

CENTRE FOR  
SOCIO-LEGAL  
STUDIES



# GRADUATE RESEARCH HANDBOOK

2025 - 2026



## Table of Contents

Message from the Director .....	2
1 Key People and Contacts .....	3
2 People at the Centre.....	4
2.1 Research Staff .....	4
2.2 Research Students – DPhil .....	6
2.3 Research Students – MPhil.....	10
2.4 Centre Associates.....	10
2.5 Academic and Student Visitors .....	10
3 The CSLS Community.....	11
3.1 Getting Involved .....	11
3.2 Sharing the Space .....	11
3.3 Looking After One Another.....	11
3.4 Oxford SU Advice .....	12
3.5 Students' Community .....	12
3.6 Frontiers of Socio-Legal Studies Blog .....	13
3.7 Residence Requirements.....	13
4 Centre Facilities.....	14
5 Research.....	17
5.1 Supervision .....	17
5.2 Pathway.....	17
5.3 Funding.....	18
5.4 Deadline.....	18
5.5 Suspensions, Extensions and Dispensations .....	19
6 Training and Development.....	20
6.1 Core CSLS Training.....	20
6.1.1 Weekly Seminar Series .....	20
6.1.2 Theory and Methods Seminars .....	20
6.1.3 CSLS Annual Lecture.....	21
6.2 Student-Led and Collaborative Activities .....	21
6.2.1 Students' Discussion Group .....	21
6.2.2 Research Clusters and Workshops .....	21
6.2.3 Social Science Division .....	21
6.3 CSLS Additional Sessions .....	22
7 Useful Portals and Online Resources .....	23
8 Frequently Asked Questions.....	24
<i>Appendix A – Theory &amp; Methods Timetable.....</i>	<i>25</i>

## Message from the Director



**Fernanda Pirie**  
Centre Director

*It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies. Whether you are beginning a new course of study, joining us as a visitor, or returning to continue your research, you will be part of a community that has thrived for decades on curiosity, collaboration, and a commitment to exploring the role of law in society.*

*The Centre has always been distinctive in bringing together people from many different backgrounds – law, anthropology, politics, history, economics, media, and more – and from different parts of the world. This diversity is enriching, even essential, in allowing us to ask questions in new ways, to challenge assumptions, and to understand law as it is lived and practised across different cultures and communities.*

*In today's world, as we are confronted by issues of climate change, inequality, migration, human rights, and digital governance, the work of socio-legal research is more vital than ever.*

*What makes the Centre special is both its scholarship and its people. Every seminar, every conversation over coffee, every collaboration between researchers at different stages of their careers, contributes to its intellectual vibrancy. We are fortunate to have a community that is both rigorous and generous, and I encourage you to take part fully; to listen, to share, to question, and to support one another.*

*I hope you will find here both the space and the encouragement to pursue the questions that matter to you most. Research is never straightforward; it requires persistence, courage, and sometimes a willingness to be surprised by where your ideas may lead.*

*The Centre exists to support you in that journey, and I trust that during your time with us you will discover not only insights into law and society, but also friendships and connections that will last well beyond Oxford.*

# 1 Key People and Contacts

Find contact details for academic staff, administrators, and student representatives who can support you throughout your studies.

## Academic Team

Prof. Fernanda Pirie	Director	<a href="mailto:fernanda.pirie@csls.ox.ac.uk">fernanda.pirie@csls.ox.ac.uk</a>
Dr. Agnieszka Kubal	Director Of Graduate Studies	<a href="mailto:agnieszka.kubal@csls.ox.ac.uk">agnieszka.kubal@csls.ox.ac.uk</a>

## Administration Team

Nikki Macmichael	Centre Manager	<a href="mailto:nicola.macmichael@csls.ox.ac.uk">nicola.macmichael@csls.ox.ac.uk</a> Tel: 01865 284222
Nadine Moustafa	Administration Officer	<a href="mailto:nadine.moutafa@csls.ox.ac.uk">nadine.moutafa@csls.ox.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:admin@csls.ox.ac.uk">admin@csls.ox.ac.uk</a> Tel: 01865 284220

## Student Representatives

Ayesha Pattnaik	Social Events Visiting Student Liaison	<a href="mailto:ayesha.pattnaik@law.ox.ac.uk">ayesha.pattnaik@law.ox.ac.uk</a>
Freya Cole Norton Ekin Genç	Organisers of the Socio- Legal Discussion Group	<a href="mailto:freya.colenorton@lincoln.ox.ac.uk">freya.colenorton@lincoln.ox.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:ekin.genc@law.ox.ac.uk">ekin.genc@law.ox.ac.uk</a>

## 2 People at the Centre

### 2.1 Research Staff

#### **Dr Ville Aula**

Digital Policy Postdoctoral Researcher working on ReMeD and Infolead, led by Professor N. Stremlau

#### **Serian Carlyle**

Project Administrator on the HuRiEE project, led by Dr Agnieszka Kubal.

#### **Dr Juliana de Cunha Mota**

Digital Policy Postdoctoral Researcher working on ReMeD and Infolead, led by Professor N. Stremlau.

#### **Dr Semir Dzebo**

Postdoctoral Researcher on the HuRiEE project, led by Dr A. Kubal.

#### **Dr Florian Grisel**

Senior Research Fellow. His work covers law and private governance, dispute resolution, law and social norms, transnational law, and international arbitration.

#### **Dr Fanni Gyurko**

Postdoctoral Researcher on the project *No Fault Compensation Schemes for Covid Vaccine Damage*, led by Dr S Macleod.

#### **Dr Beata Huska**

Postdoctoral Researcher on the *HuRiEE* project, led by Dr Agnieszka Kubal.

#### **Dr Alma Ionescu**

Postdoctoral Researcher on the *Care in the Courtroom* project, led by Dr. Natalie Knyeswood

#### **Dr Natalie Knyeswood**

Wellcome Trust Early-Career Fellow leading the *Care in the Courtroom* project, on trauma-informed justice, sexual violence, and the medicalisation of legal processes.

#### **Dr Dominik Krell**

Leverhulme Early Career Fellow researching *Saudi Arabia and the Globalisation of Islamic Law*.

#### **Dr Agnieszka Kubal**

Associate Professor. Principal Investigator (PI) on the *HuRiEE* project (*Who are the Humans behind Human Rights?*)

#### **Dr Marina Kurkchian**

Emeritus Fellow. Specialist in sociology of law, comparative legal cultures, rule of law, and the regulative power of law in non-Western economies.

#### **Professor Bettina Lange**

Professor of Law and Regulation. Her research includes UK, German, and EU



environmental regulation, qualitative empirical socio-legal methods (including discourse analysis), and socio-legal theories of regulation.

**Vanessa Long**

Research assistant on Oral History of Radical Lawyering project, led by Prof L. Mulcahy.

**Dr Sonia Macleod**

Senior Research Fellow and PI on the *No Fault Compensation Schemes for Covid Vaccine Damage* project.

**Dr Caitlyn McGeer**

Postdoctoral Researcher and PI on the British Academy-funded *GenDR* research project.

**Dr Joe McAulay**

Leverhulme Early Career Fellow working on *Dangerous Spectacles: Conspiracy Theories, Crime, and the Law*.

**Professor Linda Mulcahy**

Professor of Socio-Legal Studies. Her research covers dispute resolution, access to justice, law, art and architecture, feminism, oral history, and law and medicine.

