Welcome from Professor John Tasioulas, Director

This newsletter gives a snapshot of the stimulating programme of events organised by the YTL Centre during the Spring Term.

The major event, of course, was our inaugural YTL Centre Lecture, delivered by one of the world’s leading public intellectuals, Professor Martha Nussbaum of the University of Chicago, on the challenges surrounding the accountability of powerful men for sex offences that they commit.

Professor Nussbaum’s characteristically powerful and provocative lecture was followed by a panel discussion the following day chaired by senior Washington Post journalist Frances Stead Sellers.

The panel generated a number of interesting criticisms and amplifications of Professor Nussbaum’s ideas, and notably featured a high level of engagement from those in attendance.

We are very grateful to Professor Nussbaum for getting the annual YTL Centre Lecture off to a marvellous start, and we look forward to welcoming next year’s lecturer, the eminent Harvard moral and political philosopher, T M Scanlon.

“Our inaugural YTL lecture was delivered by one of the world’s leading public intellectuals, Professor Martha Nussbaum”

I also wish to highlight the extremely successful Law and Justice Forum on ‘The Future of Europe’, which was superbly organised by the Centre’s Deputy Director, Dr Christoph Kletzer. The forum included distinguished speakers with a very wide range of views on the challenges confronting Europe, which resulted in discussion that was more trenchant and open than is often the case on these vexed issues.

The YTL Centre continues to make a vital contribution to the intellectual life of the Dickson Poon School of Law, the university, and the wider community, and all of us associated with the Centre continue to be grateful for the generosity and vision of the Yeoh family.
In March, the YTL centre hosted Professor Martha Nussbaum, philosopher and Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, presenting this year’s inaugural lecture during International Women’s Week, which was titled “Sexual Violence and Accountability in a Culture of Celebrity”.

Professor Nussbaum outlined the focus of her lecture as: “glamorous and powerful men, entertainers and athletes, who are in the most literal sense above the law. They will almost always prevail against accusations, no matter what they do in the sexual domain. Because they are shielded by glamour, public trust and access to the best legal representation.”

Professor Nussbaum spoke to a full audience in the Great Hall and began her talk by sharing a personal account of sexual assault and then placed the issue of ‘powerful men’ and the law in a historical and sociological framework. Her lecture also examined rape culture on US college campuses, fuelled by alcohol and a toxic atmosphere created by college sports institutions, and is often even more complicated in the context of race relations.

The event was followed by a panel discussion the next day which was chaired by senior Washington Post journalist Frances Stead Sellers. Professor Nussbaum reiterated her personal experiences of sexual assault and her own disillusionment with the law. The panel discussed the college rape epidemic and the questions raised about how accusations were handled within these institutions. There were questions about the focus on celebrity culture and how some celebrities historically got away with sexual assault and rape.
In February 2016, the Yeoh Tiong Lay (YTL) Centre hosted the second Law and Justice Forum in February on ‘The Future of Europe’, organised by Dr Christoph Kletzer. The event brought together an expert panel, including a diverse group of thought leaders and public figures, to debate the challenges that Europe faces and the possible solutions.

Speakers included former French Minister for European Affairs and Justice at the French Constitutional Court, Professor Noelle Lenoir, world-renowned philosopher Professor John Finnis, leading authority on European affairs Andrew Moravcsik, historian Sir Larry Siedentop and Swedish journalist Paulina Neuding.

The forum covered the geo-strategic, economic and cultural challenges and options for Europe. The day started with a lively discussion on the difficult subjects of mass migration, Europe’s relationship with Russia and trade-offs between women’s rights to freedom and security, on one hand, and immigration, on the other.

The afternoon’s panel, which focused on European integration, was chaired by Professor of International Law, Guglielmo Verdirame. The day concluded with a final debate featuring the whole panel in front of a packed lecture hall and hosted by Financial Times journalist Henry Mance.

All the sessions can be viewed again on the School of Law’s YouTube page (goo.gl/crFE0g).
Justice of the Supreme Court, Lord Mance, visited the Yeoh Tiong Lay Centre in February to speak about International Law and the Courts, where he outlined his approach to major international legal issues in recent years, and the role that the Supreme Court has played in addressing them.

