The following PhD vacancies and research topics within the School of Politics and International Relations were compiled in November 2013 and were correct at the time of publication.

For further guidance on pursuing a PhD in any of these areas, please consult the School of Politics and International Relations website or the website for the relevant centre or institute as listed below.

Centre for British Politics

Parties and Representative Institutions

Traditionally British politics has been defined by its institutions, notably those gathered together in Westminster. The Centre is home to work that explores the changing nature of some of Britain’s leading political institutions; its members also explore their weakening grasp on popular loyalties.

Backbench Dissent in the House of Commons Philip Cowley and Mark Stuart have researched the way MPs vote for a number of years. Their work is based on quantitative and qualitative sources and has produced a host of publications, including The Rebels: How Blair Misplaced His Majority and a website www.revolts.co.uk which carries updates of the research. The latter is now widely used by practitioners, including MPs, lobbyists, and journalists. As Nick Robinson, the BBC's Political Editor notes, 'This is academic political research doing exactly what it should do – helping to inform the political debate - and in real time not years after it matters'.

The 'Crisis' of Trust

Most commentators believe political parties and government have lost the trust of the vast majority of the public, largely due to changes in the social and economic structure. While individualism and declining deference may be new features of the cultural landscape, it is also true that the major political parties have endured an endemic ‘crisis’ of legitimacy. Centre members are approaching this subject in three contrasting ways. First, in order to better understand the current situation Steven Fielding has explored the means by which the parties have sought – and are seeking - to negotiate their inherently problematic relationship with society. Cees van der Eijk has conducted contemporary surveys of popular attitudes about public officials in Britain but also across Europe.

General Elections and Political Communications Britain’s general elections are some of the best studied in the world – thanks to a series of research projects dating back decades. One of
those – the so-called ‘Nuffield’ series – began in 1945, and has resulted in a substantial book on each general election since. Philip Cowley has co-authored the 2010 election study: like its predecessors the book examined the events leading up to the election, as well as the election itself and was based on extensive elite interviewing as well as detailed statistical analysis of the results. Steven Fielding has written an account of the Labour party’s campaign in every general election since 1997 in books edited by Andrew Geddes and Jonathan Tonge, the latest of which, Britain Votes 2010, was published by Oxford University Press. Cees van der Eijk has also taken a prominent role in studying recent elections in Britain and across Europe, employing large scale surveys and quantitative analyses of party manifestos.

Caitlin Milazzo’s research focuses on exploring the effects of competition on mass and elite behaviour both in Britain and cross-nationally. She would be happy to supervise dissertation topics on the political behaviour of citizens or elites in a wide range of countries. In particular, she can advise students on topics related to voting behaviour, political knowledge, and election campaigning. She is also able supervise students interested in studying in the effects of political institutions, such as electoral rules and other constitutional arrangements.

Choosing a Party Leader

Since 1963, the political parties have repeatedly changed the ways in which they choose their leaders. This raises a number of questions: how and why have these changes occurred, and what have their consequences been for the parties themselves and for the nature and operation of British parliamentary democracy? Andrew Denham has published extensively on party leadership selection in British politics, including numerous articles on Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat leadership (and deputy leadership) contests in recent years.

Secret Whitehall

Much of Whitehall's intelligence and security machinery remains shrouded in secrecy. Rory Cormac's research sheds light on some of the darkest corridors of Whitehall. He is interested in the relationship between intelligence and policy in the British system and how successive Prime Ministers have used their intelligence services. Cormac is currently exploring British approaches to covert action since 1945. In doing so, he is uncovering top secret committees where MI6, the Foreign Office, and the military thrashed out ideas for covert intervention - from blackmail to coups. Cormac has also published a number of articles on how Britain's intelligence machinery has evolved to meet so-called 'new' threats - from terrorism to economic insecurity. Indeed, his first monograph, considers how intelligence assessments shaped government responses to insurgencies. Rory would be keen to offer PhD supervision on any aspect of intelligence. This includes intelligence history, issues of mass surveillance and oversight, how intelligence is collected and analysed, and how intelligence impacts upon policy. He is also keen to supervise
projects about covert action and secret foreign policy - including the role of the CIA and MI6 in contemporary history.

**Britain and Counter-Insurgency**

British military participation in, and political management of, counter-insurgency wars is under the spotlight as troops look to be withdrawn from Afghanistan ahead of the 2014 deadline for the NATO pull-out. The controversial war in Iraq, and the subsequent British efforts to retain control of the south of the country in the face of violent insurgent opposition, has led to a revisiting of Britain's colonial heritage as a means of exploring Britain's contemporary and historical relationship with the nuances of counter-insurgency warfare. Andrew Mumford's research sits at the nexus of British political and military history. He is keen to explore the weight of Britain's historical experiences in this form of conflict to interpret contemporary performance in what David Petraeus has labelled the post-9/11 "counter-insurgency decade". He is eager to hear from potential PhD students who are interested in seeing how successive British governments dealt with the insurgencies that proved blocks in the road to decolonisation of the Empire in the mid-twentieth century, and whether there are modern parallels seen in Iraq and Afghanistan. On the security side, Andrew is also keen to hear from those interested in the evolution of British military theory and practice towards counter-insurgency.