**Dr Matthew Nesvet**

Postdoctoral Researcher on Nuffield Foundation project: Developing a mixed funding model for free legal advice, led by Prof. L Mulcahy

**Professor Fernanda Pirie**

Professor of the Anthropology of Law. Specialises in the anthropology of law, legalism, history of law, and Tibetan law.

**Dr Julius Schneider**

Postdoctoral Researcher working on Leverhulme Trust project Floods and Pandemics, led by Prof. B Lange, specialising in crisis governance, public policy, and discourse analysis, with a focus on climate change, public health, and far-right meaning-making in the UK and Germany.

**Professor Nicole Stremlau**

Professor in Law in a Digital World and Head of the PCMLP. Works on media and development, freedom of expression, conflict communication, strategic communication, and East African politics.

**Dr Francesca Uberti**

British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow. Her project *Law and Conspiracy* explore legalistic narratives in anti-authority worldviews.

**Dr Daniel Wojahn**

Postdoctoral Researcher on Leverhulme Trust research project: *Tibetan Law: the socio-historic exploration of a unique legal system*, led by Prof F. Pirie.

We also encourage you to explore the activities of Principal Investigators and their programme/project associates and collaborators, at <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centre-for-socio-legal-studies/content/section-index/research-centre-socio-legal-studies>.

## 2.2 Research Students – DPhil

**Selina Abächerli**, Lincoln College

*Making 'Good' Law: An Anthropological Analysis of Debates About Legislative Standards in the UK*

Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie

**Roxane Agon**, Wolfson College

*Partners in Crime? The Mafia and the State in New York*

Supervisor: Dr F. Grisel

**Nouf Albinhassan**, Linacre College

*Corporate Governance and the Sovereign: What Corporate Governance Role Do Sovereign Wealth Funds Play?*

Supervisor: Dr F. Grisel

**Kara Apland**, Balliol College – part-time

*The limits of legal protection: A study of the influence of law on adolescent sexuality in Nepal*

Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie

**Mohammad Asmi**, Oriel College

*Digital Sovereignty in India: A Socio-Legal Understanding of the Regulation of Chinese Technology*

Supervisor: Prof N. Stremlau

**Muhammad Atcha**, Keble College

Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie

**Benedikt Barthelmess**, Exeter College

*Domestic Law-Making and the Transnational Anti-Money Laundering Governmentality*

Supervisor: Prof B. Lange

**James Campbell**, Wolfson College – part-time

*The Laws of Motion: Towards a Sensational Jurisprudence of Movement within the Court*

Supervisor: Prof L. Mulcahy

**Freya Cole Norton**, Lincoln College

*The Local Welfare Safety Net: Fit for Purpose?*

Supervisors: Prof L. Mulcahy and Prof B. Lange

**Marcus Dahl**, St Edmund Hall

*Indigenous political voice, the Uluru Statement and the demand for a constitutionally protected Voice to Parliament in Australia*

Supervisors: Prof F. Pirie and Prof A. Wood

**Ana Carolina Dall'Agnol**, Wolfson College

*Foreign Direct Investment and the Role of the Law: The Case of Mozambique*

Supervisors: Dr F. Grisel and Dr C. Decker

**Ann-Marie Debrah**, Exeter College

*Phenotype, Scientific Racism and Colonialism: The Reintroduction of Colonial Categories of Race in Committee Proceedings in Brazil*

Supervisor: Prof L. Mulcahy

**Luise Eder**, Exeter College

*How Do Transnational AI Governance Initiatives Frame and Steer Regulatory and Policy Frameworks in the Global South?*

Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie

**Fatima Elhag**, Somerville College

*Family Law in the Gulf: Judicial Reason, Litigant Strategies, and Gendered Dynamics in Qatar*

Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie

**Ekin Genç**, Keble College – part-time

*Code, Law and Degeneracy: An Empirical Inquiry into the Fragile Private Order of Decentralised Finance*

Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie

**Lauren Gowler**, Wolfson College

*Pathways to Reconciliation: Reimagining Dispute Resolution Processes between Indigenous Communities and Museums in Colonial-Era Repatriation Claims*

Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie

**Irene Han**, St Antony's College – part-time

*Empirical Legal Studies*

Supervisor: Prof L. Mulcahy

**Abdullahi Ali Hassan**, Pembroke College

*Transnational business dispute mediation among the Somali communities in South Africa*

Supervisor: Prof N. Stremlau

**Daniel Herszberg**, St Cross College

Supervisor: Dr F. Grisel

**Keertana Kannabiran Tella**, St Anne's College

*Judicial Meaning-Making, Dignity and Reproductive Justice as Care: A Critical Study of Carceral Governance in Postcolonial India*

Supervisor: Prof N. Stremlau

**Lama Karame**, Exeter College

*Age and the Law: A Critical Approach to Ageing under Legal Pluralism*

Supervisors: Prof L. Mulcahy and Prof J. Herring

**Sothie Keo**, St Peter's College – part-time

*The Evolution and Role of Law in Cambodian Nation-Building*

Supervisor: Prof N. Stremlau



**Israr Khan**, Regent's Park College

*Analysing China's Approach to Investor-State Disputes Under the Belt and Road Initiative*  
Supervisor: Prof B. Lange

**Stephen Knight**, Wolfson College – part-time

*Humanely Treating Terrorist Prisoners: How the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria Observes International Humanitarian Law After the End of Hostilities*  
Supervisor: Dr F. Grisel

**Vendula Kolařík Mezeiová**, Regent's Park College

*A Discourse Analytical Inquiry into Legitimacy: MMR Vaccination and Behavioural Regulatory Tools in France*  
Supervisor: Prof B. Lange

**Jade Kosche**, Wolfson College

*Behind the Seams: Private Labour Ordering and Gender-Based Violence in Lesotho's Garment Factories – A Work-Centred Legal Ethnography*  
Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie

**Fidelis Leite Magalhaes**, Wolfson College – part-time

*Transitional Justice in the Age of Social Media and Digital Technology in Timor-Leste*  
Supervisor: Prof N. Stremlau

**Sarah Levy**, Green Templeton College

*A Tale of Two Seal Hunts: Contesting the conflation of Canadian sealing activities in law and policy*  
Supervisor: Prof B. Lange

**Amanda Lindstrom**, St Antony's College – part-time

*Business, Politics and Law: Socio-Legal Aspects of Global Health Supply Chain Governance and Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Due Diligence*  
Supervisors: Prof L. Mulcahy and Prof A. Davies

**Junyu Liu (Loveday)**, Regent's Park College

*A farm, and a firm: ethnography of a Chinese agricultural corporation*  
Supervisor: Dr F. Grisel

**Krzysztof Lukaszek**, New College

*Property discourses in a post-communist society: a socio-legal case study of land reprivatisations in Warsaw (1990–2021)*  
Supervisors: Prof B. Lange and Prof A. Layard

**Angela Moore**, Brasenose College – part-time

*Regulating Asylum: The CEAS, the Refugee Crisis and the Search for Common Standards*  
Supervisors: Dr M. Kurkchian and Dr C. Decker

**Hanna Oliinyk**, St Antony's College

*Law, Memory and Colonial Power: Legal Production of Collective Memory in Russia-Occupied Ukrainian Territories*  
Supervisor: Dr A. Kubal

**Maria Obrebska**, Reuben College

*Human Rights Capture: Why has the language of rights become such an effective tool for anti-gender mobilisation in Poland?*