After the hour-long talk Lord Mance was interviewed by Professor Guglielmo Verdirame. He spoke about his background at the Bar, where he worked in Commercial Law and his reasons for deciding to become a Judge after 25 years of practice. He also discussed his time working in Hamburg, Germany after leaving university, and his experience of German law and the judiciary.

The audience included PhD students and King’s staff. Lord Mance outlined his advice to those students embarking on a career in law: “I think they should get some experience of particular areas of the law. Arrange to do mini-pupillages, if you are thinking of the Bar, or to do short periods with solicitors’ firms, see what the practice of the law is like.

He concluded his interview with these words of advice: “Try and work out what areas you might be interested in. I think that for those with the right qualifications, law is a wonderful career, which offers a never-ending variety of case and subject matter, a good deal of independence, and a good deal of responsibility from an early age.”

“I hugely enjoyed being a judge – managing your own court, trying to make sense of the issues, getting the parties to cooperate, and understanding the evidence.”

Lord Mance

You can read the full interview on the Centre website (goo.gl/9VQIYG).
Events

Expert Sessions feature leading thinkers

Some of the King’s team at one of the expert sessions with Professor Danielle Allen.

Our Politics, Philosophy and Law (PPL) students were privileged to be able to engage with some leading thinkers in special Expert Sessions, chaired by Professor Tasioulas, Dr Kletzer and Dr Renzo.

Among the distinguished visitors this year were Professor Danielle Allen (Harvard University), who spoke about democratic equality and connectedness, and Professor John Finnis (Oxford University), who spoke about the nature of law.

The expert sessions provide a unique format for engaging with the work of leading scholars. The students read an assigned work by a leading scholar, their written comments were then sent to the scholar in question who then engaged in discussion with the class over an intensive two hour period.
**Staff Focus**

**Professor John Tasioulas**

The Director of the Yeoh Tiong Lay Centre for Politics, Philosophy and Law, Professor John Tasioulas, recently published an article in digital ideas and culture magazine, Aeon, about the relationship between human rights and legal conventions. The article, ‘Are human rights anything more than legal conventions?’, which generated over a hundred responses, argues that human rights have an existence independent of law and social recognition. You can read his full article here on Aeon (goo.gl/qNYq73).

Professor Tasioulas gave talks during the term on human rights in law and morality (at the Centre’s work-in-progress seminar), on cosmopolitanism and national identity (at the Australia Catholic University's Centre in Rome), on international criminal justice (at the University of Frankfurt), and gave a keynote lecture on some myths about the right to health (at the Oxford/Mt Sinai/King’s Bioethics Consortium meeting in Oxford). He was also a respondent to Baroness Onora O’Neill’s Boutwood Lecture at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and to Justice Michael Kirby’s lecture on law and the challenges of technology at the Peace Palace, The Hague, Netherlands.

**Dr Massimo Renzo**

Dr Renzo has presented his work at a number of venues, including the prestigious Moral Philosophy Seminar of the University of Oxford, and the UCL Legal & Political Theory Seminar. He was a panel member on ‘Authority and War’ with Professor Helen Frowe (Stockholm University) and Professor Jon Quong (University of Southern California) at the annual conference of the American Philosophical Association in Seattle. He has also spoken at a workshop on the philosophy of international law at the University of Michigan. His paper “Rights Forfeiture and Liability to Harm” has appeared in the Journal of Political Philosophy (early view).

**Dr Christoph Kletzer**

In February, Dr Kletzer organised the event ‘The Future of Europe’ (see section above). After Dr Kletzer had published some opinion pieces in broadsheets on the overturning of the Austrian presidential election by the Austrian Constitutional Court he was invited to the prestigious ‘Judikaturseminar’ at the Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien (Vienna University of Economics and Business) to debate his views in front of members of the Austrian Constitutional Court and cabinet ministers. An article based on his talk will be published in the Journal für Rechtsphilosophie. His paper ‘The Normative Jinx’ will appear in the Oxford Journal for Legal Studies. He is also finishing the manuscript of his book ‘The Idea of a Pure Theory of Law’ to be published with Hart publishing at the end of 2017.

