

Institution:	Goldsmiths, University of London
Unit of Assessment:	21 - Politics and International Studies
a. Overview	

Young and dynamic, the Department of Politics at Goldsmiths was established in its current form in 2002, by way of a radical reorganisation of the previous Department of Social Policy and Politics. The early years of the new department saw considerable staff changes, as it sought to develop strengths in the core areas of the discipline as well as developing new areas of research that would give it a distinctive identity: one consonant with, and drawing upon, the intellectual culture of Goldsmiths, with its specialisms in the social sciences, humanities and practising arts and a strong commitment to interdisciplinary working.

The period since RAE 2008 has been guided by a clear strategic plan, implemented by successive HoDs, and with the backing and support of the college senior management. The guiding thread of this strategy has been an effort to develop a distinctive identity which treats 'politics' not as a bounded domain, but as a distinctive outlook which encompasses traditional themes (ideas, interests, and institutions) and sub-disciplines (political theory, European politics, international relations, political economy) but also new areas, notably (a) postcolonial theory and critical Asian studies, and (b) the junction between art and politics. As a relatively newly founded department, it made clear sense to be self-consciously 'post-traditional', and aim to bring something new to the discipline. The Department hosts Research Units in Governance and Democracy (RUGD) and Politics & Ethics (RUPE), and a cross-disciplinary Centre for Postcolonial Studies.

b. Research Strategy

Our aim to develop a distinctive 'take' on the discipline has been implemented by doing the core elements of the discipline *differently*, as well as *extending* the discipline into new areas of research that have not traditionally been deemed part (or fully part) of Politics. Our research is organized into six clusters presented below, the first 4 of which are core elements of the discipline. All of these are well represented in our outputs, with the notable exception of art/politics, which is represented in the form of an impact case study only. Despite its small size and relative novelty, the department has established itself as unique hub for radical, interdisciplinary, cosmopolitan, creative and unorthodox approaches to the scientific study and analysis of politics. It has prospered in terms of rising student numbers at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and in terms of spawning a fruitful research culture, the results of which will be showcased here.

1. European Politics: The European Politics cluster has adopted a heterodox and critical approach to the study of Europe, including research which seeks to overcome the arbitrary divides between the classic sub-disciplines of international relations, comparative politics and area studies and which explores the domestic impact of transnational movement and politico-economic change. It informs specific issue-areas within this cluster. One of these is *movement and immigration*. Although Pusca's work is informed by international relations (IR) theory, Levy's by history and Menz's by political economy, all are concerned with questions of human movement, its regulation, impact, and representation. Pusca's work on the regulation of the movement of the Roma peoples, Levy's on the political regulation, detention and deterrence of flows of refugees and asylum seekers, and Menz's in shaping immigration policy, all play out within this sub-cluster. Menz's 2008 OUP monograph *The Political Economy of Managed Migration* explored the role of both the EU and non-state actors in shaping national migration policies. In recognition of his pioneering role in researching and teaching European and immigration politics, Menz was awarded the prestigious Jean Monnet Chair in European Immigration Politics by the European Commission, 2011-14.

The *role of ideas* is another prism through which this cluster explores European politics. Pusca's work on political disillusionment in post-1989 Romania, Dragovic-Soso's studies of Serbian intellectuals in the renaissance of aggressive nationalism during the Milosevic era, Griffiths' work on post-Thatcher Britain, Levy's studies of the legacies of anarchism and fascism on post-war Italian politics, Martin's work on Piero Gobetti, and Newman's contributions to the study of Max Stirner and other theorists, explore (largely European) ideas as they travel into -isms and from there, into the



world. RUGD is the hub where many of these interests come together and are cultivated through seminars and conferences.