Supervisor: Dr A. Kubal

**Harshita Pandey**, St Antony's College – part-time

*Beyond Consent and Coercion: Socialisation and Law*

Supervisor: Prof N. Stremlau

**Ayesha Pattnaik**, St Antony's College

*Concealed Claims, Contested Citizens: A Study of India's Informal Internal Migrant Workers*

Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie

**Mihir Rajamane Rajendra**, Exeter College

*'Transgender' in India: Decoding the Dynamics of State Law and Gender as an Institution Through a Material Perspective*

Supervisor: Dr A. Kubal

**Vidya Ramachandran**, St Peter's College

*(En)gendering Removal: Women's Experiences of 'Voluntary Return' from the UK to India*

Supervisor: Prof F. Pirie and Dr. L. Rose

**Chiara Rohlf**s, Hertford College

*Who Defines Corporate Climate Obligations? Exploring the Blind Spots and Interaction Between Private Regulatory Initiatives and Corporate Climate Law*

Supervisor: Prof B. Lange

**Elsa Savourey**, Exeter College – part-time

*Advancing the Respect of Human Rights in Global Value Chains: Assessing the Effectiveness of Mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence*

Supervisors: Dr F. Grisel and Dr C. Decker

**Lucy Tu**, Oriel College

*Pregnancy By Design: A Study of Non-Invasive Prenatal Screening and U.S. Pregnancy Care Laws*

Supervisor: Prof N. Stremlau

**Johannes Vöhler**, Reuben College

*Judicial Independence in the EU – A Matter of Legal Culture?*

Supervisor: Dr A. Kubal

**Lisa Völzmann**, St Antony's College

*Data Access and Use in the Public Interest*

Supervisor: Prof B. Lange

**Supakorn Wilatratsami**, St Antony's College

*Shifting Legal Consciousness Under Thailand's New National Screening Mechanism for 'Protected Persons' (Asylum Seekers)*

Supervisor: Prof N. Stremlau

## 2.3 Research Students – MPhil

**Amina Bold**, Lady Margaret Hall

*Neoliberal Penalty: Analysing the Notion of the 'Public Interest' in Criminal Cases of Environmental Protestors*

Supervisor: Prof B. Lange

**Flora de Castro Santana**, Blackfriars College

*Substantive Democracy within Private Organizations in Global Governance: Investigating the ICANN Internet Regulation Regime*

Supervisor: Prof B. Lange

**Gor Vartazaryan**, Linacre College

*The Role of Dissenting Opinions at the European Court of Human Rights*

Supervisor: Dr A. Kubal

Details of all research students enrolled in the Centre's programmes can be found at <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centres-institutes/centre-socio-legal-studies/current-students>.

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## 2.4 Centre Associates

A number of Senior, University, and Postdoctoral Associates are affiliated with the Centre. You can view a full list of current associates here: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centres-institutes/centre-socio-legal-studies/associates>.

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## 2.5 Academic and Student Visitors

Our Visitors' Programme is an important part of the Centre's intellectual life. Each year, we host academic and student visitors from around the world, who join us for all or part of the academic year.

We encourage you to explore their research and connect with those who share your interests. Details of current visitors and their research interests can be found at: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centres-institutes/centre-socio-legal-studies/visitors-programme>.

## 3 The CSLS Community

### 3.1 Getting Involved

Being present and engaged makes a real difference to your experience at CSLS. The Centre offers both formal and informal opportunities to participate in academic life and build connections with fellow students and staff.

- Introduce yourself to others in the office; spontaneous conversations often lead to useful insights, collaborations, or friendships.
- Use your desk or hot desk when possible; working from the Centre helps you stay informed and involved.
- Attend Centre events, including the Monday Seminar Series, the Thursday Discussion Group, and guest talks throughout the year.
- Join us for Thursday Afternoon Tea at 4pm in the common area, a relaxed and friendly space to socialise and catch up. Feel free to bring something to share, but just showing up is more than enough.
- Explore wider University events; many relevant workshops, lectures, and conferences are held across Oxford. Take advantage of these to broaden your perspective.

### 3.2 Sharing the Space

We work in an open and collaborative environment. Please help keep the Centre a pleasant place to work by following these shared principles:

- Keep noise to a minimum in communal areas; use the pods near the entrance for calls or online meetings.
- Respect each other's boundaries; not everyone is up for a chat every day, and quiet working time is important.
- Leave shared spaces clean and tidy, especially the kitchen. Please keep the Philips coffee machine clean and wash the milk container after use.
- Do not use others' belongings without permission; this includes books, materials, and electronics.

### 3.3 Looking After One Another

The Centre is committed to a respectful, supportive, and inclusive environment. Harassment, bullying, or discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour (including sexual) that violates dignity or creates an intimidating or hostile environment.

Sexual misconduct is any sexual conduct without consent or where consent was not reasonably believed to be given.

Examples include threats, offensive comments, unwanted touching, sexual messages, stalking, exclusion, or repeated unwanted contact.

Support is free, confidential, and accessible without making a formal report:

- Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service (SHVSS)
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)
- Harassment Advisor Network
- Oxford SU Student Advice Service
- Your college welfare team

Concerns can be addressed informally (e.g. a mediated conversation) or through formal reporting to the University, your college, or department.

Full guidance is available via the University's [Preventing and Responding to Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#) page.

You can also speak with the Centre Administrative Team, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the Centre Director.

### 3.4 Oxford SU Advice

[Oxford SU Advice](#) offers free, confidential, and independent support for all Oxford students, including those on suspension.

They can help with academic appeals, mitigating circumstances, fitness to study, misconduct procedures, and reporting harassment, discrimination or bullying. They also provide guidance on processes such as dispensation and college migration, and signpost to other services through their [A-Z of Accessing Support](#).

Visit their online resources or use their [Online Form](#) to request an appointment, ask a question, get feedback on a draft statement, or request an adviser to accompany you to a meeting.

### 3.5 Students' Community

You are joining a vibrant and supportive community of students, and we hope you will enjoy being part of it. We encourage you to get actively involved in the various activities organised and led by students. Each year, the Centre nominates student representatives, listed on page 3 of this handbook. Please feel free to approach them with any questions, concerns, or ideas on how to make life at the Centre even better.

The student representatives organise a range of academic and social events throughout the year and are committed to supporting you during your time here. They will also rely on your

participation and support to make these initiatives a success and to help foster a thriving community at the Centre.

One of the student representatives will attend the meetings of the CSLS General Purposes Committee (GPC), which take place at least once a term. They will be encouraged to share your views and feedback with Centre staff, and updates will be provided on any matters discussed. Where suggestions for change are agreed, every effort will be made to implement them as soon as possible.

As part of the wider Law Faculty, CSLS DPhil students also elect a representative to sit on the Law Faculty Board and its Graduate Studies Committee. The Centre strongly encourages students to take part in this process. The person nominated may be the same representative who sits on the Centre's GPC or another student.

### **3.6 Frontiers of Socio-Legal Studies Blog**

The Centre's blog, launched in 2021, promotes debates about issues and methods in the socio-legal community. Much of its content is geared towards early career academics and students. Its editors are recruited from the student body, overseen by Professor Linda Mulcahy as the senior editor. The editorial team actively encourages contributions from the student body. You can see the blog here: [Frontiers of Sociolegal Studies](#). The [podcasts](#) on different methodologies should be of particular value to first year students.