**Fiction and Politics**

What role does fiction play in the political process? How far does it construct how people see 'real' politics? Steven Fielding’s work draws on the concerns of political scientists and historians to answer such questions. His innovative research has mapped out the changing ways in which fiction – as articulated in novels, plays, as well as in the cinema and on television – has critiqued representative democracy in a variety of genres. His published work, culminating in A State of Play (Bloomsbury, 2014), and recent Radio 4 documentaries have so far focused on the British case but he is interested in extending his scope to include the United States and other representative democracies. Steven is interested in offering supervision in any aspect of this subject. He is currently working on how television period dramas responded to Britain’s 1970s crisis and how real political leaders – at the moment just Churchill – have been depicted on the screen. However there are many other topics that be covered within this growing and fascinating field.
The research interests of IAPS members fall under a wide range of disciplines that include history, business and economics, politics and international relations, sociology and geography. IAPS welcomes research students working on any country in Asia, but particularly if they are working on the major research areas set out below.

**Nationalism and Ethnicity in Asia**

Asia is extremely diverse, both between and within countries. This diversity is both regional, but even within regions diversity exists on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, tribe, caste and/or language. The states of Asia have adopted multiple and differing strategies to manage (and in some cases seeking to eliminate) this diversity. IAPS members have examined the historical success (or otherwise) of these strategies and seek to examine contemporary national and ethnic conflicts, both between groups but also those targeted against the state (or perpetrated by the state). Research interests in this area also extend to examining insurgency movements against the central state, many of which can be linked to the ‘war on terror’.

**Federalism and decentralisation in Asia**

Many countries in Asia have adopted federal systems of government (e.g. India, Pakistan, Malaysia), others are considering adopting it (e.g. Nepal), whilst others have sought to create a strong unitary state (e.g. Sri Lanka). Others have adopted a more nuanced position (e.g. Indonesia). IAPS members have researched on the operation of federal forms of government and have continuing research interests in the relationship between local government and provincial government, the ways in which federal states have sought to manage diversity within their countries, as well as seeking to answer questions relating to the allocation of resources and the delivery of good governance.

**Democratisation in Asia**

Asia has varying experiences of democracy. India is the world’s largest democracy whilst its neighbour, China, is not. Many other states in Asia hold competitive elections but in many different ways the institutionalisation and quality of their democracy is weak and democracy cannot be said to be consolidated in these countries. Members of IAPS have conducted research projects on different aspects of democracy and are interested in supervising students working on a range of topics in this area. These include (but are not limited to), the role of
social media in newly democratising countries, how to measure and understand democracy, the relationship between democracy and the recognition of minority rights, the role of technology in elections, the role of political parties in aggregating preferences and civil society and democracy.

Human security in Asia

There are many aspects of human security. IAPS members currently work on the impact of the ‘War on Terror’ on human security in Asia, particularly on the relationship between anti-terrorist measures and a broad understanding of human security. Migration is another issue that IAPS members have engaged with, seeking to examine the (historical and present) causes of migration and conflict occurring from migration. Much of this research also links to the nationalism and ethnicity research strand of IAPS. A final research cluster has looked at non-traditional security issues, such as the conflicts and resolutions of trans-boundary natural resources and the geographies of rehabilitation of natural disaster-affected populations, particularly in Southeast Asia.

Resource Politics and Conflicts in Asia

Over one third of the world’s freshwater is located within the Himalayas. Tensions between upstream states and those lower downstream seen in all regions of Asia are likely to intensify as the call for hydro-energy and irrigation grows more acute due to population growth, climate change and economic development. These issues not only affect relations between states but are increasingly the source of tension within countries. The intertwined issues of energy security, water security and food security are an area in which IAPS members seek to expand their expertise and IAPS will be organising events on in the coming academic year.

International Relations in Asia

The long-running research interests of IAPS members have generated a number of high-profile research programmes focused on the development of political, cultural and economic interactions between Asia and the world. Relations between certain states in Asia have been fraught and have exploded into direct conflict. Between others, relations have been peaceful but still tense. Research interests of members of IAPS include understanding bilateral relations between Asian countries e.g. Sino-Indian relations, as well as research on the ways in which the larger countries (India and China) have modified their foreign policy goals in recent years and how the smaller countries have reacted to this. The linkage of foreign aid in promoting foreign policy goals is another research interest, as well as seeking to understand regionalism within the region (SAARC and ASEAN). China’s contributions to UN peace-keeping operations and the
relationship between the policies, practices and outcomes of China’s peace-keeping activities across a range of Asian and African countries is one current project.