2. Global Politics/International Relations: Research in this cluster engages with international relations in innovative ways. Postcolonial theory and an interest in non-Western critiques of the discipline of IR inform the work of Seth (including his edited book in the influential *Interventions* series published by Routledge), Gruffydd Jones and D. Martin. Martin and Pusca explore and develop the 'aesthetic turn' in IR. Martin's 2011 MIT book *Curious Visions of Modernity* examines and critically explores standard versions of rationality with regards to the politics of the visual. Dragovic-Soso's work on transitional justice in the post-conflict Balkans crosses the boundaries between comparative politics, intellectual history and global politics; her work explicitly addresses the global trend towards truth commissions and contributes to complex debates on history, memory and reconciliation after conflict. Gruffydd Jones studies the political economy of space and cities in the African context and decolonises international relations, critically applying and examining standard concepts from International Political Economy (IPE), for example the "failed state" thesis, to explore the potentials and pitfalls of doing so in a distinctly non-Western setting.

3. Political Theory: In this cluster, the department is distinguished by concentrating its research predominantly outside the field of the Anglo-American mainstream. It engages the dominant variations of theory – historical and thematic assessments of individual philosophies and normative ideas, ideological formations, and wider cultural and political discourses – but has a notable focus on *figures and topics* typically marginalised in political theory. For instance, Newman and Levy have made important contributions to, and surveys of, modern and contemporary anarchism; Griffiths, Levy, J. Martin and Newman have undertaken innovative studies of thinkers who subvert dominant strains of post-Enlightenment political thought; and Gruffydd Jones has explored the work of African political thinkers. J. Martin's scholarship on Poulantzas has been translated into Greek and was celebrated at an event in Athens in 2009, where he was a keynote speaker; and he has given invited talks at Harvard and New York University around his research on Gobetti. Newman has delivered keynotes in Europe for his work on Stirner and Foucault. He has written six books and edited two others; his work on post-anarchism is widely cited and discussed, and has been translated into Greek, Italian, German, Spanish, Turkish and Serbo-Croat.

The cluster adopts innovative *perspectives and approaches* in theorizing political ideas: Dutton and Seth have developed critical theories from the perspective of post-colonial experience; and Newman and J. Martin draw upon poststructuralist innovations that creatively reframe the relationship between ideas, discourse and power. J. Martin's recent work on rhetoric also contributes to methodological innovations in political analysis; he convenes the PSA Rhetoric and Politics Specialist Group and is currently the beneficiary of a Leverhulme Research Fellowship award in this field. Newman has formulated alternative approaches to the theory of human rights through the critical thinking of Agamben and Arendt; and has edited a special issue of the *Journal of Political Ideologies* on the theme of left-libertarianism.

RUPE is a central hub for presenting and publicizing these ideas, and for attracting research students, in addition to other conferences and seminars. These achievements have been reflected in considerable professional acclaim. Newman is on the advisory board of four journals, including *Contemporary Political Theory*, and a founding series editor for a new book series on 'New Politics of Autonomy' (Rowman & Littlefield International). J. Martin is a founding series editor for two book series with Palgrave-Macmillan, one in Political Theory and the other in 'Rhetoric, Politics and Society'. He is also on the advisory board of the Rhetoric Society of Europe.

4. Political Economy: This cluster combines an already successful research portfolio in comparative and international political economy with an emerging cutting-edge focus on bottom-up processes of finance, housing and consumerism, an actively expanding growth area in the dept. Our foci encompass classical political economy (Gunn, Griffiths), international political economy (Gruffydd Jones, Menz) as well as comparative political economy (Menz).

In the autumn of 2013 two new appointments (Ivanova, Montgomerie) have complemented the portfolio of research expertise which, together with Menz, straddle the comparative and international political economy divide. Ivanova's research areas include social theory and political economy,



money and finance, the role of the US dollar as key international currency, crisis theories, political economy and sociology of the United States (in particular, consumerism, housing, and economic history). Montgomerie explores the everyday political economy of financial crisis and the Anglo-American growth model through the lens of personal finance and indebtedness. Her expertise is solicited to comment on policy debates (in print and blog formats) related to household debt in the US and UK. Her collaborative work fosters interdisciplinary dialogue and challenges the theoretical silos of cultural and political economy understandings of the 2007 financial crisis. This research involved extensive engagement with Trade Unions, civil society groups and local city councils, extending the impact of this research outside of academia.