### **3.7 Residence Requirements**

The University takes residence requirements very seriously. You must be resident for at least six weeks in at least six terms of your programme. You may be granted dispensation from the requirements to keep residence only if it is necessary for you to carry out academic work elsewhere. Residence means residing within 25 miles of Carfax Tower. This is to enable you to be fully supported throughout your studies and to benefit from the Centre and University's research environments. Further detail is available at: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements>.



## 4 Centre Facilities

A guide to the resources, workspaces, IT, kitchen amenities, and accessibility features available to you at the Centre.



### Centre Access

You will have access to the Centre during normal building open times (which follow the Social Sciences Library opening times). If you require access to the Building Out of Hours (OOH), please make this request to the Administration Officer. You will need to view an online OOH induction and provide your university card details. Once you have OOH access, you will be responsible for ensuring the Centre is secure as you enter and leave – doors should be shut behind you throughout the building and valuables not left unattended.



### Desk space

The Centre allocates a desk and PC/docking station to all new research students for their first year and makes them available to continuing students depending on the availability of the space.

The communal areas of the Centre should be treated as a quiet working space for both students and researchers, so please keep long conversations to a minimum. Please also respect your working space by ensuring that any unwashed mugs, plates etc. are not left at your desk and keeping your space tidy.



### Hot desks

For those who have not been allocated desks, there are 6 desks available for hot desking near the entrance of the centre.



### Sofa Pods

There are two meeting pods located at the entrance to the Centre, and these should be used for online meetings and phone calls so that others in the open plan area are not disturbed.



### Terrace

We have a terrace with tables and benches which can be used by CSLS staff and students between 9am and 5:30pm, weather permitting.



### IT

The Centre will automatically arrange an email account for you on the University's Nexus365 system: <https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/nexus365>. It will take the form firstname.secondname@law.ox.ac.uk and will be in addition to your college email address. A letter telling you your username and password for Nexus365 will be sent out to you, normally via your college.

Once you have activated your email account, remember to check regularly for messages. It is expected that you will check your email on a regular basis during working hours for Centre and Faculty messages. Your Oxford Single Sign-On (SSO) gives you access to a range of Oxford-based systems which require login access, such as Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR). You're your allocated docking station and monitor, you will need to bring your laptop with you and use Eduroam as your Wi-Fi connection.

If you need to contact the IT Team directly ([itsupport@manor-road.ox.ac.uk](mailto:itsupport@manor-road.ox.ac.uk)) please do so through your @ox.ac.uk account; emails from external providers are automatically bounced back.



### Photocopier/Printer/Scanner

All students can access the Centre's photocopier within the printer room by using their University Card. You will need to log in manually the first time you use it: your username will be your SSO (e.g. abcd1234) and the password will be the barcode on your University Card. The Centre allows a reasonable number of copies to be made per year. Please scan the QR code above the printer for detailed user instructions. Each student and postdoctoral researcher is also allocated a pigeonhole in the same room for mails.



### Social Area

The social area is located by the orange sofas at the far end of the Centre, near the terrace. This is where we host our Thursday Afternoon Teas, and it's also a popular spot for staff and students to have lunch, take a break, or catch up with colleagues over coffee.



### Refreshments

You are welcome to use the Centre's kitchen, including the supplies of tea, coffee, milk and sugar. A microwave is available for heating food and drinks. Those using the kitchen are responsible for tidying up after themselves – *this is not the administrators' job*. There is a cafeteria (The Glasshouse) the first floor (open 08:00-16:00, Monday to Friday Weeks 0-9) as well as a shared Common Room (used by all the academic departments in the building). There is café in the St Cross Building, run by the Missing Bean, which also is open Weeks 0-9 each term. Vending machines for hot drinks and snacks and a water cooler are located on the first floor near the cafeteria. Please feel free to make use of the CSLS roof terrace to consume refreshments.



### Dishwasher

The dishwasher is run every day late in the afternoon. Please unload it if you are first into the Centre in the morning.



### Afternoon tea

There is an informal afternoon tea in the sofa social area next to the terrace in the Centre on Thursdays at 16:00 throughout the year. You are encouraged to attend and take this opportunity to interact with other Centre members.

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## Tidiness

Centre members are required to keep the Centre tidy and as they would wish to find it. This includes the sofa areas and the kitchenette. After Centre events—seminars, afternoon teas—please help to wash and tidy away items you have used.



## Showers

There are two showers in the Economics Department on the second floor which are available for use during normal opening hours, Monday to Friday.



## Fire Information

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, evacuate Manor Road Building immediately via the nearest staircase (not via the building's main stairwell) and assemble on the pavement at Manor Place (the small road opposite Manor Road Building reception). Please read fire notices within the building and take the time to explore your exit routes in case of an emergency.



## Access to Facilities

There is a ramped access to the main entrance and there is a powered door at reception. Accessible toilets are on each floor. For wheelchair access to the Centre, there is a lift. An infrared hearing loop is available by request in each of the teaching rooms. An evacuation chair is located at reception. Should you need any special assistance, please alert the Centre Manager or building facilities staff via reception.



## First Aid

First Aid can be administered by one of the Facilities Management team trained in first aid. There is a first aid box in the CSLS printer room, at reception and in the locker room. Please contact reception to request first aid.



## Accident reporting

Please report any accidents, incidents or near misses to the Centre Manager.



## Contemplation Room

There is a Contemplation Room in the St Cross Building next door, it is located on the ground floor and is open to all staff, students and visitors who may need a little time away from the busy spaces we occupy. It is a quiet, private space, for people to use for short periods during the working day to pray, rest or meditate.



## Lactation Room

This is in the Manor Road Building next to the accessible toilet on the third floor. For more details: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/quiet-rooms>

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## 5 Research

### 5.1 Supervision

Your research will be supported by your supervisor at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies (CSLS). A second supervisor may be arranged if additional expertise is needed for your project, in consultation with your main supervisor.

At Oxford, the primary focus is on the one-to-one relationship with your supervisor(s), who will provide feedback on your progress. It is generally expected that you will meet your supervisor(s) three times per term, though the frequency can vary depending on your research stage and needs. It is your responsibility to take the initiative in setting up meetings. Contact your supervisor as soon as you arrive to discuss your work schedule and remember it is your responsibility to arrange these meetings.

At the end of each term, you are expected to submit a report on your academic progress via the Graduate Supervision Reporting System (GSR). This report allows you to review and comment on your progress, with your supervisor adding their own report.

If you have concerns about your supervision, discuss them first with your supervisor. The Director of Graduate Studies is also available for consultation.

### 5.2 Pathway

#### 5.2.1 DPhil Students

During your DPhil, you will pass through three formal assessments:

#### **Qualification Test (QT) or Transfer of Status:**

- This transition from probationary status (PRS) to DPhil status requires a thesis outline and a piece of written work, demonstrating a clear thesis proposal, familiarity with relevant literature, a sound methodology, and the ability to develop an argument to DPhil standard.
- Aim to submit in Trinity Term of your first year, or at least before the beginning of Michaelmas Term (your second year). Two assessors will read your work and conduct a viva.
- Completion of the University's [Research Integrity Training](#) is required before submitting for the QT.

#### **Confirmation of Status Test (CoS):**

- Conducted after the data-gathering stage and initial writing phase, typically by the end of the third year. You will submit two chapters, ideally including the

Introduction, outlining the thesis's themes, structure, and argument. Two assessors will read your work and conduct a viva.