Centre for the Study of European Governance

www.nottingham.ac.uk/ccpr/research

Members of the Centre for the Study of European Governance cover a wide range of topics in comparative politics, public policy, public administration and political economy. The research concentrates on but does not exclusively include European countries. Applications that address the following themes are particularly welcome:

- Political representation and public opinion, political socialisation, voting behaviour and the consequences of electoral systems
- Europeanisation, in particular, with regard to parties, party systems, Euroscepticism, voting behaviour, public administration, democratisation
- Comparative politics and public administration, especially, with regard to the corruption, quality of government, administrative reform, immigration
- Methodologically focused projects especially with regard to survey research and discourse analysis

Citizens

From its inception the European Union and process of European integration were elite driven, with input from ordinary people generally being indirect.

Over the past three decades, however, citizens of the EU began to leave their mark on the EU more directly, as witnessed by referenda on EU issues and European parliamentary elections.

CSEG thus aims to understand the nature of mass attitudes toward the integration project and how events like elections and referenda are used by citizens to make an impact on the EU.

States

One result of the growth in size and scope of the European Union is that traditional understandings of what a 'state' is have come under increasing challenge. In addition to the
question of whether the EU itself can be seen as a state, there is a growing debate about the role, the range, and the capacity of states.

CSEG seeks to explore some of these issues in more depth, focusing for example on democratisation in southern Europe, EU integration and political management of ministerial bureaucracies in east-central Europe, and decision-making in the EU.

Security

There are a number of projects within CSEG related to the external policies of the European Union. Professor Wyn Rees works on EU-US security cooperation, both in the field of external and internal security. Dr Catherine Gegout specialises on European military intervention in Africa.

CONCEPT: Centre for Normative Political Theory

www.nottingham.ac.uk/concept/research

Justice and the Politics of Recognition

Recent work on justice has focused on the issue of ‘the politics of distribution versus the politics of recognition.’ The former is associated with what is allegedly the traditional way of thinking about problems of justice from Aristotle to Rawls. The latter is associated either with the philosophy of Hegel or with contemporary poststructuralism/postmodernism, with its focus on ‘identity politics.’ The issue is which of these two ways of thinking about problems of justice is most appropriate in society today, in what some people think is a ‘postmodern’ world. Please contact Dr Tony Burns if you have an interest in this area of research.

Justice in Education

Questions of social justice and the provision and content of education are very closely intertwined. Schools educate the next generation of citizens. Consequently, questions in the field of educational justice range across issues such as: what values ought educational institutions aim to impart to children to make them functioning citizens? Is the cultivation of the capacity for autonomous decision making an appropriate aim of school education? Should the state allow, or even support, religious education? Is private education permissible? How much control should parents have over what their children learn about in school? Is equality of opportunity the correct foundation for the provision of education? What opportunities should be
equalised, and how is this best achieved? As such, questions of justice in education overlap with other important areas of normative theory such as egalitarianism, rights, multiculturalism, and democracy. Dr David Stevens is the fellow of CONCEPT with a particular interest in this area.

Justice and the ‘Digital Divide’

The rise of the new technologies has transformed restrictions on human actions and public policies. The work of Dr David Stevens looks at developments such as the Internet and worldwide web have created new inequalities, exacerbated old ones, and removed or lessened others. Questions of how to deal with these issues, because they include the distribution of benefits and burdens amongst people, are ultimately questions of social justice. How access to technology and the training to utilise it should be distributed, and who picks up the tab, are pressing normative issues. Similarly, the new technologies provide mechanisms for political action, including radicalisation and religious and political extremism. These raise questions concerning censorship, market regulation, freedom of speech, and so forth.

Justice and the Environment

The question of how the tenets of justice might be applied to environmental questions has been a central concern in environmental political theory in recent years, as considerations of both distribution and recognition raise difficult problems in this area. For example can and should the ‘community of justice’ be extended beyond the conventional human-centred sphere to include sentient animals, all life, or even entire ecosystems? Can such an extension be grounded in the concept of autonomy? How can we understand justice in relation to future generations of human beings who do not yet exist? Does the loss of irreplaceable natural values raise special problems for justice theory? The work of Mathew Humphrey, Matthew Rendall, and David Stevens relates to such questions about the relationship of the environment and justice.

Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice

www.nottingham.ac.uk/cssgj/research

Political Theory

Cosmopolitanism, global citizenship and solidarity - Does the rich north have obligations to the poor south? If so, why? If not, why not? What does it mean to be a 'global citizen'? What are
the nature of ‘our’ obligations and duties to each other? Who are ‘we’ in this context? What is ‘humanitarian intervention’? Could that possibly be a bad thing?

