues at the café and restaurant. To avoid this, the Library staff are recommending that you only visit the Reading Rooms at St Pancras during this peak period if you have a genuine need to access the British Library collections.

As you may know, the British Library is particularly suited to providing support for postgraduate research students. If you are a Taught Course student please visit your university library as a first port of call. Alternatively, there are various other options available to students during this period. Please view the following links for more information:

SCONUL vacation access scheme
Inform25

If you find that the material you require is only available from the British Library, you may find that an Interlibrary loan will help. Titles can be loaned to Higher Education libraries across the country.
Calling all budding legal eagles from both law and non-law degree backgrounds.

TARGETchances would like to invite you to an exciting event we have coming up this semester: TARGETchances regional law for ethnic minorities

Date: 19 March 2008, Place: Birmingham

Who's eligible: All ethnic minority students who are in any year of study of a law or non-law degree at university in the UK.

Sponsors: DLA Piper, Shoosmiths, Wragge & Co

Beyond London's limits exists a huge variety of exciting and challenging legal careers with leading large commercial firms boasting well-known clients. Throughout the day you'll gain a unique insight into life as a trainee solicitor, work with trainees on a legal case study and get top-notch advice on making legal applications from graduate recruiters. The legal life outside of London offers a wealth of opportunities combined with innovative and cutting-edge work so come dip your toe in the bigger legal pond!

Travel expenses will be reimbursed and refreshments provided!

Apply today at http://www.targetchances.co.uk/apply (limited places). If you have any queries please contact the TARGETchances team on 01491 828915 or email us at targetchances@groupgti.com.

Please find below information about the first edition of Bergen Summer Research School on Global Development Challenges (BSRS) taking place in Bergen, Norway, 7-17 August 2008.

The theme for 2008 is Global Poverty understood as a global challenge, affecting advanced, developing and less developed economies. Our program offers nine different PhD courses and academic as well as social and cultural activities. The city of Bergen is known for its distinctive beauty and charming ambience, which will be the inspirational backdrop to lectures, group work, plenary debates and discussions on Global Poverty. We think this will be an excellent opportunity to acquire new knowledge and meet with PhD-candidates and experts in an international unique setting.

The Bergen Summer Research School is a joint venture under the leadership of the University of Bergen, with the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH), the Christian Michelsen Institute on Human Rights and Development (CMI), the Bergen University College (HIB), UNIFOB and the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN).

You will find the application form and more information about the BSRS on our website www.gdc.uib.no.

The deadline for submitting the application form is April 15, 2008.

If you are a University of Leeds student or researcher please contact your local WUN administrator, Constanze Vageler, c.vageler@leeds.ac.uk before applying. Many thanks. Constanze Vageler, WUN Administrator, Enterprise and Innovation Office, Charles Thackrah Building, 101 Clarendon Road, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9LJ, T +44 (0) 113 343 0932, F +44 (0) 113 343 0949

Oxfam Voluntary Post Opportunities

We are currently recruiting for 3 voluntary positions (1 media & communications assistant and 2 campaigns assistants), based in the Oxfam regional campaigns office in Leeds. We have had some very successful volunteer campaigns assistants from Leeds University in the recent past, several of whom have gone on to paid positions within the campaigns and communications sector.

If you are interested in applying please email Sophie Johnstone at s.a.johnstone@leeds.ac.uk for a copy of the job specification. The deadline for applications is 5th March 2008.
Volunteer Opportunities in Development

Are you looking for practical experience of working in the development sector?

Respond ReNUH is a community-based organisation which works to support community health and development through capacity building and resource coordination in the post-conflict zone of northern Uganda. Our aim is to empower vulnerable groups by increasing accessibility to healthcare, education, and livelihood resources.

We are currently offering the opportunity to volunteer with us.