For Gruffydd Jones, the interaction of space and money and the commodification of land constitute key research areas, especially behind the backdrop of African cities. Between 2007-2010 a major British Academy research grant enabled her to conduct extensive fieldwork in Ghana, resulting in a number of peer-reviewed articles. Her work on the political economy of African cities has spawned a number of lecture invitations in the UK, Japan, and continental Europe. Since 2008, she serves as Book Reviews Editor for the *Review of African Political Economy*, and between 2011 and 2013 as a member of the Executive Board of the British International Studies Association.

Griffiths' work on public service reforms has been highly influential in shaping policy debate, as further articulated in one of our two impact case studies. Menz's recent work has explored the political economy of the privatization of migration management, with research funding from the British Academy. This project has resulted in a number of peer-reviewed articles and contributions to edited volumes. In addition, his work focuses on the political economy of labour migration policy and the agency of trade unions and employer associations, spawning a 2008 OUP monograph. As part of an EU FP7 funded research consortium, Menz analyzed the role of trade unions in migrant integration in the labour market. As co-chair of the European Union Studies Association's interest section on political economy, Menz co-directed a research project on the politics of the Eurozone crisis, producing a co-edited special issue of the *Journal of European Integration*. An on-going research project explores the demise of the Delorsian Social Europe agenda since 2000. There is also ongoing work on a book on Comparative Political Economy for which a contract has been secured with OUP. The Department plans more appointments to further bolster this cluster.

The above 4 clusters are core elements of the discipline; in addition, the department has also concentrated energies and resources on 2 areas that extend the boundaries of the discipline.

5. Postcolonialism/Critical Asian Studies: With key research interests centred on China (Dutton), India (Seth), Japan (Pandey), and Africa (Gruffydd Jones) a number of staff are engaged in research on the non-West. We have also made an appointment in Latin American Politics and Culture (Carballo). Such expertise in non-Western politics is unusual outside specialist institutions such as SOAS, and is of high calibre as evidence by (for example):

- Dutton is author or co-author of four books, most recently the Harvard UP monograph, *Beijing Time*, and co-editor of Duke UP's flagship Asia/Pacific book series and Routledge's Postcolonial Politics series. His expertise has been recognized within and beyond the academy in the form of prestigious visiting professorships, including at Griffith University in Australia and Qinghua University, Beijing. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences, chaired the Levenson Committee of ASA (Asian Studies Asociation) in 2008, and is one of only two UK-based scholars ever to have won the Levenson Award for his 2005 book. This is the most prestigious award for Chinese studies worldwide. He has also advised former Australian PM Kevin Rudd on Chinese politics and served on the Audit Review Committee at City University Hong Kong.

- Seth's *Subject Lessons* (2007) was shortlisted for the International Convention of Asian Scholars (ICAS) 2009 prize for best book in the social sciences, and more recently, the flagship journal of the field, the *Journal of Asian Studies*, published a lengthy commissioned essay by him.

– Pandey, who has an international reputation for her work on medieval Japan, has published work on gender and on popular culture in contemporary Japan, while Gruffydd Jones' work critiques notions of the "failed state" and explores the African city.

The research activities of this cluster – including externally funded conferences and seminars in Japan and Brazil - are enabled by the college-wide Centre for Postcolonial Studies, housed in Politics



and led by Seth and Dutton, who are founding co-editors of the leading journal in this interdisciplinary field (*Postcolonial Studies*). Postcolonial theory has hitherto been principally the preserve of English departments; Goldsmiths Politics is playing a key role in situating it within the discipline of Politics. In 2012, the Centre for Postcolonial Studies signed an agreement with Matadero Madrid, the Spanish capital's leading creative and art hub, which has already seen a number of staff members delivering lectures in Madrid. Matadero has agreed to host Politics MA and PhD students for short research sojourns.

6. Art and Politics: This cluster has enabled Politics to push into newer, more heterodox research areas whilst balancing these with practical and creative outcomes. One of its impact case studies – the Artraker Fund - demonstrates how inspiring staff teaching and research has spawned a new initiative recognising 'the political' in various expressions of art worldwide. The Fund endeavours to showcase the role of art in expressing ideas and stimulating debate about political conflict and war.

