

## POLIS alumni - September 2019

Dear alumni,

Welcome to the September edition of your POLIS alumni newsletter.

Thank you, as always, for your feedback from the previous edition. We love to hear your news so, if you would like to get in touch, please [email us](#).

You can connect with POLIS via our [website](#), on [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#). For our video content, head over to [YouTube](#).

Yours,

Andy Cuthbert,  
Alumni Relations Co-ordinator

### Dr Aaron Rapport (1980 - 2019)

The Department of Politics and International Studies is greatly saddened to report the passing of Dr Aaron Rapport, lecturer in the Department since 2013 and Fellow of Corpus Christi College. An obituary and space for colleagues and friends to leave their memories of Aaron can be found at the page linked below.

[Read more](#)



### Dr Finbarr Livesey (1972 - 2019)

The Department of Politics and International Studies is greatly saddened to report the passing of Dr Finbarr Livesey, senior lecturer in the Department and Fellow of Magdalene College. An obituary and space for colleagues and friends to leave their memories of Finbarr can be found at the page linked below.

[Read more](#)



## Martinez Dissertation Wins APSA MENA Award

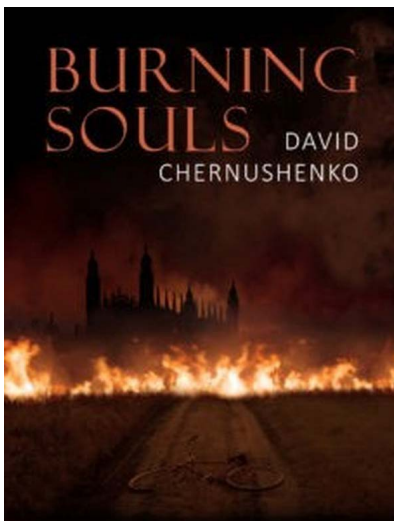
Jose Martinez, one of our PhD students who graduated in 2018 has received an award for his dissertation *'The Politics of Bread: State Power, Food Subsidies and Neoliberalization in Hashemite Jordan'* from the American Political Science Association's Middle East and North Africa Politics Section.



The awarding committee commented: "The committee was impressed by this highly innovative study of welfare politics in Jordan, presenting the Jordanian state as engaged in a process of demonstrating its authority through the distribution of flour, the regulation of bread prices and the indirect management of the bakery. Combining theoretical fluency with empirical richness, the dissertation is based on a mix of detailed archival work, extensive interviews with policy-makers and other officials, and a multi-site ethnography conducted in bakeries over an eighteen month period of fieldwork."

The Department would like to extend its congratulations to Jose on his award.

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[Read more](#)

## POLIS Features in Alumnus' New Novel

David Chernushenko (MPhil in International Relations, 1987-88) recently served two terms (2010-18) as an elected city councillor in Ottawa, Canada, including one as chair of the city's Environmental and Climate Protection Committee. Environmental education, advocacy and action has been at the heart of his career — in federal government, private sector consulting, documentary filmmaking, municipal politics and now as a novelist. *Burning Souls* — David's "climate breakdown thriller" — was published in May 2019, and is of likely interest to Cambridge and POLIS alumni, as the university and the program figure prominently in the book. The fictional heroine of *Burning Souls* is pursuing her MPhil in 1997-98, and meets the other three principal characters at Cambridge as they pursue their respective graduate studies before they all head out into the world to make their mark (and discover some people don't want what they are selling!).

# In brief

## John Dunn Prize 2019

We are delighted to announce that the John Dunn prize for 2018-19 was shared by **Jakob Gomolka** and **Todd Gillespie**. The John Dunn Prize is awarded for the best dissertation by an undergraduate final year student and is named after Emeritus Professor John Dunn.

Jakob Gomolka had this to say about his experience: 'Writing a third year dissertation under the supervision of Dr Tom Hopkins was a very enjoyable opportunity to explore a subject in much greater depth than term time normally allows. Curious about the implications of the emergence of atheism for European political thought, I dove into the history of nineteenth century socialism. What I found in the debates surrounding the writings of philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach was not only a connection between German idealism and Marx but also a historical precedent for questions that bothered me personally: modern disputes about realist political philosophy and intersubjective ethics of recognition. This made me rethink how to read the history of political thought more generally and encourages me to take the time to pursue even seemingly niche interests.'

Todd Gillespie made the following comment on his dissertation: 'I delved into the recent history of the American libertarian movement, its intersection with utopian theory and how this was manifest in the case of the Free State Project. Working on my dissertation has led me to give greater attention to certain aspects, particularly desire and psychology, in the way I consider topics in politics more generally. I'm very grateful for the academic windows opened by my supervisor Duncan Bell and the opportunity to take on a dissertation essentially without limits.'

## Geoffrey Hawthorn Prize 2019

We are delighted to announce that this year's winner of the Geoffrey Hawthorn Prize is **Edmund Wilson**. The Geoffrey Hawthorn Prize is awarded to the student with the highest average on papers POL1 and POL2. The prize is named after Emeritus Professor and former Head of Department Geoffrey Hawthorn, who sadly passed away in December 2015.