Our projects include the following:
- IGAP (Income Generating Activity Project): We are working with 30 ‘child mothers’ i.e. women who were abducted by the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) during the civil war in northern Uganda, sexually exploited, and who gave birth during their abduction. These women and their children are very vulnerable and face a lot of discrimination and stigma due to their experience. Respond ReNUH is engaged in building secure housing for these women, providing skills training to enable them to engage in income generating activities and enable their empowerment and self-reliance, and sending their children to school, for the first time in their lives.
- SHG (Self-Help Groups): We are setting up a micro-financing project to be run in several internally displaced people (IDP) camps in the region which will further the financial, business, and self-reliance skills of vulnerable people.
- FALE (Functional Adult Literacy Education): This project teaches basic reading, writing, maths, and other basic skills to people in the IDP camps, many of whom never had the chance to attend school due to the twenty years of civil war.
- Health: We are currently developing a project to set up rural satellite health clinics, an extremely urgent task. And we are running a small project to help restore the surgical ward of the local hospital.

We are looking for people who:
- Are enthusiastic, reliable, flexible, and are willing to take on the challenge of working in a developing country under sometimes difficult conditions;
- Can work independently and as part of a team;
- Have a background in fields such as healthcare, education, social sciences or an interest in development and post-conflict recovery issues;
- Are available for a period of 3 to 6 months.

Benefits:
- The opportunity to make a real difference to people’s lives;
- The experience of a lifetime, personal growth, CV enhancing;
- Essential requirement for a career in the development sector – most organisations will ask for at least 6 months’ experience of working in the field.

Costs:
- Most organisations charge volunteers hundreds of pounds of admin fees – we don’t. As a result, your only cost will be:
  - Flight to Entebbe, Uganda
  - Visa and travel insurance
  - US$170/month for accommodation in a secure, shared house
  - Food, personal expenses

For further information and to apply, please email jennifer.schmidt@sant-oxford.com
FAQ… 5 Minutes With… Dr Simon Lightfoot

Dr Simon Lightfoot, Lecturer in European Politics and Admissions Tutor

What does your working day at POLIS involve?
A mix of teaching, seeing students and of course, being a university, lots of meetings!

What brought you to POLIS and the University of Leeds?
Having studied and worked at new universities, I wanted to see what life was like in a Russell Group University. I also felt that I needed new challenges, such as supervising PhD students.

How long have you been working at POLIS?
I started in August 2005 so I’m in my third year now. Before that I spent six years at Liverpool John Moores University.

Can you tell us about the pod-casting project you are involved with?
Dr Jason Ralph had been utilising podcasts in his lectures for a little while before he asked whether I would be interested in putting together a funding application to explore how podcasts can be used in a blended learning environment. The project has been going really well. Jason has created podcasts for his students to subscribe to and we have had some excellent student-made podcasts. Dr Naomi Head has been a star and created an excellent resource on grazr, giving access to relevant podcasts on US foreign policy. Interestingly initial findings from our student survey suggest that these types of activities, which give students something extra to complement lectures and seminars, are exactly what students want! To find out more about the project, visit: http://www.c-sap.bham.ac.uk/subject%5Fareas/politics/polcasting/

What do you enjoy most about your job?
I enjoy working in an intellectually stimulating environment with colleagues from a variety of backgrounds. Since I’ve arrived colleagues have been very encouraging and supportive, which has allowed me to settle in very quickly. Their input has opened up new research areas for me as well as allowing me to consolidate existing research strengths. Having said that, probably the aspect of my job I enjoy most is teaching students! Each teaching session is different and you get to engage with some amazing people from a very diverse range of backgrounds.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
As a parent of a 16 month old, most of my spare time is soft play areas, the Night Garden and Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes! Otherwise I spend too much time watching sport, (although not sure watching Notts County flirt with relegation again counts) and listening to slightly obscure indie music, some of which has now come back into fashion (which makes me feel old).

If your life had gone in a different direction, what might you be doing instead?
My only non-academic job was working for Blackwells so I might have been a bookseller! Otherwise I seriously considered becoming a special needs teacher.

If you could get students to understand one thing what would it be?
That to get the most out of seminars they need to read and prepare in advance! If people contribute too, the hour goes so much quicker as well, which is a bonus. Also that the Council of Europe is not an EU institution! Ok that is 3 things!

If you would like to take part please email polisnews@leeds.ac.uk for an interview sheet.