- This test provides critical and constructive feedback to help you complete your thesis.

### **Final DPhil Viva:**

- Conducted by two experts in your research field, this viva determines whether your thesis meets the required standards and contributes to the knowledge base. Most students complete their doctoral thesis in about four years, with guidance from their supervisor.

## **5.2.2 MPhil Students**

MPhil students work directly towards a single viva, to be completed by the end of the academic year (September). The MPhil thesis requires the same academic rigour as the DPhil, though on a smaller scale. MPhil students are encouraged to use secondary sources and data rather than extensive fieldwork.

For further details on assessments, submission requirements, deadlines, procedures, ethics, and risk assessment, consult the CSLS website: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centres-institutes/centre-socio-legal-studies/postgraduate-programme/postgraduate-programme>.

For academic matters, your supervisor should be your primary point of contact. For formal process enquiries, please first consult the information on this webpage: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/progression>, and then contact **Nadine Moustafa**, Administration Officer, if you require further assistance.

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## **5.3 Funding**

There are funding schemes available at Faculty level, and more limited funds for research expenses available in the Centre, to support your research. More information on funding sources can be found here: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centres-institutes/centre-socio-legal-studies/funding-and-employment>.

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## **5.4 Deadline**

### **DPhil in Socio-Legal Studies**

- **Qualification Test (QT) / Transfer of Status:** Normally apply in your third term and must achieve by the end of your fourth term after admission (part-time: between the sixth and eighth term).
- **Confirmation of Status (CoS):** Must apply within nine terms of admission (part-time: within eighteen terms), extendable by up to three terms.

- **Thesis submission:** Within four years of admission to the DPhil, extendable by up to six terms.

### MPhil in Socio-Legal Research

- **Application for Appointment of Examiners:** Submit the form by noon on Friday of Week 8 of Trinity Term.
- **Thesis submission:** By noon on the second Saturday in September.

*All relevant forms (Transfer, Confirmation, Appointment of Examiners) are available via the Graduate Forms webpage.*

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## 5.5 Suspensions, Extensions and Dispensations

If illness, personal circumstances, or other serious reasons affect your ability to study:

- Suspension stops the clock on your studies. Apply via the Graduate Forms [webpage](#) through the Graduate Administrator. Normally granted one term at a time (max six terms in total).
- Extension gives extra time to complete but does not pause your status. DPhil students may apply for up to six terms in total; MPhil extensions are rare and only approved in exceptional cases.
- Both require supervisor and college approval, and some funders have strict rules.

Seek advice early from your supervisor, college advisor or Graduate Administrator.

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## 6 Training and Development

The Centre offers training for all new graduate students. Attendance at the Theory and Methods class, the weekly seminar series, and the Centre's annual lecture and related workshop is *mandatory* for first year students. Completion of all elements of this research training must be certified.

### 6.1 Core CSLS Training

#### 6.1.1 Weekly Seminar Series

Description: The Centre convenes a research seminar in which papers are presented by research staff, members of other institutions within the University and speakers from other universities. There are weekly seminars in Michaelmas and fortnightly seminars in Hilary term. Attendance is compulsory for first year students. Even if a seminar does not directly address the topic of your research, it will help you to gain an understanding of what constitutes a socio-legal approach to research and how different types of theoretical and methodological frameworks can be applied.

The series is followed by lunch in the third floor Atrium, which provides an important opportunity for students and staff to meet the speaker and other Centre members to discuss issues of common interest. Many students find informal conversations an invaluable source of advice and ideas.



Schedule for *Michaelmas term*: Mondays 11.30–1.00pm, Seminar Room G  
Schedule for *Hilary term*: TBC

#### 6.1.2 Theory and Methods Seminars

(Sessions for probationary research and MPhil students)

The aims of these sessions are to:

1. Help students understand the intellectual origins of socio-legal studies and how the field relates to doctrinal scholarship and critical legal studies.
2. Introduce students from both law and social science backgrounds to the contributions of sociology, politics, anthropology, law, and economics to understanding the role of law in society.
3. Familiarise students with seminal and contemporary debates in socio-legal studies.
4. Enable students to situate their own research projects within the context of these debates and to identify their contribution to them.
5. Allow students to critically assess and compare key empirical methods for the collection and analysis of data.



Sessions take place – unless otherwise stated – on Mondays, 2.00–4.00pm in Seminar Room B

*Note: The detailed Theory & Methods is included in Appendix A at the end of this handbook.*

### 6.1.3 CSLS Annual Lecture

The CSLS Annual Lecture is scheduled to take place in **Week 3 of Trinity Term** (exact date to be confirmed). The speaker will also lead a workshop with research students. Further details, including information about the speaker and confirmed timings will be shared once available.

## 6.2 Student-Led and Collaborative Activities

### 6.2.1 Students' Discussion Group

This Discussion Group is organized by students to discuss the progress of their research. It includes seminars led by external speakers. Attendance is highly recommended, and information will be widely distributed.



MT: Thursdays 12:00–13:30, Seminar Room G (Weeks 1,3,5 and 8)

HT: Thursdays 12:30 -14:00, Seminar Room B (Weeks 1,3,5 and 8)

TT: Thursdays 12:30 -14:00, Seminar Room B (Weeks 1,3,5 and 8)

### 6.2.2 Research Clusters and Workshops

The Centre organises its research into several thematic clusters. Each cluster may host an informal workshop once a year, open to all students and staff, with details shared separately. In addition, all conferences and seminars hosted by CSLS are open to student participation.

### 6.2.3 Social Science Division

In addition to the basic course in 'Theory and Methods of Socio-Legal Research' outlined above, you may want to consider – in discussion with your supervisor – attending methodology classes for the social sciences offered by other departments, such as [Politics and International Relations](#), the [Said Business School](#), the [Centre for Criminology](#) and the [Department of Sociology](#).

Information about the training opportunities available within the Social Sciences Division and across the University is available [on the Division's website](#).

## 6.3 CSLS Additional Sessions

Date and time	Room	Session Title	Convener	Open To
12 November 14:00 – 16:00	Seminar F	<b>Working with Existing Data</b>	A Kubal	MPhil students
19 November 14:00 – 16:00	Seminar F	<p><b>Academic writing: the challenge of clarity</b></p> <p>Academic writers almost always find there is a tension between being sophisticated and being clear. And this is not just a challenge for non-native English speakers. As we try to express abstract ideas, summarise complex arguments, and engage in insightful analysis, most of us find that our prose tends to become complex and obscure. But good ideas, however sophisticated, can always be expressed in a straightforward way. In this seminar, we will discuss some of the ways we might achieve this and common pitfalls to be avoided.</p> <p><b>Reading</b> Sword, Helen. 2012. Stylish academic writing. Harvard University Press. (ch. 5)</p>	F Pirie	All students and post-docs
Hilary Term (TBC)	TBC	<b>Write and Ignite Workshop</b>	N Kyneswood	DPhil students writing up
Trinity Term (TBC)	TBC	<b>Writing an Effective Analysis</b>	A Kubal	DPhil students writing up

## 7 Useful Portals and Online Resources

### 7.1 New Students

- **Welcome to Oxford:** Find essential information to help you settle in and make the most of your time at Oxford. [New Students Portal](#)
- **Oxford Transition Support:** Provides resources to help you adjust to academic and social life at Oxford. [Oxford Transition Support](#)

