

OXFORD LAW

2023
No 26



Amal Clooney speaks to Faculty, Alumni and students

Oxford Business Law Blog: The Dialogue Between Corporations and Institutional Investors

DPhil student Serene Singh on her Oxford experience

Border Criminologies celebrates 10 years

Access and Outreach students enjoy punting



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OBLB and Citadel logo
 DPhil Student, Serene Singh
 Prospective Students enjoying punting
 10 Years of Border Criminologies
 Amal Clooney speaking at St Hugh's College

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Dean's Introduction



Another summer draws to a close, another academic year begins. The year just completed was the first since the pandemic in which we operated free from COVID-19 restrictions. In that sense it marked a return to “normal operations”. But normality seemed to take more effort than before: re-starting activities after a hiatus, re-adjusting to new (old) ways of doing things, all the while managing the exhaustion from the efforts of the previous two years. This meant a continuing challenge for those—such as our outgoing Dean, Professor Mindy Chen-Wishart—who had to lead organisations in bridging the gap. So it’s all the more remarkable that, by now, the Faculty has not only “returned to normal” as before the pandemic, but that we have made significant progress forwards from there. This progress would be an impressive achievement for a Dean, even had we not been deflected along the way by the greatest interruption since World War II.

Mindy’s tenure as Dean was characterised by her qualities that came to the fore in responding to the crisis that defined it: resilience, humanity, equity, and energy. Mindy’s humanity saw her working tirelessly to foster community in a time in which we were all islands of humanity isolated by a rising tide of loneliness. As restrictions were eased, she led the way in encouraging us to engage with one another again, showing extraordinary generosity in sharing her time with colleagues and students. Her emphasis on humanity and concern for equity also showed very importantly in her efforts to champion the position of those whose lived experience has been of more permanent alienation within our community through casual racism or marginalisation. Her voice on these issues held the University to account, and the Faculty’s progress in equality, diversity, and inclusion, achieved under her leadership, is a central achievement and lasting legacy of her tenure as Dean.

Mindy’s energy enabled her to reform a number of aspects of the Faculty’s organisational structure, including restructuring our development team in exciting ways. We are delighted to announce the appointment Craig Edwards as Head of Development following the retirement of Maureen O’Neill. Craig will be taking charge of our development strategy going forward. Other changes have been to research support, and to our overall administrative structures. Alongside this, Mindy negotiated from the University a transformative increase in support and academic-related personnel.

During Mindy’s tenure, our undergraduate admissions planning has become more data-driven in a quest to ensure that we are offering opportunities most effectively to those with the greatest potential, whatever their background. And for research students, we have more than doubled the investment we make in bursary funding, allocated primarily on the basis of financial need, in order to open access as widely as possible. Mindy also launched the Dean’s Scholars’ Fund which has seen the Faculty financially support graduate students who, without it, would not have been able to take up their places.

The Faculty in 2020 appointed Ngoc Son Bui as our first Professor of Asian Laws. He has spearheaded an ambitious and impactful programme of work in the field. Mindy herself (somehow!) found time to co-edit a series of definitive books in this field. Mindy has now left us to take up a prestigious Provost’s Chair at the National University of Singapore. However, we are fortunate to be able to retain her as a member of our Faculty through a Visiting Professorship.

All of this means that at the end of Mindy’s time as Dean, we all owe her a tremendous debt of gratitude for her extraordinary service. The work of Mindy and her predecessors makes it easy for me to take over as Dean, but humbling to follow in her footsteps.

While there is nothing as acute as the pandemic, society faces many large-scale challenges – climate crisis, forced migration, the return of war to Europe, volatility in global trade and politics, and economic headwinds, to name only a few. Within the legal sector, the deepening impact of new technologies such as AI, create opportunities for new legal work and for facilitating access to justice. I’m proud to say I now speak for a Faculty whose members are providing intellectual leadership through groundbreaking research and inspirational teaching engaging with all these issues, and many more. I am honoured to have the opportunity to serve the Faculty and the wider Oxford Law community in this way, and I look forward to engaging with as many as possible of you in the coming months and years.

John Armour

New Sponsors for the Oxford Business Law Blog

The academic editors of the Oxford Business Law Blog (OBLB) this year announced that leading financial firms Citadel and Citadel Securities have agreed to sponsor the OBLB.

Since its founding in 2016, the OBLB has grown rapidly to become a leading forum for the reporting of new research and cutting-edge developments in the field of business law. The OBLB has a significant presence in the Americas and in Asia, as well as a market-leading position in Europe.

Professor Luca Enriques, one of the founding academic editors of the Blog, said "I am so pleased that the OBLB has been able to partner with Citadel and Citadel Securities – firms that set the standard for excellence and integrity in securities and business law. The Blog was founded to facilitate exchange between policymakers, practitioners and scholars in the field,

and this new partnership exemplifies this founding principle. With the support of Citadel and Citadel Securities, we look forward to continuing to deliver high-quality, impactful content to our readers in the years to come."

Former Chair of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and Citadel Securities Chief Legal Officer Heath Tarbert (DPhil, Comparative Law, University of Oxford) added "With its insightful analysis and broad jurisdictional focus, the OBLB has become a critical resource for those interested in moving our field forward. We are proud to help facilitate the important exchange of ideas that takes place on this forum."



Bonavero Institute-UNESCO multilingual Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on freedom of expression and safety of journalists

Between 29 May and 14 July 2023, the Bonavero Institute and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) delivered a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on the international and regional standards relating to freedom of expression, including press freedom, access to public information, safety of journalists, and challenges created by the digital world.

The MOOC ran in the six official languages of the United Nations, i.e. in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, as well as in Portuguese, and built on the 2021 Bonavero-UNESCO MOOC on freedom of expression which had been offered in English. The course comprised a series of five weekly modules, covering (1) the general principles and scope of freedom of expression; (2) the limitations of the right; (3) the legal protection of the right to access to information; (4) the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, and; (5) the contemporary digital challenges to freedom of expression and information, including those that arise through state and private regulation online. The course was free and

open to judicial actors (e.g. judicial branches, public ministries, public defenders, electoral courts, human rights ombudsmen, judicial law clerks) from all justice systems, as well as to journalists, academics and other professionals across the world. 8,585 persons from all world regions participated in the course, which is now archived and freely accessible for self-learning purposes on EdX in the respective seven language versions.

The Bonavero Institute is grateful to UNESCO for partnering with us again in offering this important course, which enhances global capacity amongst judicial actors in the fields of freedom of expression and media freedom.

You can find the archived MOOC in 7 different languages on the EdX website.



Dapo Akande appointed Chichele Professor of Public International Law

The Faculty of Law and All Souls College recently announced that Professor Dapo Akande has been appointed Chichele Professor of Public International Law.

Previous holders of the chair have included Professor Catherine Redgwell, Sir Humphrey Waldock QC, Sir Ian Brownlie QC, and Professor Vaughan Lowe KC.

Dapo Akande is currently Professor of Public International Law at the Blavatnik School of Government, a Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford and Co-Director of the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict (ELAC). In January 2023 he became a Member of the United Nations International Law Commission.

Dapo is a generalist international lawyer who has worked across many areas of the field, including the law of international organizations, the law of armed conflict, international criminal law, the law relating to cyber operations, and international dispute settlement. He is one of the co-authors of Oppenheim's International Law: The United Nations (2017, OUP), which was awarded the 2019 Certificate of Merit by the American Society of International Law. His article 'The Jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over Nationals of Non-Parties: Legal Basis and Limits' was awarded the 2003 Journal of International Criminal Justice Prize and his 2016 co-authored piece 'The International Legal Framework Regulating the Use of Armed Drones' in the International Comparative Law Quarterly was selected for the ICLQ Annual Lecture 2017. Dapo is founding editor of the widely read EJIL:Talk! scholarly blog of the European Journal of International Law. He has served on the editorial boards of several leading international law journals including the American Journal of International



Dapo Akande

Law and the European Journal of International Law.

Dapo is regularly called on to provide advice on international law issues to states, international organizations and civil society organizations. He has been a member of several boards and advisory committees for governments and international bodies including, the United States Department of State's Advisory Committee on International Law; the UK Ministry of Defence AI Ethics Advisory Panel; the Ukrainian Government's Presidential Working Group on compensation for damage caused to Ukraine as a result of the armed aggression by the Russian Federation; and the ICRC's Global Advisory Board on Digital Threats During Conflict.

David Enoch appointed Professor of the Philosophy of Law

The Faculty is delighted to announce that David Enoch has been appointed Professor of the Philosophy of Law.

Professor Enoch joins us from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he holds the Rodney Blackman Chair in the Philosophy of Law and is co-director of the Center for Moral and Political Philosophy.

He received his Bachelor of Arts in philosophy and LLB from Tel Aviv University in 1993, then went on to complete his PhD in philosophy at New York University in 2003. His main areas of interest are moral, political and legal philosophy.

In 2011 he published his book 'Taking Morality Seriously: A Defense of Robust Realism' (OUP) which develops, argues for and defends a strongly realist and objectivist view of ethics and normativity. He has also written on moral and legal luck, on statistical evidence and statistical resentment, on the value of autonomy, and on whether general jurisprudence is interesting.

David has won several prizes in Israel, both as a legal scholar and as a philosopher, and two of his articles have



been included in the Philosophers' Annual list of the ten best philosophy papers of the year.

He is on the board of 'Ethics', an International Journal of Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy, and 'Law and Philosophy', an international journal for Jurisprudence and Legal Philosophy.

Bonavero and GWU International Human Rights Law Summer School

For the first time this summer, the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights (Faculty of Law, University of Oxford) in partnership with the George Washington University School of Law (Washington DC) presented a Summer School in International Human Rights Law.

The Summer School has a long history. Since the

1990s, it has been presented by the Department for Continuing Education in Oxford in partnership with the George Washington University School of Law. The co-directors of the 2023 Summer School were Professor Freya Baetens from the Bonavero Institute, and Professor Ralph Steinhardt from GWU. Professor Steinhardt has been a leader of the Summer School since its inception, although sadly 2023 will be his last year as co-Director as he retires later this summer.

The 26-day residential summer school, which

took place in July 2023, offered participants the opportunity to follow an intensive programme of university-level study in international human rights law in Oxford. Students were accommodated within the beautiful surroundings of New College, Oxford. The programme offered courses focusing on the theory and practice of human rights law, including an introductory course in the fundamentals of international human rights law, an advanced course in human rights lawyering and six electives addressing important contemporary issues in the field – Climate Justice; Gender, Sexuality and International Human Rights Law; Human Rights and the Digital Realm; Human Rights in the Marketplace; International Human Rights Law and Refugees; and War, Peace and Human Rights.

Courses were taught by an internationally recognised and distinguished faculty combining both academic and practical experience. Tutors included Başak Çalı, Professor of International Law and Director of the Centre for Fundamental Rights at the Hertie School, Berlin; Joshua Castellino, Executive Director of Minority Rights Group International; Elvira Dominguez-Redondo, Professor of Law at Kingston University, London; Helen Duffy, Professor of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights at Leiden University, the Netherlands; David Kinley, Professor of Human Rights Law at Sydney University, Australia; Stuart Maslen, Honorary Professor at the University of Pretoria, South Africa; Stephen Meili, Professor of International Human Rights Law at the University of Minnesota; Charles Ngwena, Professor of Human Rights Law at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, and Daragh Murray, Senior Lecturer at Queen Mary University of London.

In addition, several optional events were organised for students and the broader public. These included the launch of “The Constitutionalisation of Human Rights Law: Implications for Refugees” (OUP 2022) by Stephen Meili, which was discussed by Catherine Briddick (Warwick) and Alexander Betts (Oxford); a seminar on “Decolonising Human Rights Through an African Lens” by Charles Ngwena; a session on “Open source investigations for human rights accountability” with Sam Dubberley (Human Rights Watch), Daragh Murray and Judy Mionki (Amnesty

International); a screening of the documentary *The Social Dilemma* with Liz Umlas and a presentation by Ambassador (and summer school alumnus) Federico Villegas on “International Human Rights Protection and Geopolitics. From theory to practice”.

48 students from 16 different countries participated: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Philippines, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, the UK and the United States. All students whose attendance at the lectures and seminars was satisfactory were awarded a Certificate of Attendance. The programme is also accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) for 5 semester credits so it is of particular interest to North American law students who apply through George Washington University.

Professor Baetens says ‘We at the Bonavero institute are delighted to have run this summer school in partnership with GWU. We were able to offer participants the opportunity to develop their academic knowledge and practical skills in international human rights law. We hope that the summer school will build a network of alumni with the skills, knowledge and experience in international human rights law that will not only enhance their careers but also contribute to the advancement and protection of human rights globally.’

For more information about the Summer School, please see: www.law.ox.ac.uk/IHRLschool

Registrations for the 2024 edition of the Summer School are tentatively scheduled to open in January 2024.



New Head of Development joins the Faculty of Law

The Faculty is delighted to announce the appointment of Craig Edwards as the new Head of Development.

Craig joins us from the University of Birmingham where he led the University's fundraising activities across Asia, for example, establishing the University of Birmingham Hong Kong Foundation.

At the Faculty he will work with the central University's Development Office to secure philanthropic support to fund scholarships, academic posts and research.

Craig says of his appointment 'I am looking forward to building on Maureen O'Neill's many achievements and successes during her time with the Faculty. Her retirement leaves big shoes to fill. I am excited to collaborate with the Faculty's many corporate partners and alumni to continue to advance research with global impact, and to attract those who would most benefit from scholarships to read Law at Oxford'.



Craig Edwards

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Isaac Agyiri Danso selected for the prestigious Modern Law Review Scholarship for the 2023-24 academic year

DPhil student Isaac Agyiri Danso has been selected for the prestigious Modern Law Review Scholarship for the 2023-24 academic year. The scholarship was awarded for Isaac's research 'Truly inclusive? A critical analysis of African countries' perspective and experience of the global tax'.