Behind such innovations are a team of scholars and artists working on interdisciplinary approaches to art, aesthetics and politics in a novel research environment that is opening up interfaces between Politics and the Creative Industries. Close teaching and research links with, for example, Tate Modern [TM] have made possible unique practice-based Politics PhDs, including two AHRC funded Collaborative Doctoral Awards with TM and another practice based PhD with Emily Carr School of Art+Design, Ontario. Individual staff have consolidated such links. John Reardon and David Martin received £22k from the Open Society Initiative and British Council to conduct a two-month series of community-engaged workshops and a 2-day workshop with New Cross People's Library, Somerville Adventure Playground, Art Mongers, Lewisham Young Offenders Team and artists Child, Leeson and Cohen. The project also included a 6-day live performance event on Cambridge Heath Road, London in September 2013 titled <u>Manual Labour: making and making-do</u>; a publication is currently in preparation.

Reardon, a London-based artist and founder of ARTSCHOOL/UK convenes the project - one of two core elements - of the MA Art & Politics which he has developed and co-taught over the last four years with Prof Michael Dutton. At the core of this element are project partners from the academic and non-academic world who have enabled it to be constructed around a series of 'sites' (including e.g. the Museum of London, Millwall FC, London Eye, Portcullis House, Greenwich Foot Tunnel, Brick Lane, the Liberal Jewish Synagogue) which become the focus for context-specific group projects and material outcomes. As an artist, he works collaboratively and generatively through a kind of 'barn raising', or 'community building', each project producing artefacts, publicity and further projects that vary in form and content but use a common collaborative and context-specific approach around an idea, a proposal, or an event. Reardon is currently engaged in work in the UK, Germany and South Korea and over the past five years has received numerous small grants, awards, and residencies totalling c. £50K to undertake this work; sources have included Seoul Art Space (S Korea); DAAD; Korean Arts Council; Incheon Art Platform (Seoul); Arts Council England; Austrian Cultural Forum; Pro Helvetia; and the Henry Moore Foundation.

Bernadette Buckley is Convenor for Art and Politics British International Studies Association; on the Advisory Group for the AHRC-funded research programme, Art + Conflict; a Board member for Tate Papers; Juror for *iraqmemorial.com* and Artraker; and a consultant for the Whitney Museum of Art, NY, 2011. Dragovic-Soso advised the director and actors in Debbie Tucker Green's play *Truth and Reconciliation*, staged at the Royal Court Theatre in 2011. Dutton and Reardon co-authored the introductory essay for PhotoEspana, Madrid 2012.

Future Strategy of the Department: Our strategy for the next six years is to consolidate and build on our key research clusters. Recent appointments in the area of political economy, related to a college initiative to introduce a new Politics, Philosophy & Economics (PPE) degree with an intellectually innovative and politically radical intent, are accompanied by plans to establish a new Centre for Political Economy which will bring together the strengths in economics which exist across various college departments (Politics, Sociology, Media & Comms, Anthropology). Plans for an Asia Centre are well advanced, and are linked to the introduction of two new degrees: BA International Studies with Chinese, jointly with our Confucius Institute; and MA Asian Cultural Studies, jointly with our Centre for Cultural Studies. Between them, this Centre and the existing Centre for Postcolonial Studies will mean that our existing strengths in intellectually innovative approaches to the study of



the non-western world will have substantial financial support and an institutional locus that enables joint work. In particular, we plan to build on our strengths in research on China and to engage in collaborations with our Confucius Institute.

An important aspect of our future plans is to generate additional external funding; in addition to applications for such funding by individual staff, the department will facilitate applications linked to its Centres and Research Units. The Centre for Postcolonial Studies was awarded two grants to Seth in the period covered to enable building networks and holding conferences, and this 'model' will be used to apply for large grants to enable research on the areas covered by these bodies.

c. People

I. Staffing strategy and staff development

Four permanent staff (one a Pro-Warden with a nominal presence in the department) departed or retired in the REF period; Pusca, D. Martin, Reardon, Griffiths, Pandey, Montgomerie, and Ivanova were newly appointed or had contract positions converted into permanent ones. In addition, Carballo, Gunn and Larkins have been appointed to fractional positions. This marks a significant expansion in the size of the department, driven by the strategic considerations outlined above. This expansion is likely to continue with more appointments in political economy, US and UK politics.