### 7.2 Academic and Research Resources

- **CSLS Graduate Programme:** Information on the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies' postgraduate programmes. [CSLS Graduate Programme](#)
- **Research Ethics:** Guidance on maintaining ethical standards in your research. [University Research Ethics](#)
- **The Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA)** is the national learned society in our field. It hosts an annual conference and postgraduate conference. Membership is free for the first year for students: <https://www.slsa.ac.uk/>.
- **University Policy on Research Degrees:** Detailed policies and procedures related to research degrees at Oxford. [Research Degrees Policy](#)
- **Frontiers of Socio-Legal Studies:** <https://frontiers.csls.ox.ac.uk/>

### 7.3 Academic Support

- **University Student Handbook:** Comprehensive guide covering academic policies, student responsibilities, and support services. [Student Handbook](#)
- **Research Degree Stages:** Outline of the stages involved in completing a research degree. [Research Degree Stages](#)
- **Graduate Studies Office (GSO) Progression Forms:** Forms and guidance for progressing through your graduate studies. [GSO Progression Forms](#)
- **Changes in Student Status:** Procedures for changing your student status, including suspensions, extensions, and withdrawals. [Changes in Student Status](#)

### 7.4 Health and Welfare

- **Student Health and Welfare:** Information on health services, counseling, and welfare support available to students. [Health and Welfare](#)

### 7.5 Research Integrity and Training

- **Good Practice in Research:** Training and checklists to help you adhere to best practices in research. [Research Integrity Training](#)
- **Avoiding Plagiarism:** The University's IT Services runs a [course for students on plagiarism awareness](#).

## 8 Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I connect to eduroam Wi-Fi?

Eduroam is the recommended Wi-Fi service for students and staff, giving you internet access across Oxford and at other participating universities.

Follow the step-by-step setup instructions on the University IT website here:

<https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/how-to-connect-to-eduroam>

You'll need your Oxford username (in the format abcd1234@OX.AC.UK) and your remote access password (different from your SSO password).

### How do I print documents using the CSLS printer?

Please scan the QR code above the printer for detailed instructions on how to print/scan/copy. Please consult the instructions for logging in under section 4 Centre Facilities: Printing/Scanning/Copying for details. Please think carefully and environmentally about whether you need to print.

### Are there any sources of financial support for my research?

For details of funding possibilities, please consult: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centres-institutes/centre-socio-legal-studies/funding-and-employment>.

### Is there any equipment available for loan?

The Centre has a high-spec camera (with video recording capability), tripod, and a range of microphones available, which may be useful for recording interviews during your fieldwork. If you would like to borrow any of this equipment, please contact the Administration Officer or Centre Manager.

### Am I entitled to Socio-Legal Studies Association membership?

The first year of membership is free to all students, £25 pa thereafter. Please view the [SLSA website](#) for other student benefits.

### I need University ethics clearance for my fieldwork; how does this process work?

Please consult: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centres-institutes/centre-socio-legal-studies/ethics-and-risk>. A bank of previous successful applications (prior to application submission via WorkTribe) is available on a shared drive, the link for which will be circulated to new students at the start of Hilary term.

### Can I do some teaching?

You can do teaching as a research student, but only after you have transferred to DPhil status if it's for the faculty. Before transfer, you may teach at other institutions with your supervisor's approval. To teach for the faculty (e.g. as a Graduate Teaching Assistant), you must also complete the faculty's teacher training course (held in Trinity Term) and provide a supervisor's letter confirming it won't delay your thesis. Please refer to p.16 of the [Law Postgraduate Research Handbook 2024–25](#).

## Appendix A – Theory & Methods Timetable

### A.1 Michaelmas Term Course Outline

Sessions in Michaelmas Term introduce key approaches and debates in contemporary socio-legal studies. The discussions will explore the nature of law, the various forms it takes, and the different roles it plays in a variety of social settings and relationships.

#### Week 1: 13 October

**Fernanda Pirie**  
*Legal Pluralism*

How is law to be identified outside the formal legal systems of the nation state? What does it even mean to talk of ‘non-state law’? Should it be identified by its sources, its functions, or its form? This seminar introduces debates about the nature of law generated by anthropological examples from around the world, including what is promoted as ‘legal pluralism’, and the ways in which they can be used to reflect upon what law is.

#### Essential Reading:

- Merry, Sally Engle. 1988. ‘Legal pluralism’. *Law and Society Review*, 22: 869–96.
  - Roberts, Simon. 2005. ‘After government: on representing law without the state’. *Modern Law Review*, 68: 1–24.
- 

#### Week 2: 20 October

**Nicole Stremlau**  
*Global Histories of Socio-Legal Studies*

This seminar explores the multiple and contested histories of socio-legal studies- we examine how the field has been shaped by institutional contexts, global power dynamics, and postcolonial critique. Harris’s account of UK socio-legal studies invites discussion on the foundations of our own Centre. We will also reflect on how research on law and society in Africa has had an often overlooked, but central and defining role, in shaping the field of socio-legal studies in the UK and globally. And we will discuss how the recent turn to “the local” can actually reproduce exclusionary, patriarchal, and externally imposed forms of authority. Together, these readings ask us to think critically about how we might engage with diverse legal and social traditions in our own research. Students are encouraged to come to class prepared to discuss how socio-legal perspectives have been influenced, defined, and shaped in the contexts where their research takes place.

#### Essential Reading:

- Harris, D. R. (1983). The development of socio-legal studies in the United Kingdom. *Legal Studies*, 3(3), 315-333.
- Manji, A., & Harrington, J. (2017). The limits of socio-legal radicalism: social and legal studies and third world scholarship. *Social and Legal Studies*, 26(6), 700-715.



- Branch, A, (2011) 'Ethnojustice: The Turn to Culture', Chapter 5 in *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda*. Oxford University Press.

### Week 3: 27 October

**Bettina Lange**

#### *Is law a regulatory tool or a knowledge regime?*

This seminar introduces Foucault's post-structuralist conception of law which critiques an instrumental understanding of law as a regulatory tool. Reflecting critically upon how we conceptualize law matters since different ways of understanding law steer towards asking different socio-legal research questions. An instrumentalist conception perceives law as a powerful normative order which can regulate social actors' behaviour and facilitate social change. This chimes with lawyers' understanding of legal ordering. From a Foucaultian perspective, however, law is not just a set of sometimes coercive social practices. Instead, it is also a distinct way of representing and knowing the social world. From this perspective law is primarily understood—not as a regulatory tool—but as a distinct knowledge regime.

#### **Essential Reading:**

- Foucault, M. 2009. 'Alternatives to the Prison'. *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 26 (6), 12–24.
- Valverde, M. 2010. 'Specters of Foucault in Law and Society Scholarship'. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 6, 45–59.

### Week 4: 3 November

**Agnieszka Kubal**

#### *Legal Culture and Legal Consciousness*

This seminar investigates the intricate relationship between law and society through the interconnected concepts of legal culture and legal consciousness. By engaging with foundational and contemporary scholarly works, we examine how legal norms, practices, and beliefs are both shaped by and shape societal values and behaviours. The seminar will discuss the symbiotic relationship between legal culture and legal consciousness as two complementary conceptual lenses, revealing the cultural foundations of legal systems and their impact on social dynamics.