Isaac is a Lawyer, Chartered Accountant, and Chartered Tax Practitioner with significant expertise in commercial law, accounting, finance, and international tax law. He is an Assistant to Ghana's Minister for Finance, and previously served as a Senior Counsel at the Volta River Authority and an Associate at Mercer & Company, an

Accra-based law firm. In 2017, he co-founded Audit Partners, Africa.

Isaac obtained a Master of Public Policy (with Distinction) from the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, as a Standard Bank Africa Scholar and graduated top of his class. He holds a Bachelor of Laws degree (LL. B) from the GIMPA Law School (Ghana) and is a member of the Ghana Bar Association and the Institute of Chartered Accountants.



Oxford Nicolas Berggruen Prize Winner Dr Katie Johnston was awarded the Oxford Nicolas Berggruen Prize for Best Doctoral Dissertation in Philosophy, Law and Politics 2023.

This prestigious prize is generously funded by Nicolas Berggruen of the Berggruen Institute in Los Angeles. Each year the prize is awarded to the work that is both excellent and transformative in either theory or practice. One dissertation is nominated by each of the three faculties in Oxford (Philosophy, Law, and DPhil) every year, and then selection of the prize dissertation is made among the three highly impressive nominees by a committee constituted by the terms of the prize.

The prize was awarded to Dr Johnston, for her dissertation "The impact of the coexistence of multiple

norms from different sources of international law on change to the jus ad bellum".

Katie, who is currently a Lecturer in Law at the University of Liverpool, was a Fulbright scholar at Georgetown University, worked at the UK Law Commission in London, where she researched reform of UK public law, was a legal advisor at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris, and worked for a human rights NGO in Cambodia.



DPhil candidate elected to European Court of Human Rights

The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) recently elected Sebastian Raduletu as judge to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Romania.

Sebastian is a former graduate of the MSc in International Human Rights Law Masters and a current DPhil candidate.



Hogan Lovells Equality and Diversity Essay Competition

This summer, Oxford Law held its second Hogan Lovells Equality and Diversity Essay Competition for undergraduate students, including those who were finalists in the 2021-2022 academic year.

The panel, composed of Rt Hon Lord Justice Singh, Ciara Kennefick, and Kristin van Zwieten, was impressed by the standard of the competition. Participants were asked to answer the question: *What is the role of law in ensuring equality of opportunity in society?*

The winner of the competition was Jenson Davenport, BA Jurisprudence with Law in Europe (4th year), and the

runner-up was Beatrice Munro, BA Jurisprudence (2nd year). You can read their contributions on the Faculty website at bitly.OxLawED

The panel also gave special commendations to Valentina Syla, BA Jurisprudence (2nd year), for her essay.

When asked about his participation in judging the competition, the Rt Hon Lord Justice Singh said: I am very pleased to have been asked to be one of the judges in this year's essay competition. I enjoyed reading the essays, which were wide-ranging in their discussion of the important issue of equality in law and society.

WINNER!

**HOGAN LOVELLS
EQUALITY AND
DIVERSITY ESSAY
COMPETITION 2022**

JENSON DAVENPORT
BA JURISPRUDENCE
WITH LAW IN EUROPE

Hogan
Lovells

UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

HOGAN
LOVELLS
LAW

Widening participation within the Faculty of Law

We are constantly working hard to engage with students from disadvantaged educational and socio-economic backgrounds in-line with the University's Access and Participation Plan. We are delighted with the progress we have made over many years of sustained work in this area but recognise that there are still challenges to overcome.

This year's UNIQ programme saw 75 students attend over 2 weeks. UNIQ is a university-wide free residential summer school for year 12 students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, organised via faculties with students staying in one of 14 supporting colleges.

Students attend lectures and talks at the Faculty over a period of five days. This year students participated in a mock court hearing, tried their hand at commercial negotiation and took part in a tutorial with one of our graduate students. They also had lectures on topics such as criminal law and Brexit. There is also much more to do outside the faculty, with sessions on interviews, personal statements and student finance available.

One of the students commented "This session on Causation Law not only deepened my understanding of the legal intricacies involved but also provided valuable insights into the importance of precision and logical reasoning when building legal arguments."

We hosted 21 students from disadvantaged backgrounds over the summer for the Freshfields Oxford ExpLaw Summer School which is supported by the law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer. The aim of the Summer School is to provide academically talented students from UK state schools with the opportunity to experience the University of Oxford and learn about the study of law. Participants are selected according to academic merit and a variety of socio-economic factors. During the 2-day summer school, students take part in a range of legal lectures and discussions, information talks about admissions and studying law at Oxford, and visits to a range of Oxford colleges.



ExpLaw 2022

The Faculty held two Law taster days, generously supported by Clifford Chance, comprising an online session, two taster lectures and a seminar.

Students said that they found the sessions 'enriching' and 'thought provoking'. One said "Yesterday, I had the fantastic opportunity to attend a Law Taster Day event... The day included a lecture on Intellectual property, where we discussed copy right laws, specifically centred around books. Also, a seminar discussing the Territorial Constitution: Federalism, Devolution and Secession, where we spoke about the different definitions of federalism, and if the UK fits into these definitions, this seminar also helped me gain a further insight into my Politics A level course as we discussed Devolution (hopefully this may help me in my upcoming mock exams)! We were then given a tour of New College, where a scene of Harry Potter was filmed! Finally, we had a chance to talk to employees at Clifford Chance and their pathways into Law and what amazing opportunities this Magic circle firm offers!"

In June we welcomed a large group of Sutton Trust Pathways students from Liverpool who were interested in studying Law for a taster session, lunch and a tour of a college. The Pathways to Law programme runs across two years and offers Year 12-13 students an opportunity to find out more about studying a degree, university life and the application process.

One of our new initiatives is a special online session for teachers to find out more about the LNAT. 100 teachers registered and the session was recorded for distribution to teachers who were unable to attend. The LNAT is a key part of the undergraduate application process but it can seem like another barrier to prospective students, so we are keen to demystify it and support students to complete it.

We continue to support outreach work being done by the Colleges, this year Wadham's 'Think Like a Lawyer' students and the Corpus Christi Peter Cane Prize essay students also attended the Faculty's taster days.

We also gave talks on the Law application process to students from Target Oxbridge, a programme aimed at helping students of black African and Caribbean heritage to secure places at Oxford and Cambridge.



Punting



Undergraduate Admissions data show Faculty of Law performing well on student diversity

The University of Oxford has recently released its Annual Admissions Statistical Report, covering admissions over the last five years, from 2018 to 2022. This data is collected across all subjects and colleges and gives information on the students who have applied, received offers and been admitted to Oxford over this period. The Report provides transparency about our processes and measures our progress in ensuring that those with the highest academic potential, from all backgrounds, can realise their aspirations to study here.

Law is a very competitive subject; in 2022 we received 8.2 applications for every undergraduate place. Law has always performed better than most subjects when it comes to student diversity, admitting 23.7% of our students from areas defined as the most disadvantaged in the UK (Acorn 4 & 5). 23.2% of our students come from areas defined as of low progression to higher education (Polar 1 & 2).

The Faculty has also been working to improve the admission of students from BME backgrounds. 32.6% of students admitted between 2020 and 2022 were from BME backgrounds, half of which are of Asian heritage. Black African and Black Caribbean students make up 6.7% of our BME students.

In total 76.7% of students admitted to undergraduate Law courses at Oxford from 2020– 2022 were educated in the state sector. We work hard to encourage prospective students from all backgrounds and are pleased that the data is reflecting this effort.

Mindy Chen-Wishart, Dean of the Faculty said

“The Law Faculty is proud of these results whilst at the same time acknowledges that much work still needs to be done. To that end we will continue to support our access and outreach activities alongside our Equality and Diversity initiatives in order to encourage the most talented and able students from all walks of life and all ethnicities to fulfil their potential. We need lawyers who can tackle the challenges of the future and we cannot make that happen without widening participation in our degree programmes.”

In the foreword to the Report, Vice-Chancellor Professor Irene Tracy said “Our students reflect the UK’s diversity in many respects, and we want to maintain long-term progress in this area. To support this ambition, we will continue to innovate and to build on the success of our existing outreach initiatives to increase our engagement with people across the UK and support, inspire, and motivate bright students to realise their academic potential and aspirations, and – we hope – to foster a love of learning and consider Oxford as a place truly for them.”



Announcing the launch of the Family and Medical Law blog

The Faculty of Law's Family and Medical Law Research Group has launched its own dedicated blog space on the Oxford Law Blogs site. Led by Convenor Professor Imogen Goold and edited by DPhil students Urania Chiu and Mihika Poddar, the Family and Medical Law Blog is the new home for fresh insights on recent cases and up-to-date research findings in an exciting area of law from members of the Research Group. It is for anyone who is interested in the broad field of family law and medical law and ethics

The first two posts were written by postgraduate researchers. 'At-Home Early Medical Abortions Made Permanent in England and Wales' by Philippa Kemp and

'Slow but Steady: Is the Istanbul Convention the Key to Tackling Obstetric Violence in the UK?' by Frances Hand

You can find the blog on the Law Faculty website: blogs.law.ox.ac.uk/family-and-medical-law/6

Subscribe to the mailing list by sending a blank email to fammedlawblog-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk

Follow the blog on Twitter @FamMedLawOxford.



CSLS is awarded a British Academy International Writing Workshop grant

The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies is delighted to announce that it has been awarded a prestigious British Academy International Writing Workshop grant, in partnership with colleagues from the University of Johannesburg and the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.

The two-year project, titled "Crafting Socio-Legal Methods: Local Realities and Global Debates," will involve CSLS colleagues, Linda Mulcahy, Caitlyn McGeer, Florian Grisel, and Nicole Stremmlau, working with early career socio-legal researchers from across Africa.

The focus of the project is on promoting discussions about research methods being used in the global South, addressing epistemological inequalities, and fostering South-South research. The project aims to bolster accounts of African-specific methodological practices of emerging scholars and facilitate the publication of this work in collaboration with the Journal of Law and Society and the South African Journal of Human Rights.

Despite growing demand by governments, legal bodies, and the private sector to understand more deeply how law works in practice, teaching on research methods is marginalised within law faculties. This is particularly true for institutions in Africa, where research methods find little space in law school curricula. As such, this project will play an important role in promoting critical reflections about research methods and providing early-career researchers from the global south with the skills they need to publish socio-legal work in leading journals.



Researchers find COVID-19 vaccine compensation schemes increased during pandemic

Researchers from the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies are mapping the development, characteristics and functions of no-fault compensation schemes (NFCSs) that are intended to compensate for injuries due to COVID-19 vaccines

Over three years and three phases, the team from the Faculty of Law will create an online database that will allow researchers to compare the compensation schemes. They will then be able to populate the database with more detailed data on, for example, the amounts paid by each scheme, the criteria for claims, claim timeframes and success rates.

It is hoped that this data will prove to be a resource for academics, governments and vaccine manufacturers to analyse, potentially providing evidence-based support for the design and implementation of NFC systems in future pandemic situations. The final phase will evaluate the impact of the schemes in different countries and settings.

Dr Sonia Macleod, Researcher in Civil Justice Systems at the Faculty's Centre for Socio-Legal Studies and the project's principal researcher, said 'The pandemic drove the rapid creation of NFCS coverage. This coverage isn't evenly distributed globally, and it can be difficult to find information on these schemes. We have mapped the world-wide distribution outlining what provision is in place where. This website will enable affected individuals who want to make a claim,

governments, policy professionals and academics to see what is available in their country and how it compares to other nations.'

With the first phase focusing on the database's creation already complete, the researchers found that at least 146 countries operated an NFCS related to COVID-19 vaccines. In January 2020, around the start of the pandemic, there were only 26 in existence.

Three multinational compensation schemes, from the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT), COVAX and UNICEF, cover 98 low- and middle-income countries. The UK introduced its own scheme through the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979, which covers vaccinations for, among others, tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough and was expanded to cover COVID-19 vaccines during the pandemic.

Dr Macleod added "Simply creating a NFCS is not enough; a scheme that no one knows about or that doesn't function well is not delivering for injured individuals. In contrast, a properly designed well-functioning scheme can both provide redress and collect valuable information that can be used to inform

our responses to pandemics. Our next research focus is finding out if people are using these schemes and what difference the schemes are making."

The research was funded by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) to investigate the provision and function of these NFCSs.



New research project to examine Civil Justice Systems in the Twenty First Century

Andrew Higgins, Professor of Civil Justice Systems, has been awarded a British Academy mid-career fellowship to study the modern civil justice system. Andrew is a member of the Civil Justice Council which is currently examining the modernisation of the civil justice system. His work will contribute to their review.

This project will look at all the components of the civil justice system, from juries to judges, from defendants to the role of the state. Andrew will examine the impact of recent developments in AI and technology, especially in the wake of the pandemic when many cases were heard online. He will also look at alternative dispute resolution and the role it plays alongside the traditional civil justice system and what impact it has on the legal framework.

The project will examine the role of all actors in the system; the law makers and what they provide and support; the parties and their representatives; the responsibilities of the state, the court, the judge. Equally as important will be an assessment of what the general public want, and should expect from a justice system.

This resulting analysis will provide a comprehensive overview of the system, how all the working parts fit together and an analysis of how successful the system is at delivering justice in our modern age.

The research project will result in a book aimed at practitioners, students and policy makers in order to inform current conversations and future developments around the civil justice system.

Andrew's project will start in January 2024 and last for 10 months.