Research excellence has been the driving force behind our recruitment and promotions policy. On appointment all staff are assigned a research mentor; all staff participate in an annual performance development review (PDR) process with the HoD, in which research endeavours and achievements are a central component. In addition to publishing, staff are encouraged and expected to organize events - conferences, workshops, exhibitions and so on. Such events are a striking feature of intellectual life at Goldsmiths in general, and contribute to the dynamic and engaged atmosphere of the college. All staff receive a research allowance to enable conference attendance and/or support for fieldwork, modest financial support for grant applications (disbursed by the department research committee) - in addition to the extensive support offered by the college Research Office - and training (including courses run outside of Goldsmiths). All staff are eligible for a term of research leave after every nine terms of teaching, and, if their research requires it, they can elect to defer this and take a longer period of research leave subsequently. Staff who gain external funding are eligible to 'buy out' some of their teaching and administrative responsibilities.

Administrative responsibilities are shared, including by senior staff, who are required to do at least as much, or more, than early career staff. Equality and diversity are treated as critical aspects of staffing policy. The success of our staffing strategies is attested to by two important measures. In 2006, Politics had only three full time female staff members. Now, more than one-third of permanent staff are women. Policies to support research have resulted in staff progressing in their careers; in the period under consideration, Dragovic-Soso, Gruffydd-Jones, Pusca and Pandey (all female staff members) have been promoted to SL or Reader, and J. Martin, Menz, Levy and Newman have all been appointed to professorships.

II. Research students

During this REF period 9 students were awarded PhDs. The number of PhDs awarded is likely to increase substantially in the future. In the academic year 2012-13, there were 23 research students enrolled for either an MPhil or PhD, one of whom was awarded ESRC funding in 2012 from the college's Doctoral Training Centre and another funded by the AHRC, supervised in collaboration with the Tate Modern. In this period the department drew upon its financial reserves to award 3 bursaries (covering tuition and living expenses) to research students. Two earlier bursary winners successfully completed their PhDs in the period.

Research students benefit from intensive supervision, a research seminar series offered by the Graduate School and the opportunity to collaborate with faculty on research projects and publications. Students are encouraged to publish articles and several have done so in journals such as *Theory & Event*, *Global Discourse, Europe-Asia Studies* and *Environment and Planning*. Doctoral students Tazzioli and Lanci are the co-editors of two forthcoming books. A number of students are actively involved in organising college-wide seminars on the work of Foucault and the politics of



immigration, and have participated in events run by RUPE. They are eligible to apply for funding for fieldwork and for seminars/conferences they organize, from department funds as well as from the Graduate School, and they have successfully done so, including for a highly successful conference on 'Migration and Militant Research', papers from which are forthcoming in a special issue of *Postcolonial Studies*.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The department has been very successful in securing funding from domestic and international sources, with grants totalling over £500K awarded during this REF period (research spend to date almost £300k). Sources have included the Leverhulme Foundation, the British Academy, the ESRC, the AHRC, the Ango-Daiwa Foundation, the British Council, the Open Society Foundation, JISC, the European Commission, and the German Academic Exchange Service.

These successes speak to the effectiveness of our research leave policy and the department's intellectually fruitful climate which fosters and supports bids for third party funding. Thus, Pusca secured financial support from the Open Society Foundation in Budapest for her work on Roma in Romania as well as her Open Philosophy project. Dragovic-Soso advised on curriculum reform at the University of Belgrade under the auspices of the Open Society Institute's Higher Education Support Programme. Gruffydd-Jones secured major British Academy funding for her work on governance in the African city. J. Martin attracted a major grant from the Leverhulme Foundation for his on-going research on the politics of rhetoric. Menz received funding from the German Academic Exchange Service for a stay at the Max Planck Institute in Cologne to facilitate his work on the German political economy, and from the British Academy for his work on privatization of migration governance; he also participated in an EU FP7 project on the role of trade unions regarding immigration policy. Applying in connection with the Centre for Postcolonial Studies, Seth was awarded support from the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation and from the British Academy Latin American-Caribbean Linkage Grant to organise conferences in Tokyo, London and Brasilia.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