**Dr Ashwini Vasanthakumar**

Dr Vasanthakumar was invited to speak at the International Studies Association annual convention (Baltimore) on ‘Diasporas and International Relations’; the Central European University (Budapest) and University College Dublin (Dublin) on ‘The Problem of Multiple Political Allegiance’; Cardozo Law School (New York) on ‘Victims and Violence’; and the University of Cambridge on ‘Weaponising Citizenship’. In May, she convened at King’s a one-day workshop, ‘Privatising Border Control’, funded by the British Academy Rising Star Award.
Staff Focus

Mita Vaghji

Mita Vaghji is our newly appointed coordinator who has taken on the role previously filled by Helen Bhandari and will be supporting the work of Professor John Tasioulas. Mita has a background in higher education and previously worked in the Faculty of Natural & Mathematical Sciences at King’s as an Events Officer.

News

Politics, Philosophy & Law Society launch student journal

The Politics, Philosophy & Law (PPL) Society launched the inaugural issue of the King’s Student Journal for Politics, Philosophy and Law earlier this month with a sold-out event in The Terrace Bar of the Student Union.

The event included a panel discussion chaired by Timothy Macklem, Professor of Jurisprudence and was attended by members of the academic faculty: Dr Christoph Kletzer, Programme Director for Politics, Philosophy & Law; Andrea Biondi, Professor of European Union Law & Director of the Centre of European Law; and Dr Colin Jennings, Senior Lecturer in Political Economy.

The event brought together students, staff and alumni of the PPL, Politics, and Philosophy programmes for an evening of lively discussions about some of the topics covered in the journal. The panel included contributing student authors Zuzanna Bobowiec, Melanie Sabbah, and Penny Tridimas who spoke about their respective papers: ‘Brexit and Free Movement of People: The Frameworks and Legal Bases of Possible Migration Controls’, ‘The Hegelian Dialectics of Punk’, and ‘Brexit Referendum: An Incomplete Verdict’.

Special recognition goes to Penny Tridimas, a fourth year PPL student and journal editor, who, with the help of the editorial committee, started an initiative enabling students to further their academic interests and development, helping to raise the profile and overall impact of the PPL LLB programme. The journal is available in print but can also be viewed online here (goo.gl/tmwgDk).
The YTL Centre Advisory Board has recently welcomed three new members. Baroness Finn is a Conservative member of the House of Lords and a former government advisor on industrial relations, efficiency and civil service reform. Judge James Crawford is a member of the International Court of Justice and a former Whewell Professor of International Law at the University of Cambridge. They are also joined by Justice Michael Kirby, former Justice of the High Court of Australia who led a United Nation Human Rights Council report into human rights abuses in North Korea.

Law and Justice Forum in June

A Law and Justice Forum on Revolution, Oppression and Political Violence takes place at the YTL Centre on 16 June 2017. The event will focus on the theory that we may be entering ‘a new Age of Revolution’ in light of the number of revolutions and civil wars that have swept the Middle East since the end of 2010.

To address these questions the YTL Centre for Politics Philosophy and Law will bring together some of the theorists working at the forefront of these debates. The speakers will include Professor Simon Caney (Oxford), Professor Christopher Kutz (Berkeley), Professor Anna Stilz (Princeton), Professor Lea Ypi (LSE), and Professor Christopher H Wellman (Washington, St Louis). Respondents will be Professor Saba Bazargan-Forward (UC San Diego), Dr Holly Lawford-Smith (Melbourne), Dr Avia Pasternak (UCL), Professor James Pattison (Manchester) and Dr David Rodin (Oxford/EUI).

Law and Technology

Professor John Tasioulas was respondent to a lecture given by Justice Michael Kirby at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands on 18 April. The talk focused on the continuing relevance of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) privacy principles, which Justice Kirby co-authored, for issues of data protection.
Graduate Research Lab

A major innovation this year was the establishment of a Graduate Research Lab, in collaboration with the Transnational Law Institute and the King’s College London Graduate Legal Research Society. The aim of the Lab is to expose the work of our PhD students to searching, but constructive, criticism from various members of the faculty and PhD student body. Two highly successful sessions took place in the second half of the year, with Niccolo Ridi presenting on res judicatae in international law and Adi Goldiner presenting on membership rights.

Thank you

On behalf of all those directly benefiting from such generous support, we would like to thank the Yeoh family for their commitment to YTL Centre for Politics Philosophy and Law.

As this newsletter highlights, the Centre is a hub for attracting talent, hosting events and forging international collaborations. We look forward to providing the Yeoh family with further updates on activity within the Centre in the coming terms.