New BA Post-doc fellowship project will examine the 'Freeman on the Land' movement

Francesca Uberti, post-doctoral researcher at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, has been awarded a British Academy post doc fellowship to work on her project "Law and Conspiracy: Exploring the Use of Legalistic Rhetoric and Narratives in Anti-Authority Worldviews".

Francesca is interested in challenges to the authority of the law and the authority of the state, as well as 'symbolic' or 'mythological' narratives of law. Her previous research into vaccine critical groups led her to the 'Freeman on the Land' movement in the UK. The pseudo-legal arguments developed by this movement, often referring to ancient laws like the Magna Carta, have been recently invoked during the pandemic to challenge the authority of lockdown regulations in the context of anti-lockdown protests.

The 'Freeman' movement has been described as representing a unique current challenge to the authority of the legal system and the judiciary. It is not a structured movement but a collection of loosely organised local groups whose central belief is that the law does not apply to an individual unless they consent to it. The main bodies of authority who come into contact with the 'Freeman' proponents are local authorities. Some even have references on their websites to say that citing the Magna Carta does not provide an exemption to council tax payments. Local authorities and the judiciary are struggling to respond to these types of arguments. The project aims to understand how prevalent this is and the nature of the challenges that local authorities face.

Researchers in Canada and the US looking at groups such as the Freemen and 'Sovereign Citizens' have identified characteristics that these groups all share and have catalogued the use and prevalence of such beliefs. Francesca will explore how widespread these groups are in the UK and will conduct archival research to find out about litigation where 'Freeman' arguments have been used. She will also conduct a thematic analysis of online content and survey local authorities.

The output of the project will be three articles in peer-reviewed socio-legal journals and a draft monograph.

CSLS Researchers are awarded a new EU Horizon project on Resilient Media for Democracy in the Digital Age

The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies is excited to partner on a new EU Horizon project titled Resilient Media for Democracy in the Digital Age (ReMeD). This large consortium project involves researchers from across Europe and will investigate the relationship between media and new technologies, including AI and social media, and political processes in Europe. We are leading the work package on Media Law and Regulations for Diversity and Pluralism. With vast regulatory changes underway in Europe, this is a very timely and exciting moment to conduct rich empirical research that will directly address these emerging issues.

The consortium is led by the University of Navarra (Spain), with six additional universities participating, along with the European Federation of Journalists (France).



Geneviève Helleringer receives French CY research award

Geneviève Helleringer, Lecturer in French Law and Business Law at the Institute of European and Comparative Law, has received a research award from the French CY initiative fund for scientific excellence of €210,000 to lead a 4-year comparative research project on venture capital contracting.

Venture capital finances innovative start-ups via investment in equity. VC investment agreements include terms relating to as repartition of the value between founders and investors, information, voting and exit rights. Such contractual terms respond to a dilemma: how to structure relationships among founders and investors to take into account the risk of opportunistic behaviours, as well as the need for efficient decision-making?

The project, *“Venture Capital Contracting in the US compared to France, Germany and Italy”*, articulates a core comparative study on the practices of VC contracting, a theoretical enquiry on contracting in civil jurisdictions, and the building of an international pluridisciplinary research community. The primary goal of the project is to compare VC contractual practices in the US, France, Italy and Germany, to identify similarities, differences, as well as to explain them, relying on a range of analyses.

This comparative project also has the potential to set the debate on the approach to the evolution of contract law under the pressure of contractual imports, demonstrating that substantive European codified contract law has limited relevance to agreements that leverage freedom of contract and are entirely organised around US-style VC clauses.



New research project will examine ownership of AI inventions

The Faculty is delighted to announce that Ozgur Arikan, who recently completed his PhD in Law at the University of Manchester, has been awarded a Marie Skłodowska Curie Action (MSCA) Fellowship to study whether the status of slaves in Roman law can provide resolution for inventorship and ownership issues of artificial intelligence systems in patent law.

The rapid evolution of AI systems has created an environment where there is a lack of regulation around the rights to inventions created by AIs. Who can claim the patent for something that has been invented by AIs? Ozgur will use his knowledge of Roman Law and Patent Law to discover whether the legal status of Roman slaves can shed light on this debate. In Roman Law slaves were acknowledged as people in Law but they, their inventions, and anything they produced were the property of their master. As the AIs do not have legal personality comparable to natural and legal persons, they can be neither employed nor can they transfer rights. Are we at the stage where we need to give AI a legal personality in order to overcome this regulatory void?

Most current research into AI regulation looks at the liability for AI created inventions, for example who is liable when AI goes wrong? However Ozgur's research is from an intellectual property rights perspective and he has found that, from recent cases, the law is deficient in

regulating IP and AI.

Ozgur is tackling this question from a unique angle. He has knowledge and expertise in both Roman Law and Patent Law which will allow him to research this question from both perspectives. He hopes his research will inform AI regulation and wants to expand on this subject in the future to examine copyright ownership and what would happen if AI infringed copyright or patent law.



Ozgur Arikan

Launch of the Designing for Inclusion Good Practice Guide

The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies is pleased to announce the launch of a new guide today entitled 'Designing for Inclusion'. Funded by an ESRC Impact Acceleration Account, the 'Designing for Inclusion' good practice guide has been produced in partnership with His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, AdviceUK, the Advice Services Alliance and the Law Centres Network. The research on which the guide is based was undertaken by Dr Anna Tsalapatani and Professor Linda Mulcahy of the Oxford Centre for Socio-Legal Studies.

Dal Warburton National Network Lead at AdviceUK said of the guide "If you want to make your advice service more accessible and inclusive, this is a great resource.

We particularly appreciate the way it brings together key information in one place – including taking you through the design process itself."

The guide draws on good practice in the field identified in a series of focus groups with front line advice workers across England and Wales. The guide will be of use to anyone responsible for producing public facing materials about their benefits and rights. It has been designed with the particular needs of smaller organisations in mind. This project is an offshoot of the Supporting Online Justice project in which a series of public information films were produced for litigants invited to an online hearing.

These projects form part of the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies Access to Justice Research Cluster.

Moiz Tundawala awarded a Leverhulme Trust early career fellowship

Dr Moiz Tundawala has been awarded a three year Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship to pursue research on the topic 'Legalizing Sovereignty in South Asian Constitutionalism' at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights under the mentorship of Professor Kate O'Regan. Moiz is joining Oxford after completing his doctoral studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science, LLM from the School of Oriental and African Studies, and BALLB (Hons) at the West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences Kolkata. He has been teaching at the Jindal Global Law School in Delhi NCR India. He is interested in studying public law and constitutional theory underpinned by an interdisciplinary engagement with intellectual history and global political thought.

Moiz's postdoctoral project examines how the ethno-nationalist and socio-religious movements of Hindutva and Islamism have instrumentalized constitutionalism to become politically powerful in postcolonial India and Pakistan. His work looks at the ideologies of these

movements, which despite being at odds with the founding principles of civic-nationalism and liberal-secularism, have managed to insert themselves onto the constitutional field and influence state power in the two countries. He adopts a historical, comparative and interpretive approach to examine the key texts of Hindu and Muslim political thought and the relevant literature connected to the legal systems of India and Pakistan, including constitutional, legislative and judicial debates on the subject.

Taking the South Asian subcontinent as his starting point, Moiz is developing an explanatory intellectual framework to make sense of the conflict between law and sovereignty in the global age of authoritarian populism. With the return of religion to the political sphere and the rise of bigotry and xenophobia, his research will contribute to the understanding of these phenomena and their implications for the constitutional culture of the contemporary moment.

This project follows on from Moiz's DPhil thesis completed at the LSE, which he is revising into a monograph on law, sovereignty and constituent power in modern India.



Border Criminologies celebrates 10 years

The Border Criminologies research programme marked its 10th anniversary in September this year. When it was founded in 2013 by Mary Bosworth, with support from the Leverhulme Trust and the European Research Council, the criminological field of study of border control issues was in its infancy. Despite the existence of key texts, not least of which was former Border Crim director, Juliet Stumpf's 2006 article on 'crimmigration', there was still a sense that immigration belonged to other disciplines and fields of study.

Today, the criminalisation of migration and, indeed, of asylum, has been normalised around the globe, with the UK playing an increasingly central role in such matters.

Mary Bosworth said "Under these conditions, celebrating our tenth anniversary is a little bitter sweet. It would have been far preferable to have been able to close down the organisation, due to its irrelevance. Yet, here we are. Our mission is, it seems, more important than ever. We will, therefore, celebrate our achievements, and regroup and develop new strategies we need to address the challenges ahead."

The work of Border Criminologies continues. In March this year, Mary Bosworth was awarded a 5-year British Academy ARP grant to secure the future of the programme, together with support from Leiden, Oxford, and Warwick Law Faculties. This funding will allow them to appoint a new communications manager to help disseminate the research findings of network members and to contribute to public policy. This award signals clearly the value of the organisation and its academic merit.

New research grants have also been awarded to projects within the Border Criminologies remit. Andriani Fili was awarded a Wellcome Trust grant for her project 'Medicalising Immigration Detention: The role of health provision in building bordering practices and their effects

on immigrants at risk of in detention in Greece'.

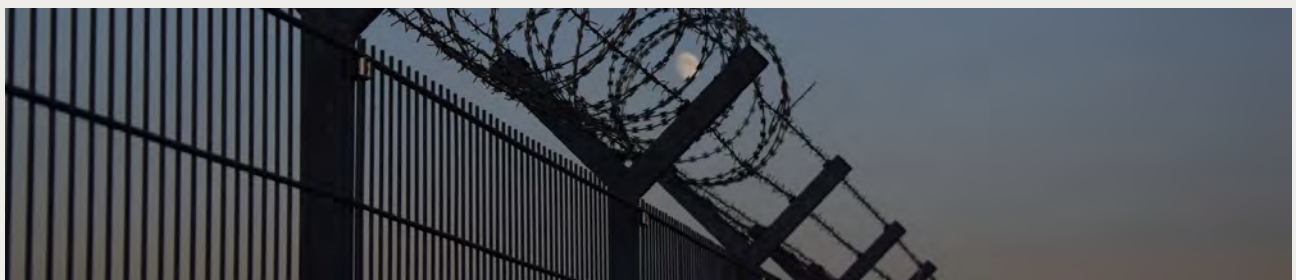
This project will explore the role and impact of health provision on people inside immigration detention centres in Greece and after release. The focus will be on Greece as a key entry point for migrants and asylum seekers and a testing ground for European policies.

Mary Bosworth & Andriani Fili have also been awarded nearly £50,00 by the Oxford Public Policy Challenge Fund for another project looking at the refugee experience in Greece: "InteGRation: Tackling chronic challenges in the field of integration of refugees in Greece".

The project's goal is to offer evidence-based alternatives to the prevalent polarised discourse on migration in Greece, by providing solid, research- and rights-based information about refugee integration. This information will be used to inform policy making (and public opinion) in a way that reflects the country's international responsibilities, its socioeconomic realities, and the untapped opportunities of integration.

Border Criminologies and the Greek Council for Refugees have been working together over the past 6 years, building a strong and meaningful collaboration. This new project will allow them to consolidate the partnership and work towards communicating a better understanding of border control and refugee protection in Greece to a wider audience.

Border Criminologies marked its 10 year anniversary with a two-day event on September, which brought together international scholars and NGOs to discuss their work on the intersections of border control and criminal justice.



The Dialogue Between Corporations and Institutional Investors: An Introduction

By Luca Enriques (Professor of Corporate Law, University of Oxford) and Giovanni Strampelli (Full Professor at the Department of Law, Bocconi University, Milan)

With (minority) shares now concentrated in the hands of a relatively small number of institutions, institutional investors are expected to play an ever-increasing role in the governance of listed companies worldwide. However, it is uncertain whether institutional investors can actually deliver on these expectations, as a number of economic and legal factors, as well as the methods of engagement and the issues covered, can influence their propensity to engage with portfolio companies.

Against this background, in a forthcoming volume, *Board-Shareholder Dialogue: Best Practices, Legal Constraints and Policy Options* (Cambridge University Press), leading law, management and finance scholars from around the world examine the theoretical underpinnings of the current governance framework as well as the relevant practices and the legal and policy issues relating to the dialogue between institutional shareholders and corporate boards.

Our introductory chapter provides an overview of the book's 20 chapters, taking a broad perspective on the role of institutional investors in the governance of listed companies in the US and Europe and focusing on the factors that may influence investors' ability and willingness to engage.

First, we outline the phenomenon of reconcentration of share ownership in the hands of institutional investors

across countries. We add to the existing literature by presenting newly collected data on the shareholdings of the 25 largest institutional investors in each of the Continental European companies included in the Euro Stoxx 50 and the fifteen largest UK companies included in the FTSE 100. We find that leading institutional investors are among the largest shareholders in most of the companies in the sample and that an asset manager is the largest shareholder in most of them. As controlled companies have a lower weight in the index because the STOXX 50 index is weighted by the free float market capitalisation of companies, the size of the Big Three's shareholdings is smaller in companies with a controlling shareholder.

Second, we track asset managers' ownership and nationality as these may lead to a divergence in the incentive structure for shareholder engagement on both sides of the Atlantic and, in particular, may help explain potential conflicts of interest affecting asset managers' willingness to engage. To complement available anecdotal evidence showing that European asset managers controlled by banking or insurance companies do conduct a significant number of engagements covering a wide range of ESG issues, we present ownership data on the top 20 US asset managers and the top 20 European (EU and UK) asset managers, tracking their weight in Stoxx 50 companies and the top fifteen FTSE 100 companies. We find that bank-owned asset managers are the largest category among the largest EU asset managers. In contrast, large institutions that are publicly traded or are not part of insurance or banking groups are much more common in the US. US asset managers not belonging to insurance or banking groups, with the exception of Vanguard, all have other top asset managers among their largest shareholders. Whether such common ownership can influence asset managers' approach to engagement, particularly on social and environmental issues, is controverted. According to a first view, common ownership explains why major asset managers do share common ESG preferences and regularly engage on these topics. An alternative point of view is that common ownership in the asset management industry is too low to influence the preferences and behaviour of leading investors.