Edmund Wilson had this to say about his success: 'Receiving the Geoffrey Hawthorn Prize is an honour I never once expected and will never forget. Many thanks to all involved for seeing my essays as deserving of this recognition. Many thanks also to all those who organised and taught the Part I HSPS course which I loved, given both its political breadth and its philosophical depth. I'm particularly grateful for the support from Selwyn College - notably from my POL1 and POL2 supervisors, Benjamin Studebaker and Dr Lauren Wilcox.'

Though I have not come across Professor Hawthorn's writings until now, the prize has prompted me to look them up. They look really interesting and relevant to my own passions, and I will definitely be reading some of them in the coming months. I also look forward eagerly to Part II of HSPS. This prize has given me renewed enthusiasm to study these topics long into the future - and one day, perhaps, to act on them in the political world beyond the academy.'

## Winner of the Lisa Smirl Prize for best PhD 2018-19 Announced

POLIS would like to offer their sincerest congratulations to former PhD student Sean Fleming who has won the 2018-19 Lisa Smirl Prize.

His thesis entitled, "Leviathan on a Leash: A Political Theory of State Responsibility," was described as a brilliant combination of history of political thought, political theory, and international law.

The Prize is named in memory of Lisa Smirl, who gained her PhD in the Department in 2010 but who sadly passed away from cancer in February 2013.

## In brief

### 2019 Antcliffe Lecture

The 2019 Antcliffe Lecture was given by Dr Robert Saunders, Senior Lecturer in Modern British History, Queen Mary, University of London on the topic *Thirty Years On: Thatcher, 1989 and the Fall of the Berlin Wall*.

Thirty years ago, a tide of revolutions swept through Eastern Europe, triggering the collapse of the Communist bloc, the reunification of Germany and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the events of 1989 stirred a heady brew of emotions in the West, ranging from amazement and admiration to fear and trepidation. For Margaret Thatcher, the collapse of communism might have been a moment of triumph; yet her attempts to slow the pace of change put her at odds with other world leaders and out of step with opinion in Britain. Barely a year later, she herself would fall from power. This lecture assesses the role of the 1989 revolutions in the fall of Margaret Thatcher. It explores the hopes and fears that animated Thatcher's response, and asks what this might tell us about Thatcherism, Euroscepticism and the significance of the Cold War in modern British politics.

The recording of this public lecture can be found [here](#).

### Fieldwork Photography Competition Winner

This year POLIS ran a Photography Competition in collaboration with our blog, In The Long Run, to showcase the best images our PhD students have taken whilst out on their fieldwork. We received some fantastic submissions but we were able to narrow down our winners.

In Third Place: Alex Grigor,  
In Second Place: Karim El Taki,  
First Place: Paola Velasco Herrejon

These images will be featured on our website in the upcoming academic year, so keep your eye out for them! Thank you again to everyone who entered this year.

### New Book from POLIS Alumnus

Prof Verlan Lewis, from the Department of Political Science at the University of Colorado is pleased to announce the publication of his new book: *Ideas of Power: The Politics of American Party Ideology Development* (CUP, 2019). The origins of this book project can be traced back to Prof Lewis' study of party ideology development and the history of political thought as an MPhil student at Cambridge in 2009-10.

## Alumni Spotlight - Prof Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen

### Article title

Prof Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen shares his memories of Cambridge, where he completed his PhD in International Relations at POLIS between 2002 and 2008. Since then he has been a postdoctoral researcher at Harvard, United Nations University (Yokohama), Aalborg University and is now Professor of Northern Studies and Barents Chair in Politics at The Arctic University of Norway (Tromsø).



[Read more](#)

### Would you like to appear in our Spotlight feature?

If you'd like to be featured in our Spotlight feature, please [email Andy](#). The Spotlight is an 800–1,200 word guest article written by a former POLIS student. Your article should include information about your time at Cambridge, your work now and, if possible, the link between the two.

For inspiration, previous Spotlight features are [on our website >](#)

## Talking Politics

186 | Adam Tooze on the Global Slowdown  
September 08, 2019

Helen Thompson and Adam Tooze take us beyond Brexit to look at the global situation and the bigger threats we face. Italy, Germany, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Russia, Trump vs. the Fed, the US vs. China, Hong Kong, the dollar, the euro, climate change, oil: an amazingly wide-ranging conversation that somehow manages to connect it all up.



[Listen now](#)

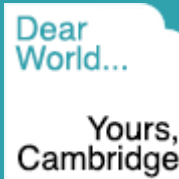
## 185 | Is It Legal? September 04, 2019

With British politics in disarray, we try to sort out what's a stake - legally, constitutionally and electorally. Can Johnson refuse to do what parliament demands? Can Corbyn get the election he wants? What is Dominic Cummings playing at? And how much is the Fixed-term Parliaments Act to blame for the mess? Plus we explore the likely choices ahead for voters and politicians and we ask the big question lying behind all the drama: is this a question of politics or is it a matter of law? With Helen Thompson and Kenneth Armstrong.



Listen now

Our campaign for the University and Colleges of Cambridge is raising funds to attract the brightest minds, create the finest facilities and give the freedom to create more world-changing ideas. To do this, we need your help.



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