#### **Essential Reading:**

- Silbey, Susan S. 2005. 'After Legal Consciousness'. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 1: 323–68.
- Axel Pohn-Weidinger, Julia Dahlvik. 2024. *Legal Consciousness Without Legal Culture? A Comment on Ewick and Silbey's The Common Place of Law* [in:] *Laypeople in Law*, London: Routledge, pp. 141-156
- Kurkchian, Marina. 2023. 'Legal Culture as an Approach to the Study of Law in Russian Society', in Hydén Håkan, et al. (eds), *Combining the Legal and the Social*

*in Sociology of Law: An Homage to Reza Banakar*. London: Hart/Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Chua, Lynette and David M. Engel. 2019. 'Legal consciousness reconsidered'. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 15: 335–53.
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## Week 5: 10 November

Florian Grisel

### *Social Basis of Law: Theoretical Approaches*

This session will explore the theoretical foundations of socio-legal approaches by examining the work of leading sociologists such as Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. We will analyse the ways in which a socio-legal approach differs from the doctrinal analysis of the law, and highlight the empirical dimension of this approach. We will critically analyse these theories and link their interpretations of what law is to the larger viewpoints of social philosophy. We will then discuss whether the models have relevance to empirical reality.

#### Essential Reading:

- Durkheim, Emile. 1982. *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: The Free Press [Chapter II].
  - Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Vol. 1. Berkeley: University of California Press [Chapter VIII.i].
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## Week 6: 17 November

Nicole Stremlau

### *The Digital Turn in Socio-Legal Studies*

The digital turn in socio-legal studies invites us to examine how law is being reshaped by new technologies—and by the values and social orders they encode. Rather than treating digital systems as neutral tools, we consider how legal-tech infrastructures often marginalize practices and knowledges outside global centers of power. New forms of platform governance are mimicking legal authority while attempting to evade traditional accountability. At the same time, AI systems appear to be further formalizing elite perspectives, often erasing plural legal traditions and the experiences of marginalized communities. These developments challenge us to rethink what counts as law, who defines it, and how justice is imagined in a digitized world.

#### Essential Reading:

- Mavhunga, C. (2017). 'Introduction', in "What do science, technology, and innovation mean from Africa?", MIT Press, pp 1-27.
- Hoque, S. T. (2023). Neocolonial digitality: Analyzing digital legal databases using legal pluralism. *Asian Journal of Law and Society*, 10(3), 516-549.
- Klonick, K. (2019). The Facebook Oversight Board: Creating an independent institution to adjudicate online free expression. *Yale LJ*, 129, 2418.

**Week 7: 24 November****Fernanda Pirie*****Comparison in Socio-Legal Studies***

Many socio-legal projects are explicitly comparative, while in others, the researcher analyses their material by comparing parallel studies from different social and political contexts. Qualitative research lends itself to what has been called ‘disjunctive’ comparison. Instead of trying to compare apples with apples, rather than oranges, the researcher draws insights from comparing unlike examples. How and why might socio-legal scholars usefully compare in these, or other, ways?

**Essential Reading:**

- Creutzfeldt, Naomi, Agnieszka Kubal, and Fernanda Pirie. 2016. ‘Introduction: exploring the comparative in socio-legal studies’, in F. Pirie, A. Kubal, and N. Creutzfeldt (eds), *Comparative Socio-Legal Studies*, special issue of the *International Journal of Law in Context*, 12: 377–89.
- Lazar, Sian. 2012. ‘Disjunctive comparison: citizenship and trade unionism in Bolivia and Argentina’. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 18: 349–68.

**Additional Reading:**

- Pirie, Fernanda. 2025. ‘Global comparative law? Review of Siems and Yapp, “The Cambridge Handbook of Comparative Law”’, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 45: 506–24.

**Week 8: 1 December****Bettina Lange*****From discourse to socio-legal ordering?***

This seminar will introduce you to discourse analytical thinking as a distinct approach to carrying out socio-legal research. A range of socio-legal studies have been informed by discourse analysis, and hence this seminar focuses on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of doing discourse analysis for a socio-legal research project. We will discuss different meanings of the concept of ‘discourse’, whether law can be considered as a distinct discourse, and how various discourses contribute to socio-legal ordering also by constituting the institutions through which law is created and implemented.

**Essential Reading:**

- Schmidt, Vivienne A. 2008. ‘Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse’. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11: 303–326.
- Schmidt, Vivienne A. 2022. ‘European Emergency Politics and the Question of Legitimacy’. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 29 (6): 979–993.
- Lynch, Richard A. 2014. ‘Chapter 22: Discourse’, in Leonard Lawlor and John Nale (eds), *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*. CUP.

## A.2 Hilary Term Course Outline

These seminars will build on the last session of Michaelmas Term to discuss the practical techniques available to carry out socio-legal research and the ways in which they relate to the theoretical approaches you might take. We will consider which questions you can ask and what methods can help you to answer them.

### Week 1: 19 January

Linda Mulcahy

#### *Introduction to Socio-Legal Methodology: The qualitative-quantitative spectrum*

The session will provide a general survey of the social and philosophical roots of the various techniques available for data collection and analysis. Particular attention will be paid to the contested issues in social science research, such as: What are we trying to achieve when we are engaged in research activities? Do qualitative and quantitative approaches have equal claims to be considered 'scientific'? When we decide on which methods to use in collecting the information we need, what assumptions are we making and what do they imply? What philosophical approaches do these assumptions rest upon? What do the differences between the various approaches entail for the interpretation of the nature of knowledge and truth? Finally, having surveyed the dynamic interplay between theoretical concepts and empirical data, the discussion will stress the importance of constructing a conceptual framework that will ensure the consistency and integrity of a research project.

#### Essential reading:

- Lawless, Robert M, Jennifer K. Robbennolt, and Thomas S. Ulen. 2016. *Empirical Methods in Law*. Wolters Kluwer [Chs 1 and 2]
- Silverman, David. 2020. *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. Sage Publications [Ch. 1]

### Week 2: 26 January

Linda Mulcahy

#### *Interviewing and Focus Groups*

In this seminar we will be looking at one of the most popular forms of data collection, the interview. We will consider a broad range of approaches to interviewing as well as the different ethical and practical issues around interviewing 'elites' and 'everyday' people. This week is the first in our series of 'Masterclasses' led by experienced empirical researchers. The class will be led by Professor Paul Rock, who has substantial experience in a range of methods including ethnographies and qualitative interviews. Paul has recently finished writing the 'Official History' of Criminal Justice in the England and Wales, and will reflect on his methodologies of combining elite unstructured interviews with archival work. For further details of Paul's extensive range of research and publications see: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/socialPolicy/researchcentresandgroups/mannheim/staff/rock.aspx>

#### Essential reading:

- Bryman, Alan. 2015. 'Interviewing in Qualitative Research' in Social research methods (5th ed.). Oxford: University Press or
  - Silverman, D. 2015. 'Interviews' in Interpreting qualitative data, (5th ed.) London: Sage.
  - Halliday, S. and P. Schmidt, P. 2009. 'Patricia Ewick and Susan Silbey and The Common place of Law', in Conducting law and society research: reflections on methods and practices (ch. 19) Cambridge University Press.
- 

### **Week 3: 2 February**

**Fernanda Pirie and Agnieszka Kubal**

#### ***Archival Research***

Historians have long debated the philosophical issues raised by archival research, starting with the nature of archives themselves. But such debates should not dissuade socio-legal scholars from making use of available documentary sources. After all, laws are texts and often preserved in archives. MPhil students often find an archive a good focus for a project and historical documents may give useful historic context to any research. As with interview and survey data, all archival sources must be assessed and analysed on their own terms. We want to encourage students to think reflexively about approach archives not just as repositories of facts, but as active sites of power and interpretation. In this session we will consider some of the particular issues raised by archival records: what can they reveal, how they should be interpreted, what are the significant gaps and silences, and how can we navigate extensive quantities of material? What are the practicalities of using archives? What kind of ideological and institutional contexts must be taken into account in evaluating the archival sources?