To assess whether asset manager ownership affects engagement, we also look into the distribution of AUM by asset manager ownership category. We find that publicly owned asset managers and those not belonging to insurance or banking groups hold, on

average, significantly larger stakes in companies included in our sample than bank- and insurance-owned asset managers.

In terms of nationality, the blocks held by top US investors are (in many cases by far) larger than those held by top European investors in all the companies in our sample. On average, the US asset managers included in our sample own 15.56% of the equity, while the European institutional shareholders in the sample own a mere 5.71%.

Finally, we consider other factors than ownership and nationality that may affect the actual ability and willingness of asset managers to engage with investee companies. In addition to cost issues and collective action problems, which have been widely explored in the literature, end-client preferences and potential regulatory backlash appear to be crucial.

Against this background, the different degree of political consensus over ESG investing on the two sides of the Atlantic and the backlash ESG is currently facing in the US contribute to explain why European asset managers

are keener to engage on ESG issues and to support ESG-related resolutions than their US-based competitors. Indeed, the political risk arising from the ESG backlash may affect the stewardship strategies of US asset managers by pushing them to adopt a less ESG-friendly approach.

This blog post was published on the Oxford Business Law Blog on 29 August 2023. The Oxford Business Law Blog is generously supported by Citadel and Citadel Securities.

You can find more blogs curated by the Faculty of Law at blogs.law.ox.ac.uk



Research Profile - Naomi Lott

Dr Naomi Lott is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Faculty of Law, funded by the ESRC. Her primary research interests are in the field of children's rights, with a particular focus on children's economic, social and cultural rights, and particularly the right to play. Here she talks about her most recent research on the right to play.



What was the issue that you were looking at in this research?

For over thirty years children have had a right to play under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but for much of this time little was known about what the right entails, how it should be implemented, and what it means for children. The right to play had been so under explored that it was referred to as a 'forgotten right' and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (Committee) observed that the right had been 'neglected'. The lack of engagement with the right and corresponding deficiency of knowledge and understanding of the right has meant that children's right to play has not been able to be fully implemented.

The nature of play, as something that children will seek to do in most contexts, has contributed to this neglect. It is also likely due to the difficulties of trying to "pin down" what play is, and operationalising the right for a legal context. Further, it has been argued that the right to play was sidelined due to a perception of the right as a 'luxury'.

What was your argument and how did you make it?

In setting out to research the right to play, I sought to address some of these challenges and to offer a detailed exploration of the right and the measures needed for its implementation. This required moving beyond traditional doctrinal research. I began by exploring literature from a wide range of fields including child biology, education,

geography, and psychology to understand the value of play for children and the challenges they face when seeking to enjoy their right to play. I found that whilst children's play has significant intrinsic and instrumental value – including benefits for their cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and overall wellbeing – children face considerable challenges when looking to enjoy their right. These challenges range from availability and accessibility of appropriate safe spaces for play through to a scholarisation of childhood, a proliferation of excessive use of technology, and market and commercial pressures. Underlying all these challenges is a general lack of understanding of the importance of play for children. Many of these challenges are heightened for adolescent children, or children marginalised for other reasons. Following this analysis of existing literature, I studied records of the drafting process for both the Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These showed that treaty drafters saw children's play as a core aspect of childhood and recognised the value of play for children's holistic development. Examining the work of the Committee (from 1993-2020) revealed an absence of real engagement with the right both for monitoring purposes and for the purpose of developing normative content of the right, until 2013. In 2013 the Committee produced a General Comment (No.17) on Article 31, which includes the right to play, acknowledging the importance of play for children, and

offering some guidance on implementation of Article 31.

To complement this research, I conducted a multiple-case study of the United Kingdom and Tanzania. This case study revealed greater legal protection for the right to play in Tanzania than in the United Kingdom, and an overall support for the right in grass-roots groups across the two nations. However, expert interviews in both countries showed difficulties in realising the right on the ground. My findings echoed many of the challenges expressed in the examined literature, and revealed a need to map the outcomes of play onto other priorities in order to gain traction with government and other key actors such as teachers. For example, through showing the value of play for children's cognitive development and learning outcomes it may be possible to increase teacher interest in implementing the right to play.

Ultimately, my research found that countering the extensive challenges facing the realisation and enjoyment of children's right to play requires a societal change that recognises children's need to play. This should include the development of policies and environments appropriate for children's play, and a culture shift that perceives play – and especially play in the public space – in a positive light. I shared the findings of this project in *The Right of the Child to Play: From Conception to Implementation* (Routledge, 2023).

What do you think are/will be the consequences of this research and its impact?

Following this project, and in view of the considerable benefits of play for children, I held an international

symposium at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights in June of this year, drawing together academics, NGO and I-NGO actors, and other key stakeholders together to discuss the right to play and its value for children across a wide range of areas. One key outcome of this will be an edited collection on *The Interdependence of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Understanding the Relationship of the Right to Play with other Convention Rights*. This edited collection includes contributions that demonstrate the value of implementing the right to play for realising other children's rights – such as the rights to education, health, a healthy environment, and their digital rights – and vice versa. Alongside this analysis, others will explore the specific importance of the right to play for children in unique contexts, such as refugee and asylum-seeking children, street children, and disabled children. It is hoped that this collection will further evidence the value of implementing the right to play, and initiate a broader conversation on the interdependence of children's rights.

One key question that has arisen from my study and conversations with key stakeholders has been how best to implement the right to play for children – what factors are required for implementing the right to play? This question is now the focus of my study, in a project funded by the University of Oxford's John Fell Fund, 'Developing a Framework for Implementing the Right to Play'. This study will work with 100 children aged 3-17 across Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, with findings expected to be shared in the autumn of 2024.



Amal Clooney and Philippa Webb address students, alumni and Faculty members

On 15 May the Faculty was delighted to welcome Amal Clooney and Philippa Webb to St Hugh's College. The day comprised a 'conversazione' between Philippa and Kate O'Regan, Director of the Bonavero Institute for Human Rights, and a lecture given by Amal and Philippa.

Amal, an alumna of St Hugh's College, is a barrister at Doughty Street Chambers who specialises in international law and human rights. Amal is also an Adjunct Professor at Columbia Law School where she co-teaches International Law and Human Rights and in 2016, she co-founded the Clooney Foundation for Justice to advance justice through accountability for human rights abuses around the world.

Philippa Webb is Professor of Public International Law at King's College London and a Visiting Fellow at Exeter College. In 2022, she was an Academic Visitor at the Oxford Law Faculty. Philippa is also a barrister at Twenty Essex and a board member of the Clooney Foundation for Justice.

The speakers, who recently published 'The Right to a Fair Trial in International Law' revealed that they have a second book on another fundamental right coming out in January: 'Freedom of Speech in International



Amal Clooney and Dame Elish Angiolini with students

Oxford hosts Amal Clooney and Philippa Webb

Law'. Amal has co-edited the book with Lord Neuberger, the former President of the UK Supreme Court and Philippa has co-authored two chapters.

In their lecture 'Waging Justice in an Age of Authoritarianism', Amal spoke about the right to a fair trial being the right on which all other rights depend.

She said

“Our thesis is that justice must be waged because justice is not a state; it’s an act. And it is not inevitable: it doesn’t just happen on its own. We have to wage justice, fiercely and constantly: in the police precincts, prisons and courtrooms around the world. It is our great hope that we can contribute to this fight for justice: one case at a time.”

Philippa spoke about some of the legal tools that can be used to wage justice – specifically how to wage justice by fighting for free speech and fair trials.

She referred to the silencing of dissent and the manipulation of the truth by autocratic states and also to their use of sham trials.



audience Q&A

During the Q&A session, chaired by Sandy Fredman, Director of the Oxford Human Rights Hub, students asked the speakers about their careers and for advice for aspiring human rights lawyers.

The event was Amal’s first return to her Oxford college, St Hugh’s, since her graduation. She expressed delight at being there and her gratitude to St Hugh’s for ‘taking a chance’ on her.



Joshua Getzler and Amal Clooney



Philippa Webb and Kate O'Regan



Sandra Fredman with Amal and Philippa

Oxford hosts lecture on ‘Waging Justice in an Age of Authoritarianism’

By Gayathree Devi Kalliyat Thazhathuveetil, DPhil in Law

In a compelling lecture delivered at St Hugh’s College, University of Oxford, Amal Clooney, renowned human rights barrister and Oxford alumna, and Professor Philippa Webb, Professor of Public International Law at King’s College London, emphasized the importance of the rights to fair trial and free speech in today’s world.

Quoting John Milton’s famous words ‘give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties’, Clooney underscored the central role of fair trials and free speech in safeguarding other fundamental rights and protecting democracy. She argued that challenging government overreach through the courts is the only effective way to preserve these rights.

Speaking of her forthcoming co-authored book on free speech, Clooney highlighted the alarming fact that 98 States employ criminal penalties for blasphemy, with 5 nations even resorting to the death penalty. The weaponization of law by States to silence dissent, imprison journalists, and oppress human rights defenders is unsurprisingly common. She cited examples from India, Turkey, Russia, and the revival of national security laws in Hong Kong, illustrating the growing threat of ‘lawfare’ designed to suppress truth and manipulate public opinion. The prevalence of false news consumption, exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, further underscores the need to address these issues, especially at a time when



autocracies are gaining ground and only 13% of the world’s population is residing in liberal democracies.

Against this backdrop, Clooney emphasized the role of international law – particularly international human rights instruments and dispute settlement mechanisms that recognise the jurisdiction of international courts – as part of the solution to counteract authoritarianism. Noting how international law guides not only States but also non-State actors like tech companies in protecting human rights, Clooney stressed that international law may be able to effectively address contemporary challenges in this age of social media, so long as it is accessible and adaptable. Yet, a significant obstacle is the lack of clarity in the rules of international law. Domestic lawyers often refrain from citing international law in cases related to free speech and fair trials precisely due to this ambiguity. It is in response to this challenge that Clooney and her colleague Professor Webb embarked upon the arduous task of authoring two comprehensive books on fair trials and free speech (*The Right to a Fair Trial in International Law* was published in 2021, and their book on free speech is forthcoming). These books aim to clarify the law, enabling everyone to invoke these minimum standards in courts.

Following Clooney’s speech, Webb elaborated on the legal tools necessary to ‘wage justice’ against authoritarianism. In the context of free speech, Webb highlighted how extraordinary punishments for criticizing heads of State and sedition laws often silence debate and chill dissent.

Oxford hosts Amal Clooney and Philippa Webb

Relying on the Oxford Internet Institute's report which identified social media manipulation of public opinion by 81 States, she highlighted that authoritarian States are no strangers to the dissemination of false news and failures to prevent the spread of false news.

Discussing their forthcoming book, which distills standards for protecting political speech, Webb briefly explained how international law safeguards speech including by requiring the decriminalization of political speech, the use of civil sanctions instead of criminal punishment, proof of 'serious harm' to reputation as the necessary threshold for punishment, greater protection for public interest speech, the use of criminal penalties as a last resort, and regular evidence-based assessments to ensure the effectiveness of misinformation regulations.

Regarding the right to fair trial, Webb briefly set out its 13 component rights first. While some countries with populist governments and influence, like China, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Saudi Arabia, are not parties to the ICCPR, she emphasised that customary international law also plays a crucial role in holding them accountable. She expressed particular concern over sham trials, citing the example of trials *in absentia*.

In the final leg of the lecture, Clooney returned to share her own experiences with waging justice, representing political prisoners in different countries. She mentioned the cases of a former president in the Maldives, a female radio host in Azerbaijan and journalists in Myanmar, all of whom were imprisoned for exposing authoritarian and corrupt practices of ruling governments. Clooney lamented that those reporting on crimes against humanity often face imprisonment while the perpetrators remain free. However, reiterating that international law is an essential part of the solution to these injustices, she highlighted how in some of these cases, approaching international human rights bodies helped secure individual freedoms.

With an unwavering voice, Clooney concluded the lecture by reminding everyone in attendance that justice is not a passive state to be hoped for, but an act that must be relentlessly waged. Her words left an indelible impact on all those present, igniting a renewed commitment to the pursuit of justice in an ever-changing world.

The questions posed after the lecture stood testament to the profound impact the lecture had. Professor Sandra Fredman, Professor of the Laws of the British Commonwealth and the United States at the University of Oxford, asked about the experiences and obstacles faced by Clooney and Webb as women representing women in gendered issues. They responded by shedding

light on the prevalence of gendered social media narratives and the all-pervasive nature of gender discrimination in fair trial cases. Webb also emphasized the significance of female mentoring, citing Rosalyn Higgins as an influential figure in her own journey.

When asked for advice for individuals passionate about working in the field of human rights law, Clooney and Webb pointed out the winding paths of international law careers and observed that gaining experience in the corporate sector can also serve as a valuable training ground. They also highlighted the importance of pro bono work as a vibrant avenue for making a positive impact. The discussion then turned to the necessary changes in legal mechanisms to advance the cause of justice. Both Clooney and Webb emphasized the need for permanent mechanisms, as opposed to *ad hoc* ones, to enforce international law. They specifically called for the recognition of universal jurisdiction to ensure accountability.

The prospects of the Russian President's prosecution before the International Criminal Court (ICC) were also briefly addressed. Webb acknowledged that while the case represents a significant first step, there are no trials *in absentia* before the ICC. She also threw light on the immunities debate, referring to the ICC's judgment in the Al-Bashir case and Putin's upcoming trip to South Africa.