Postcolonial Studies - What is ‘postcolonial studies’? What are the theoretical sources available to those interested in questions of race and ‘cultural imperialism.’ Is this just another form of ‘identity politics,’ or the ‘politics of recognition,’ in the Hegelian sense?

Justice and Utopia - What is the role of ‘utopia’ and ‘dystopia’ in thinking about justice generally? In the case of ‘global justice,’ is a ‘world state’ emerging at the global level, or is this a ‘utopian’ scenario? If such a political organization devoted to ‘global governance’ were to emerge, would this be a good thing or not?

Intergenerational Justice - For the first time in history, man-made disasters such as climate change or nuclear war might damage the earth for hundreds or thousands of years. Yet if economic growth continues, our descendants are likely to enjoy higher incomes than we do. Costly measures to fight climate change will benefit people who may well, in some respects, be richer than we are. When balancing the interests of present and future people, should we ‘discount the future,’ as many economists argue? Or should we accord gains and losses to our descendants the same weight as our own, as the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change maintained? Might this not then require us, as Stern’s critics argued, to make huge sacrifices for the sake of small gains to future rich people, simply because there will be so many of them? Can people have rights if they don’t yet exist, and can we harm them if these particular persons would never have been born in the absence of our actions?

Critical Political Economy

Theorizing ‘globalization’: Possible research projects might be: What is ‘Neo-Liberalism’ and how might it be criticized? Is Marxist political economy dead? What other theoretical frameworks for understanding globalization are there? Can there be ‘non-Marxist forms of ‘historical materialism’? Will a ‘Neo-Gramscian’ approach focusing on the idea of the ‘hegemony’ of neoliberalism prove useful? Is ‘imperialism’ a thing of the past?

Globalization, ‘aid’ and ‘development’: Here research questions include: What is ‘development’? Who defines the terms and conditions of development? Is ‘development’ necessarily a good thing? How is ‘development studies’ conventionally understood? How might that understanding be criticized?

Politics of New Social Movements

Globalization and social movements - What is the role of ‘old’ movements such as ‘trade unionism’ in resisting neoliberal global restructuring? How effective are these movements? What
is the alternative to them? Does the World Social Forum prefigure new forms of agency and mobilization?

Social movements in the global south - How effective are such agents as ‘peasants’, ‘anti-corporate activists’ and ‘ethical consumers’ at contesting globalization? How do social movements in the global south develop and spread discourses and practices of resistance? How is ‘knowledge’ that contributes to the strengthening of such emancipatory projects produced? What is the role of ‘education’ here?

Democracy, protest and legitimation - What are the proper limits of protest and ‘direct action’ by groups seeking justice in a democratic society? Should individuals be bound by the majority – or are there some issues and concerns which are so important (e.g. ‘climate change,’ ‘the environment,’ ‘animal rights’) that they override the democratic imperative? Can direct action be justified? If so, how?

Centre for the Study of Political Ideologies

Political Ideologies

We welcome applications in any area of political ideology, broadly conceived. This includes work on the ‘traditional’ ideological families of liberalism, conservatism, socialism, fascism, feminism, ecologism etc., but also work on new ideological configurations that may be emerging, or the breakdown of traditional ideological forms. We also very much welcome work on methods and the study of political ideologies, and work that tracks changing ideological patterns over time.

Comparative Political Thought

Much existing work on political ideologies is highly focused on Europe and America. Work in the emerging field of comparative political thought has sought to understand ideological forms of thought and conceptual vocabularies in a much more comprehensive fashion, in particular engaging in the study of political thought in parts of the world previously neglected by western scholars of ideology, and looking at how these have developed, and at how cross-cultural currents of political thought impact upon local forms of ideology and how these local forms then exert influence back into these cross-cultural currents.

Culture and Politics
The study of political ideologies encompasses all forms of political thought, from the philosophical and abstract to the embedded and vernacular. It also engages with the multiple modes of dissemination of political ideas – textual, verbal, and visual – the image, the film or television programme, the pamphlet or newspaper article. We welcome proposals to work in this area of interface between cultural and political forms. How should we understand ‘culture’ and its relationship to politics? What explains the choices made in how to articulate political ideas? Is it possible to assess the effectiveness of different forms of dissemination?

The Temporal Dimensions of Political Thought

We also welcome applications to work on the historical dimension of political ideologies; the way historical political ideas and ideologies are mobilised, appropriated, and brought into the present. How are historical tropes incorporated into contemporary ideological discourse? How do ‘ideological entrepreneurs’ move through the historical and cultural landscape, mobilising certain themes and ideas, and ignoring others? How do ideologies exploit historical and cultural capital?