#### **Essential reading:**

- Guha, Ranajit. 1983. Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India. Delhi: OUP. [Ch. 1, Introduction. You should concentrate on his remarks, towards the end of the chapter, about sources.]
  - Macrea-Toma, Ioana, 2017. The Eyes of Radio Free Europe: Regimes of Visibility in the Cold War Archives. East Central Europe, 44(1), pp.99-127.
  - L'Eplattenier, Barbara. 2009. 'An Argument for archival research methods: thinking beyond methodology', College English 72: 67–79
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### **Week 4: 9 February**

**Fernanda Pirie**

#### ***Ethnographic Methods***

Participant observation is a key technique of ethnographic socio-legal research methods. It is a type of research that could be regarded as diametrically opposed to the collection of quantitative data. This relates not only to the methods but to the types of questions that can be answered, the research design and the subsequent analysis of data. In the seminar we will discuss the practical issues of undertaking participant observation, but we will start by considering the how participant observation relates to other types of research and the continuum between quantitative and qualitative methods that were discussed in the first

week. To this end you should do some reading on the nature of ethnography and participant observation and consider how your own project may be placed on the scale between quantitative and ethnographic methodologies. You should also read a case study about participant observation and anticipate whether you might encounter any similar practical issues in your own research.

### Essential reading:

- Nader, Laura. 1986. 'From anguish to exultation', in Golde (ed.), *Women in the Field*.
  - Punch, K. F. 2005. *Introduction to Social Research*.
  - Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. 1995. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* [Ch. 1].
- 

## Week 5: 16 February

Nicole Stremlau

### Surveys

Surveys are a much-used form of data collection, which allow us to collect large amounts of generalisable data. They are used to capture both qualitative and quantitative data but in contrast to much qualitative work, commonly require those designing them to group responses into categories before the data has been collected. In this session we will consider the dangers of such predetermined and deductive methods of data collection as well as their advantages. We will discuss how researchers and organizations use surveys as they are often at the core of indicators and indexes that can have significant impact on policies. Particular attention will be given to the challenges of survey research in difficult environments, including regions affected by crisis or conflict. We will spend some time critiquing the data contained in the Rule of Law Index, including the use of expert surveys. (see <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/>).

### Essential reading:

- Tourangeau et al. 2012. *The Psychology of Survey Response*, CUP.
  - Merry, Sally. 2011. 'Measuring the World', *Current Anthropology*, 52.
  - Firchow & Mac Ginty. 2017. 'Measuring Peace', *International Studies Review*, 19: 6–27.
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## Week 6: 23 February

Chris Decker

### The dilemmas of working with quantitative data

In the course of our research most of us rely on quantitative data, published statistics or attempt to count things even if we are doing qualitative research. In a world in which 'big data' is increasingly being discussed, it is important for us to understand the provenance of large data sets and to be able to judge the credibility of published data sets or those made available for secondary analysis. Without a basis knowledge of statistical significance, univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis we cannot attempt to judge the credibility of

published research. In this session we will look at some of the terms and models that are commonly used by statisticians and go on to consider the ways in which 'big data' impacts on the world of socio-legal studies.

### Essential reading:

- Bryman, A. 2015. 'Secondary analysis and official statistics', *Social Research Methods*, OUP.
- Gandomi & Haider. 2015. 'Beyond the hype: Big Data', *International Journal of Information Management*, 35: 137–44.
- Posner & De Figueiredo. 2005. 'Is the ICJ Biased?', *The Journal of Legal Studies*, 34: 599–630.

### Background Viewing:

- Dancing statistics: 'Correlation' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFjaBh12C6s>
  - Dancing statistics: 'Frequency' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dr1DynUzjq0>
  - Dancing Statistics: 'Variance' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGfwj4GrUIA>
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## Week 7: 2 March

### Bettina Lange Case Studies

A research design provides the 'scaffolding' for a socio-legal study. Researchers frequently frame their projects through the research design of one in-depth single, or multiple empirical case studies. Case studies can be used to address 'how' and, to some extent, 'why' research questions, e.g. through process tracing. They can generate 'comprehensive storylines', help to detect 'smoking guns' and generate 'confessions' (Blatter & Haverland, *Designing Case Studies*, 2012, p. 20). They have been used in socio-legal studies to analyse - for example - legal decision-making in organizations. But how do you actually construct and define the boundaries of 'a case'? How can case studies help to focus on specific instances of the empirical or conceptual phenomena you want to study? What are the analytical gains and limitations of framing your data collection through the case study research design?

### Essential reading:

- Clark et al. 2021. *Bryman's Social Research Methods* [Ch. 3.6].
  - Yin, R. 2018. *Case study research and applications* [Chs 1-2].
  - Elliott, C, A. Janzwood, S. Bernstein, and M. Hoffman. 2023. 'Rethinking complementarity: The co-evolution of public and private governance in corporate climate disclosure', *Regulation & Governance*[at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/rego.12550>].
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**Week 8: 9 March****Nicole Stremlau*****Ethical Issues in Socio-Legal Research***

While every researcher looks forward to finalising the often-complicated institutional ethics processes for their study, ethical questions do not simply end with ethics approval. Drawing insights from a chapter of Lareau's *Unequal Childhoods* (2011), along with Mark Israel's introduction to ethics in socio-legal research, this session will reflect on the on-going moral and ethical considerations that take place before, during, and after undertaking empirical research. It will include guidance on how to identify possible ethical issues and negotiate institutional ethics requirements, including questions of anonymity, privacy, research data management as well as power relationships in the field.

**Essential reading:**

- Israel, Mark. 2017. 'Research ethics and integrity', *Research Methods for Law*.
- Lareau, Annette. 2011. 'Reflections on longitudinal ethnography', *Unequal Childhoods*, 312–60.



## A.3 Trinity Term Course Outline

### Week 1: 27 April

#### CSLS post-Docs

##### *Experience of doing field research*

In this session two or three of the Centre's senior doctoral students will be invited to share with the group their experience of conducting empirical research and discuss the problems that they have encountered in the final process of writing a full thesis draft. They will reflect upon the challenges that they have faced at the various stages of advanced research, how they have overcome them, and what lessons they have learned during the implementation of the project that they envisioned at the outset three years before.

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### Week 3: 11 May

#### First-year DPhil and MPhil students

##### *Student Presentations (A Kubal to convene)*

This is a full-day workshop in which each student gives a presentation on their research project to Centre Fellows and fellow students. The focus is on sharing work-in-progress in a supportive and collegial setting. Presentations are followed by constructive feedback and open discussion. Attendance throughout the day is expected, as students are encouraged to engage with and contribute to their peers' sessions. The event is designed to help refine research projects and provide preparation for the Qualifying Test (QT) assessment.

*Notes*

*\*\* Please note that the printed version of the handbook is up to date as it goes to press, but it may be best to consult the PDF version on the Centre website for the most recent revisions. \*\**