As the event drew to a close, the unveiling of Amal Clooney's portrait by St Hugh's college stood as a poignant symbol of her tireless dedication to human rights. It served as a reminder that the pursuit of justice is an ongoing endeavour, and that through advocacy and international law, positive change can be achieved.





DAVID ENOCH
Professor of the Philosophy of Law (see page 6)

EMILY HUDSON –
Professor of IP Law and Fellow in Law, Faculty of Law & The Queen's College.

Emily (re)joins the Faculty, this time as Professor of Law in association with Queen's College. She has moved from King's College London, where she was Professor of Law. Prior to that, she was a Career Development Fellow in Law at St Peter's College, Oxford. Emily's research interests include intellectual property law, personal property law and trusts, and law as it relates to cultural institutions and the creative industries.



ROXANA BANU
Associate Professor in Law

Roxana Banu is a Fellow and Associate Professor in Law at Lady Margaret Hall and the Faculty of Law. Prior to joining Oxford University, she was a lecturer in private international law at Queen Mary University Faculty of Law and an Assistant Professor of Law at Western Law School in Canada.

Roxana's interests lie in private and public international law, legal history, and feminist theory. In legal history, she published on the nineteenth century intellectual history of private international law and on the history of private international law during the time of the League of Nations. She is currently working on a project on the history of private international law in the colonial context and on a social history of interwar cross-border family maintenance conventions.

Her work in legal theory focused on mid 20th-century theories of justice in private international law and on connecting moral contractualism to those theories of justice. She is the co-editor of the first volume on Philosophical Foundations of Private International Law, forthcoming with OUP in the series "Philosophical



BROOKE MARSHALL
Associate Professor in Law

Brooke Marshall is an Associate Professor of Law and the Sir Richard Gozney Fellow at St Edmund Hall. Before joining Oxford, she taught Law as a Senior Lecturer at the University of New South Wales in Sydney (2019–2023) and worked as a Senior Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law in Hamburg (2014–2019).

She is the author of *Asymmetric Jurisdiction Clauses* (OUP 2023). Her research was recognised internationally in 2021 with the ICC World Business Law Institute Prize for excellence and innovation in international commercial law.

Brooke's current research explores the intersection between Private International Law and adjacent areas of International Law.



DAPO AKANDE
Professor of Public International Law (see page 5)



ANNA CHRISTIE
Departmental Lecturer in Law and Finance

Anna Christie studied for a joint degree in Law with Accounting and Finance at the University of Aberdeen, before completing an LLM at Harvard Law School and the BCL at Balliol College, Oxford. She later pursued an MBA at Stanford Graduate School of Business and a PhD at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Before returning to academia, Anna triple qualified as a lawyer in New York, England & Wales and Scotland and practised corporate and energy law for almost a decade.

Anna has broad research interests in comparative corporate governance and law and finance. Her current scholarship focuses on sustainable corporate governance, environmental and social investing, and shareholder activism. Anna's work is interdisciplinary in nature, combining legal scholarship with economic and financial analysis.

This year we said goodbye to some of our valued colleagues.



SIMON WHITTAKER,
Professor of European Comparative Law

Simon Whittaker retired this year. He was a fellow and tutor in law at St. John's College from 1987, and before that he was a lecturer in laws at King's College's London. He took his degrees at Oxford (BA, 1979; BCL, 1980; MA, 1982; D.Phil., 1987; DCL, 2008) and was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1987. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Paris I and University of Paris II on a number of occasions. He is also a member of the American Law Institute.



PAVLOS ELEFTHERIADIS
Professor of Public Law

Pavlos is an academic lawyer and practising barrister. He leaves his role as Professor of Public Law and fellow of Mansfield College this year. He is a barrister at Francis Taylor Building in London. He practices in EU law, planning law human rights and education law. His research interests are in jurisprudence and in public law, both in its domestic and international dimensions.

He took up a tenured professorship at New York University, as a Professor of Legal Studies at NYU Abu Dhabi and Affiliated Professor at NYU School of Law, in September this year.



TARUN KHAITAN
Professor of Public Law and Legal Theory

Tarun Khaitan was Head of Research at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights and Professor of Public Law and Legal Theory. He took up his new post as Professor (Chair) of Public Law at the LSE Law School earlier this year.

He completed his undergraduate studies (BA LLB Hons) at the National Law School (Bangalore) in 2004 as the 'Best All-Round Graduating Student'. He then came to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar and completed his postgraduate studies at Exeter College. His research has been cited in over a dozen cases by influential courts, including the Indian Supreme Court, the Canadian Supreme Court, the European Court of Human Rights, the Israeli Supreme Court, the Madras High Court, the High Court of Kerala, and the Superior Court of Quebec

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We had a very exciting year for equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) at the Faculty. We kick-started Michaelmas Term with the announcement of the results of the second Hogan Lovells Equality and Diversity Essay Competition held over the summer 2022. The competition focused on the ‘role of law in ensuring equality of opportunity in society’ and it was judged by a stellar panel composed of the Rt Hon Lord Justice Singh, Ciara Kennefick, and Kristin van Zwieten. The winner of the competition was Jenson Davenport, BA Jurisprudence with Law in Europe (4th year), and the runner-up was Beatrice Munro, BA Jurisprudence (2nd year).

During Disability History Month, the Faculty hosted the 2022 Herbert Smith Freehills Disability Mooting Championship, one of the flagship events of the Oxford University Disability Law and Policy Project. The moot problem focused on contract law, exploring issues of inequality of bargaining power and unconscionability. The winners were Christopher McHugh and Isobel Salzedo, both of Keble College, followed by the respondents, Shastikk Kumaran of Mansfield College, and Suneeti Srekumar of Magdalen College.

Hilary Term saw the launch of the Inaugural Jonathan Cooper LGBTQ+ Mooting Competition, which took place during LGBT History Month. The competition was the first one at Oxford specifically focusing on the promotion of the intellectual study of legal issues related to sexual orientation and gender identities, and it was named in honour of the late human rights activist and barrister, Jonathan Cooper OBE. The moot was the brainchild of Richard Wagenlander, a recent Oxford graduate, who was also the driving force behind the organisation of the event. The final round was won by Luca Montag and David Zuther, BCL students, and the runners-up prize



OXFORD LAW BLACK ALUMNI NETWORK

went to Shanaz Sharonsenthil and Kuberan Kumaresan, BA Jurisprudence (third year finalists).

We also appointed our third AfOx Visiting Law Fellow, Dr Olaitan Oluwaseyi Olusegun, a Medical Law, Human Rights and Nigerian Legal System lecturer at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Whilst at Oxford, Dr Olusegun was based at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights and worked on a project entitled ‘Protecting Children Living with Disabilities in Africa from Harmful Traditional Practices: An Urgent Call for Implementation of the African Disability Protocol.’

Building on our ongoing partnership with the Oxford Law Black Alumni Network (OLBA), the Faculty helped organise an event for current Black students at Linklaters London to discuss training opportunities, career paths and to give them an opportunity to network with partners and members of one of the top legal firms in the world.

In Trinity Term, the Faculty had the pleasure of hosting Neil Chakraborti, Professor in Criminology and Director of the Centre for Hate Studies at the University of Leicester, who delivered the Annual Equality and Diversity Lecture entitled ‘Humanising the Harms of Hate: The Inevitability of Indifference’. Bringing more than two decades of experience in the field of hate crime, Professor Chakraborti’s lecture seamlessly combined the personal and the political to present a compelling case for renewed attention to discrimination and its profound and enduring harms. Supported by Blackstone Chambers, the Faculty’s fifth annual Equality and Diversity Lecture centred the voices of those most affected by hate

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



and emphasised the connection between these lived experience narratives and the normalisation of political rhetoric which scapegoats difference and promotes divisiveness.

The Faculty also made some improvements to the St Cross Building. We now have a Contemplation Room in the building which is available to everyone in the vicinity who needs a quiet, private space, during the day to pray, rest or meditate. And we have invested in improving the accessibility of our spaces by installing nine new power-assisted doors around the building. We also released new guidance to our graduate discussion groups on where and how to host their meetings, to ensure we remove barriers to participation.

Finally, in order to strengthen the support provided to staff and students struggling with their mental health, the Faculty also invested in training six new members of staff on how to provide Mental Health First Aid. These people will be available as a first port of call to listen and signpost individuals who may be experiencing difficulties in their professional and/or personal lives. This will be supplemented by a new Wellbeing Strategy being put forward by the incoming Dean, Professor John Armour, in 2023.

You can keep track of our EDI initiatives on the Law Faculty website bit.ly/LawFacEDI



Olaitan Oluwaseyi Olusegun



Neil Chakraborti



Training lawyers for a digital world

How University of Oxford academics from Computer Science and Law are helping train the lawyers of tomorrow via OLTEP (the Oxford Lawtech Education Programme).

The working world must change quickly to keep pace with the digital revolution, and English law is no exception. But meshing complex legal principles with digital thinking is no easy feat. Enter the Oxford LawTech Education Programme (OLTEP), a training programme for lawyers that brings together the disciplines of Law and Computer Science, unlocking new possibilities for the law practice of the future.

We want to make people bilingual

The 2019–21 project “Unlocking the Potential of Artificial Intelligence for English Law”, led by Professor John Armour, provided the underpinning research for OLTEP’s inception. The findings led to the development of a new module for Computer Science and Law students at the University of Oxford, designed to help students from both disciplines gain a deeper understanding of how the two areas can work together more effectively.

The module’s success with students led to the creation of OLTEP – a learning resource to train practising lawyers using the same interdisciplinary principles. The OLTEP project is led by Professor Tom Melham (Computer

Science), Professor Rebecca Williams (Law) and Dr Václav Janeček (Law).

Professor Williams says: “We want to make people bilingual – so that a lawyer can sit down with a computer scientist, and have an intelligent conversation. They would know what questions to ask, understand the terminology, the metrics used, the different systems. It’s about having interdisciplinary conversations in an intelligent and productive way.”

We’re keen to collaborate – it’s the only way we’ll move forwards

The project team collaborated extensively with two key external partners to identify and shape the course to the unique needs of practising law.

The Government Legal Department (GLD) is the largest legal department in the country, responsible for developing, implementing and advising on government policies and decisions. Ruth Ward, Director of Knowledge, had presented at the launch conference for “Unlocking the Potential of Artificial Intelligence for English Law” in her previous private sector role. She was keen to explore carrying the connection forwards at the GLD.

“I was conscious that AI was becoming part of the legal practice knowledge that all our lawyers needed,” says Ruth. “We were therefore keen to develop and pilot an introductory programme that would be relevant and useful for all government lawyers. AI’s not an easy topic to cover at an introductory level, not least because both lawyers and technologists tend to be very wedded to their words and what they mean. We could see that the

Training Lawyers for a Digital World

team at Oxford had, by developing and running their own course internally, overcome those barriers to be able to present relevant technology and legal concepts and implications in a clear and understandable way. This expert multidisciplinary approach definitely contributed to the success of our initial partnership with Oxford.”

The OLTEP team also worked closely with leading law firm Slaughter and May, a previous partner on “Unlocking the Potential of Artificial Intelligence for English Law”.

“There has always been a real synergy between the questions they are asking and what we are working on,” says Jane Stewart, Head of Knowledge and Innovation at Slaughter and May, “and the professionalism of the team is absolutely outstanding. It makes working together a really productive and pleasurable experience. Innovation in legal services is for the good of the industry as a whole. So we’re really keen to collaborate – it’s the only way we’re going to move forwards.”

We want people to be confident users

Both organisations were involved in a series of interviews to identify training needs and shape the module content accordingly. Developing an effective means of delivery was also key – teaching was initially planned in-person but switched to remote, asynchronous delivery as a result of the pandemic. This ultimately turned out to be a positive move, leading to the creation of a training resource that can now be accessed and scaled more easily.

“Our course comes with exercises, reading, discussion, Q&As. It’s real education. We expect people to know something permanently when they’ve finished,” says Professor Melham. “I don’t think we would have achieved all that with in-person delivery.”



Having perfected the initial introductory modules, OLTEP is now focusing on developing intermediate modules to suit industry needs. The team continues to work with the GLD and Slaughter & May, and is now reaching out to other law firms that are looking to upskill.

“To effect change in the sector, we want people to be confident users,” says Dr Janeček. “Our aim is to train at least 20% of practising lawyers.”

With just under 40% of all firms approached taking up the offer of the pilot scheme and accreditation from the Solicitors Regulation Authority on the horizon, the team look to be well on track to reaching their goal.

By Penny Brazier (first published on the website of the Oxford Social Sciences Division)

The OLTEP project is led by:

Professor Tom Melham, Department of Computer Science

Professor Rebecca Williams, Faculty of Law

Dr Václav Janeček, Faculty of Law

Partners

Government Legal Department
Slaughter and May

Funding

The project is funded through the University of Oxford's ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) and EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) Impact Acceleration Accounts, the University of Oxford's HEIF Business Engagement Seed Fund, the Department of Computer Science, and the Faculty of Law.

Find out more about OLTEP at www.oltep.ox.ac.uk



MSc in Taxation Alumni Symposium and Summer Event

The annual MSc Tax Policy Symposium and Summer Event were held on Saturday 1 July 2023.

The day started off with a Symposium at the H B Allen Centre, Keble College. The symposium was attended by fifty MSc in Taxation students, alumni and staff members, including three programme directors, Professor Tsilly Dagan, Professor Michael Devereux, Professor John Vella, programme co-founders, Visiting Professor Philip Baker KC, and Professor Judith Freedman, and Professor Stephen Shay.

The programme for the symposium involved presentations by four MSc in Taxation alumni and Professor Michael Devereux. They covered a broad range of topics including *Slavery and Taxation*, *Corporate tax reform and the impact of G20 countries' tax treaty policies on low-income countries*

After the symposium, participants were treated to a delightful punting adventure. Reminder for the future: when it comes to a choice, stay with the boat and let go of the pole!

As the sun began to set, the group met at Harris Manchester College. The venue created the perfect backdrop for socialising and networking. Attendees relished the opportunity to forge new professional relationships and strengthen existing ones.

The dinner was rounded off with an engaging after-dinner speech by Professor Stephen Shay.

The tax symposium and the social activities that followed were a great success. The Oxford Tax community grows stronger every year – and the annual alumni summer event has already become a real highlight for the community.



Owen Rees, BCL alum and former stipendiary lecturer in law at LMH, appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in Canada

Oxford Law alumnus, Owen Rees, has been appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in Canada. The Hon Justice Rees (Somerville 2004) obtained his BCL in 2005 before teaching as a stipendiary lecturer in law at Lady Margaret Hall (2005-06).

Reflecting on his time at Oxford, Owen said “My time at Oxford was a formative experience. We engaged deeply with the law, in a rigorous and creative way. I was surrounded by students with a wealth of perspectives and experiences from around the world. The access to the distinguished faculty was unparalleled. The BCL prepared me well for a career at the Bar. Following the BCL, I was torn between pursuing an academic career and a career at the Bar. I spent a simulating year teaching contract, tort, and administrative law at LMH. I was grateful to LMH Tutor and Fellow Ann Kennedy for taking me under her wing. In the end, I combined both interests, practicing at the Bar in Canada and teaching administrative law for many years. I’ve remained in touch with many of my friends from my Oxford years.”

Before his judicial appointment, Owen served as Acting Assistant Deputy Attorney General of Canada. In addition, he is a recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal from the Governor General of Canada for improving access to justice by co-founding the Supreme Court Advocacy Institute with Professor Grégoire Webber (DPhil 2008).





Alumnus, Professor Subedi, elected an Honorary Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford

Alumnus and founder of the Subedi Prizes, Professor Surya P. Subedi, OBE, KC, DCL, has been elected an Honorary Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford by the College's Governing Body. It is the highest honour that Exeter College can bestow and is reserved for individuals who are both distinguished in their field and who have also contributed to society more generally. Professor Subedi is one of ten new Honorary Fellows, including four other Law Faculty alumni - Professor David Feldman KC FBA FRSA, Professor Carolyn Evans FASSA, Christina Blacklaws and Professor Kenneth Mwenda.

Professor Subedi obtained his DPhil in Law at Oxford in 1993 and was awarded the DCL by the University of Oxford in 2019. He was made an OBE in 2004 and appointed a Queen's Counsel (QC) (Hon) in 2017. Two law prizes named after his name – one for the best attainment in Human Rights Law and another one for the best doctoral thesis (DPhil) of the year in Law – were established at the University of Oxford in 2020. He is currently Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds and a practising barrister in London.

CSLS Alumna receives LASA/Oxfam America Martin Diskin Dissertation Award

Diana Dajer received this year's LASA/Oxfam America Martin Diskin Dissertation Award for her PhD thesis. This award is given to a recent thesis that embodies a commitment to the creative combination of activism and scholarship.

Diana Dajer started her DPhil at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies in 2015 and graduated in 2022. Her thesis explored the intersection between peacebuilding, citizen participation and technology, using Medellín's participatory budgeting as a case study. She argued that political exclusion from public decision-making processes is one of the main causes of conflicts worldwide and scholarship on the political inclusion of marginalised populations is growing rapidly. Diana's thesis aimed at contributing to the literature by analysing the influence of participatory budgeting on political inclusion in Medellín, Colombia's second-biggest city.

During her research, she had the opportunity to donate a technology tool that she has created to Medellín's Town Hall. It is still being used today. This was possible thanks to Build Up through their Build Peace Fellows Program, the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, Colombia's Ministry of Science and Technology and Colfuturo.

Diana is now working in Colombia as manager of citizen participation in Fundación Corona, a foundation that has worked during the last 60 years to reduce inequality in Colombia by fostering education, employment and citizen participation, working in projects that focus on democratic, social and public innovation.

DPhil alum, Alexander Wentker, awarded two prizes for his thesis, "Party Status to Armed Conflict in International Law"

Alexander Wentker, a recent Law DPhil graduate, has been awarded two prizes for his thesis, "Party Status to Armed Conflict in International Law", which he defended in June 2022.

The "Deutscher Studienpreis" (German Thesis Award) is awarded by the Körber Foundation, non-profit organisation which develops projects on social and political issues. This award is considered to be the most competitive thesis prize in Germany, with roughly 700 applications this year, and aims to select PhD theses with the greatest relevance to society. For his share of the award, Alexander received a prize worth 5000 Euros. In addition to this, Alexander was also awarded second prize in the arts and humanities section.

In response to the news, Alexander said

"I am very honoured to receive the German Thesis Award and I am deeply grateful to my supervisors and everyone at Oxford, Heidelberg, and elsewhere who supported me during my work on the thesis. As today's wars are increasingly characterised by complex patterns of co-operation, knowing who is 'at war' and what legal implications flow from this finding is both crucial and challenging. By developing a common analytical framework for identifying parties to an armed conflict, I hope that my thesis enhances our understanding of the architecture of the international legal regulation of armed conflict and how it can respond to the realities of contemporary armed conflicts."



The German Thesis Award is not the first prize Alexander has received for his thesis; in 2022, he was awarded the "Helmuth James von Moltke Prize" from the German Society for Military Law and Laws of War which was worth 2000 Euros.

Following the success of his DPhil in Law at Oxford, Alexander will begin a postdoc position at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg.



Sam Ridgway

Sam Ridgway studied Geography at undergraduate level and then went on to study the MSc in Criminology at Oxford. He is now Head of

Marketing and CSR at White & Black Limited, Corporate and Technology Lawyers based in Oxford.

Can you tell me what areas you focused on in your MSc?

I covered some fascinating areas during the MSc. Sentencing, Public and Private Policing, Risk, Security and Criminal Justice and the Death Penalty were all option choices.

Ultimately, my favourite module was my dissertation, supervised by Prof. Lucia Zedner. Titled: *'Degrees of Deprivation: Do disruption tactics within UK counter-terror strategy create unjust disparities in citizenship status?'*, I explored how pre-emptive disruption tactics, chiefly citizenship revocation, have become central to Western democracies' counter-terrorism strategies.

My research was hot on the heels of the Shamima Begum case and there was (and perhaps still is) growing concern that the legislative design and implementation of disruptive measures were creating significant disparities within British citizenship status. I argued that the disparate legislative design and discriminatory implementation of disruption measures create a legal hierarchy of citizenship status, targeting predominantly dual and naturalised citizens from British Muslim communities.

Tell us a bit about your background before you undertook the MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice?

I came from a humanities background studying Human Geography as my Undergraduate, at King's College London. During my time there I developed an interest in extremist terrorism in Western Europe and used my dissertation to look at the impact it was having on Western Tourism. Wanting to take this area of study further opened up the MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice as an option for me, but it was outside of academics that really helped me choose this route.

What led you to do the MSc and what did you gain from it?

Growing up in Oxford, a beautiful but incredibly disparate City, you can't help but be aware of the complex and multidimensional issue of homelessness. Conversations with individuals on the streets and others would often highlight crime as the catalyst for their circumstance or, more frequently, how they felt labelled 'criminal' as a consequence of their predicament. It was the way people from all areas of social demography found themselves in a situation of such risk and powerlessness that made me curious about what can drive criminal behaviour.

Academically, I gained a far deeper insight into criminal behaviours and criminal justice systems both in the UK and Internationally. Opportunities to attend guest lectures, seminar discussions and events run by world leaders in their field is something that is truly unique to Oxford's Law Faculty. Of course, the 'Oxford Experience', perhaps more intangible, is amazing too. It's truly one of the best cities in the world to be a student with an endless list of societies, unions, sports clubs, bops and balls happening beyond the seminar rooms.

You didn't study Law at Undergraduate level, did this help or hinder you when doing the MSc?

I'm certain that it helped. Studying Geography meant spending a lot of time studying spatial and temporal variances. Studying Criminology at MSc level, I found this type of thinking and analysis was immediately transferable. I was pleasantly surprised by the level of lateral thinking, theory and creativity that a course encapsulating something as traditionally linear as Criminal Justice, allowed for. I'm sure this is largely down to the progressive, forward-thinking attitudes of the faculty. Seminars feel totally 'unstuffy' and you genuinely feel like you're working to develop new, innovative ideas and approaches to long-standing problems.

Tell us about your journey with White and Black Ltd? What do you enjoy about working in a legal environment?

I started with White & Black way back in 2013 during my gap-year. My first role was as an admin assistant within the finance team! As I alluded to earlier, I kept in touch with the firm beyond my gap year and came back during university summers to do a few weeks work here and there.

When I came back to start the MSc I reached out to the firm again and picked up 1 or 2 days a week work alongside my studies. It was mid-pandemic that I

finished the MSc and was fortunate to be offered a full-time roll with White & Black as a Trainee Data Privacy Advisor within the commercial Team. Since then my role has developed and I have pivoted away from client facing work to head up the marketing and CSR activities instead.

The great thing about the law is that it is so varied. There's a specialism to suit most personalities and skill sets. For us as a Corporate and Commercial firm, the pace, dynamism and variety is brilliant. But you won't find that in every specialism. Some firms and areas will be better suited to a steady stream of very similar work, which will work for some people.

What advice would you give a prospective undergraduate student?

First and foremost, don't pigeonhole yourself too early. Keep an open mind! It's tempting to get caught up with the stress and strain of the job hunt too early and whilst that is important, in today's day many of us will have multiple 'careers' across a wide variety of sectors and professions. The same goes for starting your degree, first-year will, most likely, look very different to third-year so it's important to try and stay flexible and appreciate that what you're interested in and find

enjoyable academically will most definitely change.

Also try and enjoy the 'Oxford Experience' as much as you can. Oxford is, of course, strenuous academically but I'd argue that the friends and memories you make whilst here are almost as important. There are so many things that you have access to and experience at Oxford that are unique to Oxford. Make the most of them!

What is the best bit about your job and what do you want to achieve in the future?

For me, it's the variety. Our firm runs like any other business and it's the challenges that come with that, that I really enjoy. I've had experience in a client-facing role, consulting various clients across different sectors on Data Privacy Law. My role in marketing looks different now and it's about how we can best sell the firm and its services and all that entails. On any given day I might be working on our website, working on social media management and content creation, planning events, building charity relationships, attending conferences and so on. Ultimately I would love to build and lead my own team and perhaps one day build my own business one day.

Timothy Endicott and Kate O'Regan appointed to the National Law School of India University's School Review Commission



The National Law School of India University (NLSIU) has appointed Timothy Endicott, Vinerian Professor of Public Law, as Chair of the NLSIU School Review Commission 2023-24 (SRC). Kate O'Regan, Director of the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights and Professor of Human Rights Law, has been appointed as Member. SRC members are appointed by the Chancellor of the University, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India Dr. D. Y. Chandrachud, in consultation with the Government of Karnataka.

Following his appointment as Chair, Professor Endicott said "I really hope that this review will be an occasion for the whole National Law School community to reflect on what can be done, and to look ahead with the highest ambitions and expectations."

NLSIU was the first National Law University established in India in 1986 to be a pioneer in legal education. The SRC will undertake a comprehensive review of all aspects of the University and submit its recommendations to the Chancellor in mid-2024.

Thom Wetzer wins The Smith School's inaugural Teaching Excellence Award



Thom Wetzer, Associate Professor of Law and Finance and the Founding Director of the Oxford Sustainable Law Programme, has been announced as the winner of The Smith School's inaugural Teaching Excellence

Award. Thom states that he was particularly thrilled to receive the award because it is largely based on feedback from students.

Thom's course, taught jointly with Benjamin Franta and Rupert Stuart-Smith from the Oxford Sustainable Law Programme, focuses on the (contested) role of the law in the net zero transition.

Thom noted "We are passionate about what we teach and spend significant effort preparing our classes, so it is wonderful to know that students valued the result. Many thanks to our committed, versatile, and outright brilliant students -- teaching you has been a wonderful experience."

Bettina Lange wins Teaching Excellence Award

Dr Bettina Lange, Associate Professor at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, was this year given a Teaching Excellence Award for 'Excellence in Supervision', by the Social Sciences Division.

These annual awards formally recognise the outstanding contributions to teaching, learning and the academic development of students shown by colleagues at any career stage.

The awarding committee said of Bettina's work

"You have shown a sustained passion, dedication, care and support for your students under difficult circumstances. Your commitment to enable each individual student to develop their own perspective and thus to grow into independent researchers equipped with the skills to develop their own distinct projects was highlighted. Your students valued your insight and direction of their work, whilst encouraging them to pursue their own avenue of inquiry."



John Finnis appointed a CBE for services to Legal Scholarship

Professor John Finnis, Professor of Law and Legal Philosophy Emeritus, appointed a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) for services to Legal Scholarship.

Emeritus since 2010, Professor Finnis teaches at the Law Faculty occasionally in jurisprudence and political theory. He was Professor of Law & Legal Philosophy from 1989 to 2010, and a law tutor at University College from 1966 to 2010.



Imogen Goold appointed to the BMA's Medical Ethics Committee

Professor of Medical Law, Imogen Goold, has been appointed to the British Medical Association's Medical Ethics Committee.

The Medical Ethics Committee is made up of BMA members from a wide range of specialties and experience, alongside lay members who are experts in their fields including theology, law and moral philosophy.

The committee debates ethical issues on the relationship between the medical profession, the public and the state and liaises with the General Medical Council (GMC) on all ethical matters affecting medical practice.

Chris Hodges appointed Chair of the Independent Governing Body of the Compensation Scheme for post office owners

The UK Government has appointed Emeritus Professor of Justice Systems and expert in alternative dispute resolution, Chris Hodges, as Chair of the Independent Governing Body of the Compensation Scheme for ex gratia payments to post office owners who were affected by the inaccurate financial IT system that The Post Office operated for several years.

A number of sub-postmasters were prosecuted and convicted for fraud, before people realised or accepted that the system, not the people, was seriously flawed. Those convicted brought a Group Action, which the Government settled. The Government has now established an ex gratia compensation scheme for those sub-postmasters who were not convicted. It is overseen by an Independent Board, comprising two politicians who have been lobbying for the victims, and Chris Hodges as Chair.



Nafay Choudhury receives international and national awards

Nafay Choudhury, a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow based at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, has recently been given awards for his work. Nafay's work sits at the intersection of socio-legal studies, legal pluralism, economic development, and the rule of law. His research explores the fragmented and plural forms of order that exist within the state, alongside the state, and beyond the state. In the last twelve months Nafay has received a host of national and international awards for his work, including those bestowed by three of the leading law and society associations in the world.

"Order in the Bazaar: The Transformation of Non-state Law in Afghanistan's Premier Money Exchange Market." *Law & Social Inquiry*, 47(1), 292-330 received the Socio-Legal Studies Association Article Prize (2022); the Asian Law & Society Association Distinguished Article Award (2022).

"Transactions as Trust: The Regulation of Informal Trade Credit by Afghanistan's Money Exchangers" *Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems*, 31(2) 341-372 won the Trandafir Writing Competition prize which is awarded by the journal *Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems* (2022).

Julian Roberts appointed Honorary King's Counsel

Julian Roberts, Emeritus Professor of Criminology, has been appointed an Honorary King's Counsel. Julian's appointment recognises his record as a leading academic authority in England and Wales on sentencing theory, policy, and practice, and the major contribution his work has made to the analysis and development of sentencing worldwide.

FHS and Mods Prizes 2023

Prize	Full name	College
3 Verulam Buildings Prize in Commercial Law	Luca Williams	Brasenose College
All Souls Prize for Public International Law	Darren Leow	Somerville College
Falcon Chambers Prize for Land Law (shared)	William Kitchen	Harris-Manchester College
	Lucy McCaughan	New College
Francis Taylor Building Prize in Environmental Law	Matilda Pratt	Corpus Christi College
Law Faculty Prize for Advanced Criminal Law (shared)	Ruth Scharff-Hansen	Exeter College
	Afra Sterne-Rodgers	Queen's College
Law Faculty Prize for Copyright, Trade Marks and Allied Rights	Advay Saxena	Wadham College
Law Faculty Prize for Human Rights Law	Weronika Galka	St Peter's College
Law Faculty Prize for Medical Law and Ethics	Beth Scott	St Edmund Hall
Law Faculty Prize for Personal Property	Rory Gaskin	University College
Prize for Roman Law (Delict)	Kacper Kryk	Corpus Christi College
Law Faculty Prize for Trusts	Sulaymaan Khalil	Balliol College
Law Faculty Prize in Constitutional Law	William Kitchen	Harris-Manchester College
Law Faculty Prize in Criminology & Criminal Justice	Tsing Cheng	Brasenose College
Law Faculty Prize in Family Law	Lucy McCaughan	New College
Law Faculty Prize in Feminist Perspectives in Law	Mihir Rajamane Rajendra	Magdalen College
Littleton Chambers Prize in Employment Law	Arya Nagwani	Worcester College
Martin Wronker Prize for Jurisprudence (overall)	Kacper Kryk	Corpus Christi College
Martin Wronker Prize for Jurisprudence (examination)	Sami Allan	Lady Margaret Hall
Martin Wronker Prize for Tort	Thomas Lim	St Catherine's College
Pinsent Masons Prize in Taxation Law	Charlie Furniss	St Edmund Hall
Quadrant Prize for International Trade	Connie Trendle	Christ Church College
Slaughter and May Prize in Contract Law	James Bishop	Brasenose College
Slaughter and May Prize in History of English Law	Oliver Clement	Magdalen College
White & Case Prize in Company Law	Rupert Balfe	Keble College
Norton Rose Fulbright Prize for Overall Best Performance	Yi Xuan Wong	Worcester College
Slaughter and May Prize in A Roman Introduction to Private Law (shared)	Yi Xuan Wong	New College
	Kenneth Hoh	New College
Slaughter and May Prize in Constitutional Law	Kenneth Hoh	New College
Slaughter and May Prize in Criminal Law	Olivia McConnell	Pembroke College

BCL / MJur Prizes 2023

Prize	Candidate	College
Herbert Hart Prize in Jurisprudence and Political Theory	Lia Lawton	Hertford College
John Gardner Prize for Philosophical Foundations of the Common Law	Conor Hay	Keble College
John Morris Prize in The Conflict of Laws funded by Quadrant Chambers	Valerie Kwok	University College
Law Faculty Prize for Commercial Negotiation and Mediation	Krzysztof Riedl	Brasenose College
Law Faculty Prize for Commercial Remedies	Lachlan Francis Hopwood	Jesus College
Law Faculty Prize for Comparative Constitutional Law	Rory Clarke	Linacre College
Law Faculty Prize for Constitutionalism in Asia	King-Him Joseph Chu	Queen's College
Prize for Principles of Financial Regulation	Timothy Nelson-Parker	St Edmund Hall
Law Faculty Prize in Advanced Administrative Law	Louis Triggs	St Hilda's College
Law Faculty Prize in Advanced and Comparative Criminal Law	Phoebe Clifford	St Edmund Hall
Law Faculty Prize in Advanced Property and Trusts	Anna Wotherspoon	Wadham College
Law Faculty Prize in Business Taxation in a Global Economy	Louis Triggs	St Hilda's College
Law Faculty Prize in Comparative Corporate Governance	John Mainland	Keble College
Law Faculty Prize in Comparative Equality Law	Aishwarya Singh	Linacre College
Law Faculty Prize in Constitutional Principles of the EU	Conor Hay	Keble College
Law Faculty Prize in Constitutional Theory	Lia Lawton	Hertford College
Law Faculty Prize in Corporate Finance Law	Alastair James Ahamed	Somerville College
Law Faculty Prize in Corporate Insolvency Law	Isabel Catherine Trinca	Balliol College
Law Faculty Prize in Families and the State: Adult Relationships	Aishwarya Singh	Linacre College
Law Faculty Prize in Human Rights at Work	William Swainson	Magdalen College
Law Faculty Prize in International Environmental Law (shared)	Olivia Morris	Magdalen College
	Anna Wotherspoon	Wadham College
Law Faculty Prize in International Human Rights Law	Sanjana Gunasekaran	Brasenose College
Law Faculty Prize in International Law and Armed Conflict (shared)	Taha Tarek Ali Almasri	Queen's College
	Rory Clarke	Linacre College
Law Faculty Prize in Law and Computer Science	Martin Wagner	Pembroke College
Law Faculty Prize in Law and Society in Medieval England	Lukas Arkadiusz Gwozdz	Magdalen College
Law Faculty Prize in Law in Society	Sanjana Gunasekaran	Brasenose College
Law Faculty Prize in Medical Law and Ethics	Phoebe Clifford	St Edmund Hall
Law Faculty Prize in Principles of Intellectual Property Law	Yihan Yu	Oriel College
Law Faculty Prize in Private Law and Fundamental Rights	Katherine Edgeley	Brasenose College
Law Faculty Prize in Regulation	Jonathan Michael Hell	Regent's Park College
Law Faculty Prize in Taxation of Trusts and Global Wealth	Henry Fahrenkamp	Magdalen College
	Louis Triggs	St Hilda's College
Monckton Chambers Prize in Competition Law	Rahul Arora	Christ Church College
Norton Rose Fulbright Prize in Incentivising Innovation	Christy O'Neil	Wolfson College
Peter Birks Prize Restitution of Unjust Enrichment	Olivia Morris	Magdalen College
Ralph Chiles Prize in Comparative Human Rights (shared)	Marie-Hélène Lyonnais	Wadham College
	Ewan White	University College
White & Case Prize in Transnational Commercial Law	Lara-Cathrine Junge	Lady Margaret Hall
Winter Williams Prize in International Economic Law	Benedikt Riedl	St Catherine's College

Note that some prizes had not been awarded at the time of printing.

Harris Manchester win the Maitland Chambers Intercollegiate Mooting Championship 2023

On Wednesday 22 February, Harris Manchester College beat New College in the Grand Final of the University of Oxford Maitland Chambers Inter-Collegiate Mooting Competition (Cuppers) 2023. Isaac Hordiyuk and Bertie Broomfield mooted for Harris Manchester, while Sara Nikolli and Kuberan Hansrajh Kumaresan represented New College. Harris Manchester had also been represented by Nicholas Stone and Lucy Fuller in previous rounds. The judges of the moot were three barristers from Maitland Chambers: Gregory Banner KC, Andrew Westwood KC and Watson Pringle. The venue was the Upper Library of Christ Church College.

The moot problem, which covered constitutional and administrative law, involved an appeal to the Supreme Court against an imaginary government which sought to restrict claims against public bodies. The mooters' arguments concerned principles of statutory interpretation, Parliamentary privilege, judicial review, Parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law. The judges noted the high standard of the moot and congratulated both teams for their oral submissions. The judges found Harris Manchester's responses to judicial interventions to be particularly impressive.

Successful inception of the Oxford Comparative Moot in German Law

The inaugural Oxford Comparative Moot in German Law took place at the Law Faculty on 2nd February 2023, hosted by the Institute of European and Comparative Law (IECL). This unique competition brought together students, practitioners and academics interested in the comparison of German and English law. It was organised by Dr Johannes Ungerer, Erich Brost Lecturer in German Law and EU Law at Oxford. For the generous donation enabling the moot, the IECL expressed its gratitude to Dr Martin Mekat and his team of fellow German lawyers from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer Rechtsanwälte Steuerberater PartG mbB.

Lord Mance chaired the moot panel and was joined by Dr Alice Möller-Roth from Freshfields and by Dr Johannes Ungerer. They welcomed the two competing mixed teams of Oxford undergraduate students reading for Law with German Law and German exchange students from Munich and Bonn.

The teams had to present their legal evaluations of a cross-border contract dispute between a car manufacturer in Oxford and a German supplier, which involved questions of liquidated damages and contractual penalties against the background of unfair contract terms legislation. The moot panel was impressed by the high standard of the submissions and how well all team members were able to respond to follow-up questions. The focus was placed on the comparative aspects of the legal analysis as well as on the commercial considerations in finding viable solutions to the dispute.



Nicholas Stone (HMC) Wins BPP Advocate of the Year 2022/2023

Having qualified through the London and Oxbridge Regional Final in December, Nicholas Stone (Harris Manchester College) joined fifteen other advocates at the Old Bailey on 25th March for the National Final of the BPP Advocate of the Year Competition.

The National Final consisted of two

mock trials, one on criminal law and one on a breach of contract. All advocates were assessed on the skills of legal submissions, cross examination, examination in chief and client conference. Witnesses were played by professional actors while the judges were experienced legal practitioners or former

practitioners. After deliberation, the judges announced Nicholas Stone as the overall winner of Advocate of the Year 2022/2023.

This is the second time in the last three years that a student from Oxford has won this national competition, and the prize of a scholarship for the Bar course.

Balliol College wins the Blackstone Chambers Postgraduate Mooting Championship 2023

A team from Balliol College, consisting of Alyssa Glass (DPhil Law) and Jonathan Tjandra (BCL), won the Blackstone Chambers Postgraduate Mooting Championship 2023. The Balliol team prevailed in the Grand Final against St Catherine's College, represented by Holly Leung and Regina Yip. The Grand Final took place at Trinity College on Thursday 23 February 2023, with Tom Lowenthal of Blackstone Chambers presiding.

The Grand Final moot problem concerned issues of constitutional and administrative law before the Supreme Court. Previous rounds had covered a range of topics including criminal law, administrative law, and tort law.

The Postgraduate Mooting Championship is the biggest postgraduate moot competition in Oxford, where up to 32 teams, each representing their Colleges (or Permanent Private Halls), compete. The 8 top ranked teams in the preliminary rounds (which consisted of two rounds held in Michaelmas Term of 2022-23) advanced to the elimination rounds of the competition in Hilary Term, comprising Quarter-finals, Semi-finals, and a Grand Final.

The competition was made possible by the generous support of Blackstone Chambers.

Oxford team wins the inaugural Temple Chambers Moot

The inaugural Temple Chambers Moot took place in Hong Kong on 27 August 2022. The competition was open to all undergraduate law students and Juris Doctor candidates at universities in Hong Kong and abroad.

The moot took place over a single day and teams were expected to prepare written and oral submissions for both appellants and respondents, with a coin toss being used to determine which team would represent which party in each round. This year's moot problem raised the issues of lawful act duress and consideration in contract variation.

The Grand Final was presided over by the Hon. Geoffrey Ma (former Chief Justice of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal) and Paul Shieh SC (former Chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association and Head of Temple Chambers). After a heated round of submissions, Jackel Cheung (BA, St Hilda) and Joseph Khaw (BA, Wadham) were declared the winners of the inaugural Temple Chambers Moot. The runner-up team was represented by Harry Chan (BA, St Catherine) and Patrick Heung (visiting student). Harry Chan was also awarded best speaker.

Christopher McHugh and Isobel Salzedo of Keble College win the Oxford Herbert Smith Freehills Disability Mooting Championship

Christopher McHugh and Isobel Salzedo, both of Keble College, won this prestigious mooting championship after great advocacy for both teams in the grand finale. The respondents, Shastikk Kumaran of Mansfield and Suneeti Srekumar of Magdalen were fantastic

runners-up in the competition. Twelve teams of two students took part in the competition, with preliminary rounds on Friday 25th and the later rounds on Saturday 26th. This year, the moot problem focused on contract law, exploring issues of inequality of bargaining power and unconscionability.

This exciting mock court case competition aimed to showcase the intellectually demanding study of disability and the law. The Grand Final and panel discussion was attended by undergraduates, graduates, members of the public and invited guests. The moot is one of the flagship events of the Faculty of Law and Oxford University Disability Law and Policy Project and was followed by a panel discussion.

This event was supported by the law firm Herbert Smith Freehills. Tim Leaver, Partner at Herbert Smith Freehills and one of the semi-final judges said "We were once again blown away by the standard of the mooting this year in respect of what was an extremely challenging moot problem.....The importance

of events like these should not be underestimated – open and honest discussions on issues of law and policy as they intersect with disability is an imperative, now more than ever. We at Herbert Smith Freehills are proud to play a small part in that, and look forward to our continuing partnership with the Oxford Disability Mooting Championship for future years."

This year's panel discussion centred around inclusive employment in times of crisis. Panellists were asked to discuss how regulation and reform of current practices for inclusive employment of disabled people may mitigate the impact of the ongoing cost of living crisis.

Thanks to Herbert Smith Freehills for their ongoing financial support of this event, to the student committee who helped put this event together and to organisers Dr Luke Rostill, Associate Professor in Property Law, and Dr Marie Tidball, Coordinator of the Oxford Disability Law and Policy Project.





Inaugural Jonathan Cooper LGBTQ+ Mooting Competition 2023 held during LGBTQ+ History Month

The Competition was the first Mooting Competition at Oxford specifically promoting the intellectual study of legal issues related to sexual orientation and gender identities. The Moot is named in honour of the late human rights activist and barrister Jonathan Cooper OBE, who passed away in September 2021. He practised at Doughty Street Chambers, particularly in the field of international human rights law, and was an inspiring advocate for LGBTQ+ rights across the world, be it for trans rights, rights of people living with HIV, or victims of conversion therapy. Jonathan Cooper OBE is also the namesake of the recently established Jonathan Cooper Chair of the History of Sexualities at Oxford's Faculty of History, the first Chair of its kind in Oxford and in the United Kingdom.

Over the course of the day, teams mooted in two rounds for both the Appellant and the Respondent in a novel case on the right to same-sex marriage. The competition's problem question, put together by

Professor Jonathan Herring and Richard Wagenlander, focused on the constitutional interpretation of the right to marriage, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the right to private and family life. The case concerned a fictitious country in which same-sex marriage was introduced but later removed by legislation, annulling same-sex couples' marital status and preventing them from marrying in the future.

Judges across all rounds commended the teams' oral advocacy and legal arguments, noting they were taken aback by how well the teams had dealt with complex questions of human rights and constitutional law given many had not studied human rights law before. The final round was won by Luca Montag and David Zuther, who had particularly impressed with acute and persuasive responses to the judges' challenging questions.

Associate Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Kristin van Zwieten, commented

"I was so impressed with the standard of mooting in the final. Mooters responded flexibly and thoughtfully to a series of probing questions from the bench. I know that the judges were similarly impressed".

We thank Kevin Childs, Jonathan's husband, for allowing the Law Faculty to form a part in continuing his legacy in form of a moot which encourages students to engage with the legal obstacles the LGBTQ+ community faces.

Thanks are also due to Richard Wagenlander for originally proposing the moot and for researching and putting together various elements of the moot together with the Law Faculty; to the volunteer judges and clerks; and to the European Human Rights Law Review, the journal of which Jonathan Cooper had been Editor, for providing judges and participants with copies of the journal's special issue dedicated to his life and work.

Serene Singh, DPhil in Law



Serene Singh is a DPhil Candidate in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Her research focuses on the experiences of women on death row in the USA.

Can you tell us about your background and home life?

I am a proud Sikh American woman. My identity, both as a Sikh and as a woman, profoundly shapes my journey. Growing up in Colorado Springs, Colorado, I observed injustice around me from a young age. I witnessed how ignorance could morph into hate and violence, especially when directed at faith groups, including my Sikh community. Additionally, I began questioning inequalities of various forms (gender, race, socioeconomic) that persisted or even intensified in the world around me. These experiences fueled my passion for addressing social issues. Perhaps due to my background and the influence of strong women like my mother, I've always carried a deep sense of purpose for justice and empowerment. This drive has led to remarkable opportunities, such as winning the world's largest pageant, authoring a children's book for young girls, and establishing my own nonprofit organization – a venture that received the Diana Award and the Victoria Secret GRL PWR Project recognition. My parents, originally from Punjab and New Delhi in India, infused my upbringing with cultural richness, nurturing a close connection to my heritage. Whether through competitive Bhangra dancing, proficiency in five languages, or sharing my culture at Oxford, it's intricately woven into how I lead. From organizing the first Sikh Langar on Oxford's campus to reciting Mool Mantar instead of the traditional Latin grace during evening formal in college, and facilitating Ravi Singh Khalsa's landmark address on Sikhi at the Oxford Union, my commitment to innovative, active, and value-driven leadership remains steadfast. Although Colorado Springs is my home, my academic journey commenced at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where I studied Political Science, Journalism, and Leadership Studies. The apex of this trajectory was the honor of becoming a Rhodes Scholar, which unlocked the gateway to my Oxford experience.

What led you to pursue a DPhil in Criminology at Oxford?

The intricate aspects of criminal justice and prison reform have always held my fascination. I grew up watching True Crime documentaries and solving Murder Mystery puzzles with my family. Although those were broader memories, the passion to really comprehend human behavior and harness that insight to cultivate a more just and empathetic society is what has always driven me.

In my first year at the University of Oxford, I pursued a Master's in Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government. I engaged in crafting policy-based reports centered around capital punishment in the United States. It was during this time that I encountered an immense challenge: the scarcity of data on women on death row. This research gap propelled me onto a path of exploration, motivating me to delve deep into their narratives and ultimately inspiring my pursuit of a DPhil in Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Can you tell us more about your research and where will that lead you in the future?

My DPhil research centers around the exploration of the prison lives of the women on death row. Beyond the academic realm, I established a nonprofit with a focus on empowering marginalized women including those affected by incarceration. My research is a deep dive into the conditions within prisons and the experiences of these women after their sentencings. My focus spans across various aspects, including motherhood, femininity, and the isolating impacts of confinement. To achieve this, I collaborate with legal experts, academics, medical professionals, journalists, and families. Through this collaborative effort, my goal is to foster a more comprehensive understanding of women's experiences on death row within the context of the criminal justice system. Furthermore, I aspire to contribute towards addressing the systemic challenges prevalent within United States prisons.

Did you have any preconceived ideas about Oxford and has your lived experience matched them?

Initially, I thought that Oxford's renown was primarily linked to its institutional reputation. However, my time here has profoundly reshaped that perspective. The true essence of Oxford resides in the students it attracts. The brilliance, determination, and fervent intellect of my peers have left an enduring impact on my approach to global challenges, the resources at my disposal, and the network of individuals I can rely on to collaboratively address these challenges. Beyond the captivating Harry Potter architecture, the intellectual fervor of every student is what sets this place apart. Wherever I turn, I find students who are resolute in challenging the "status quo" within their respective fields. The students here embrace a purpose-driven approach that permeates every facet of their lives. It's an enchanting realm where people here are not only motivated to better the world but also to embody that aspiration with unwavering commitment. This atmosphere creates a stage for any person with big goals and big ideas to actually thrive. Additionally, the diversity that permeates Oxford spans across nationalities and backgrounds, creates a powerful mosaic of perspectives! Because students attend Oxford with homes from around the world, we

are awarded a global-minded environment where multidisciplinary teams collaborate to tackle worldwide issues. It is this blend of intellectual vitality and diverse community that sets Oxford apart from any other institution I have encountered.

What is your advice for someone looking to pursue a DPhil at Oxford?

If you're thinking about pursuing a DPhil, the first step involves seeking out a supervisor who is genuinely committed to your personal and professional growth. A DPhil encompasses both your research journey and your evolution as a researcher. This underscores the pivotal role of mentorship in nurturing your development and creating a positive recollection of the experience. Equally significant is selecting a research topic that sustains your genuine interest and motivation throughout the journey! While challenges are inevitable, an enduring deep interest with your chosen subject will serve as the driving force that sustains your commitment to completing the DPhil. Lastly, it is so critical to assemble a dedicated support network. The value of establishing connections with mentors, peers, and friends cannot be overstated! These relationships will provide essential guidance, empathy, and encouragement during challenging periods in your DPhil. They will truly significantly enhance the overall experience of this academic marathon!

What's the best bit about living and studying in Oxford?

Living and studying in Oxford feels like entering a captivating story. The historical atmosphere genuinely enchants – each corner has its own tale. Yet, the true enchantment, as mentioned earlier, resides in the people this place attracts. Engaging with fellow students who possess an unwavering drive to create positive change is truly inspiring. Whether it's a cozy café at 7 AM or an old pub at 11 PM, every conversation offers an opportunity to connect with those who are shaping the future. These interactions provide a new perspective on the world and offer insights into previously unfamiliar challenges. The intellectual energy here is truly invigorating! I can step outside and engage in conversation with a celebrity from my childhood who happens to be attending an event and exploring the city. Similarly, I can send an email to a visiting professor whose work I've long admired. Oxford acts as a hub where a multitude of minds converge, and living here serves as a constant reminder of the richness that continues to enrich my life.



Isaac Agyiri DPhil in Law



Isaac Agyiri Danso (Yaw) is a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Law candidate at the University of Oxford. His doctoral thesis considers one of the key questions in recent multilateral efforts in international tax: the question of inclusion, focusing specifically on the perspectives and experiences of African countries. Isaac is a Lawyer, Chartered Accountant, and Chartered Tax Practitioner with significant expertise in commercial law, accounting, finance, and international tax law.

He obtained a Master of Public Policy (with Distinction) from the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, as a Standard Bank Africa Scholar and graduated top of his class. He holds a Bachelor of Laws degree (LL. B) from the GIMPA Law School (Ghana).

Can you tell us about your background and home life?

I was born and grew up in Tutu, a town in eastern Ghana. My dad was a teacher, and, in Ghana, that means being highly underpaid. He was often on transfer to other areas, so my three siblings and I grew up with my mum so that we could get a stable education.

After performing well in my secondary school exams, I was accepted for a university course – but with no money to pay for tuition, and no awareness of any scholarship opportunities, I was forced to decline the offer. After meeting an accountant who recommended I take a professional course instead, I explored the option of gaining chartered accountant status from Ghana's Institute of Chartered Accountants.

The programme was notoriously difficult, particularly for someone like me who was straight out of high school. After initial hesitation, I decided I didn't really have an option – staying at home meant going into menial jobs or subsistence farming, which I didn't want to do – so I decided to take it up.

I began my studies with financial support from this benevolent accountant. However, the financial assistance covered tuition fees and exam registration, and with no known relatives in Accra, I had to live in a church shed. I had to sweep and clean the compound every morning in exchange for the free “accommodation”.

Despite my difficult living situation, I qualified as a chartered accountant within two years – the shortest time that anyone had completed the programme. I picked up several subject awards along the way and won national best in the final exams, also becoming Ghana’s youngest-ever qualified chartered accountant at the time.

My success during my studies drew attention from national media outlets, allowing me to share my story, which in turn led to my first job. I have since been working in accounting and law in the public sector.

What led you to pursue a DPhil in Law at Oxford?

I studied law in Ghana, graduating as the national best in the 2017 bar examinations. In 2019, I received admission to a fully funded Master of Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, graduating with Distinction and on top of my class in 2020.

I always knew I wanted to teach law at the university level, and to do that I need a DPhil (PhD). After experiencing the quality of Oxford training in my master’s studies, I decided there was no better place to continue my training to become a Professor. This led me to apply to a DPhil in Law at Oxford.

What is your research about and where will that lead you in the future?

My research explores the question of Global South countries’ participation in global tax governance. Focusing on OECD’s global corporate tax reforms, I explore why the inclusion of Global South countries and African countries in particular matter. Interestingly, countries in the Global South took different positions on this reform package. Some did not join the Inclusive Framework at all, others joined the Inclusive Framework but did not agree to the proposed Two-Pillar Solution, and a third group joined the Inclusive Framework and agreed to the Two-Pillar proposal. What explains this difference in approach? These are the questions that I seek to answer through my research.

Given that most of the world’s challenges today (e.g., climate change, debt, migration crisis), require collaboration and joint solutions, how Global South countries participate significantly impacts the long-term

sustainability of the deals reached. My thesis seeks to make analytical and policy contributions. The lessons drawn from the study can help us better understand how to make global governance more effective through the inclusion of Global South countries. The outcomes of the research will include my doctoral thesis, presentations at conferences, publications in reputable academic journals and policy briefs for stakeholders including policymakers in Africa.

Did you have any preconceived ideas about Oxford and has your lived experience matched them?

I imagined Oxford to be a place for extremely brilliant and affluent students from the most privileged backgrounds. I have been totally blown away, not just by the academic rigour of the students but the ever-increasing diversity of the students’ community. A little remains to be done on enhancing the diversity of the faculty but I have totally loved every bit of my time living and studying in Oxford.

What is your advice for someone looking to pursue a DPhil?

Start already! You will be pushed to your depths, but it is absolutely worth it!

A PhD anywhere is challenging but a DPhil in Oxford is likely one of the most challenging things anyone will possibly do in their life. It certainly has been for me, but I love this kind of challenge as I see myself becoming better every day.

What’s the best bit about being in Oxford?

The people, students and faculty, the random conversations and the world-changing ideas and research people are working on. You will also find the timeless antiquity of the built environment truly mesmerising, and I am grateful for each day that I get to walk the streets of Oxford.



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