Our activities here include conventional contributions such as journal editorships, membership of editorial boards, and serving as evaluators of grant proposals, but extend into research 'outreach' and more generally, research and activities that seek to extend the boundaries of the discipline.

Staff undertake fieldwork in China, Japan, India, Ghana, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mozambique, Romania, Italy, Serbia, Austria, Germany, Ireland, France, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the United Kingdom. They have been fellows or visiting professors at Oxford, Columbia, LUISS Rome, the Max Planck Institute, Waseda and Kyoto universities in Japan, Qinghua in China, the Australian National University and Griffith University in Australia, and universities in Zurich, Talinn, Vienna, Leuven, and Ljubljana. In the REF period they have collectively written in excess of 35 articles, edited six books, and written 10 books or monographs. The expertise displayed in the staff publications have generated numerous invitations to serve as keynote speakers at conferences, accept visiting fellowships, consult with media, act as visiting guest professors and present research papers at academic conferences in all six continents.

Some are editors of journals including *Postcolonial Studies* and *Review of African Political Economy*; and book series, e.g. *New Politics of Autonomy* (Rowman & Littlefield International), *Critical Explorations in Contemporary Political Thought* and *Rhetoric, Politics and Society* (Palgrave Macmillan), '*Postcolonial Politics*' (Routledge), and '*Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics and Society*' (Duke University Press). Many others serve on editorial boards of major and widely cited journals, including: *International Political Sociology, Contemporary Political Theory, Asian Studies Review, Social Identities, Pacific Affairs, Politics, and Culture, History Compass, Debatte, Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies.*

We referee papers for a large number of major journals including: American Journal of Political Science, Political Studies, History of Political Thought, Journal of Political Ideologies, BJPIR, Comparative Politics, Foreign Policy Analysis, Journal of International Relations and Development, Policy and Politics, Review of International Studies, and Journal of European Public Policy. We have also reviewed manuscripts and book proposals for prominent academic presses including Oxford,



Cambridge, Manchester, Duke, Chicago, Stanford, Harvard, Hawaii, MIT, as well as for Routledge, Palgrave, Polity, Sage and Verso.

Seth and Dutton are members of the assessment board of the ESRC, Levy is an assessor for Princeton's Institute of Advanced Studies, and members of the department have assessed grant applications for the ESRC, AHRC, the Austrian Science Fund, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Staff are regularly invited to deliver keynote addresses at academic conferences, and have done so in a variety of locations, including Britain, Europe, Australia, the US, Taiwan, China, Pakistan, Japan, Brazil and Argentina. Our contributions to the discipline and research base have been acknowledged in the form of other honours and invitations. In this REF period,

- Griffiths was Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Political Ideologies at Oxford University;
- Pusca was Visiting Fellow at Columbia University;
- **Menz** was Visiting Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies (funded by the German Academic Exchange Service), Nuffield College (Oxford), and the Centre Marc Bloch at Berlin's Humboldt University; and Visiting Professor for Migration Studies at Vienna University;
- **Seth** was visiting Research Professor for three months at the Graduate School of Asian and African Studies, Kyoto University (funded by that university);
- **Dutton** was invited to manage and lead the 2009 Emerging Leaders Summit in Peking University (2009), and was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences;
- Levy was Visiting Jemolo Fellow at Nuffield College, and Visiting Professor at LUISS Rome.
- **Newman** was a funded Visiting Research Fellow at ANU and Visiting Professor of Political Theory at Ljubljana University.
- **Dragovic-Soso** was awarded the Open Society Institute's International Scholar Fellowship, to advise the Political Studies dept at Belgrade University on curriculum design and development.
- **Dutton** and **Seth** were guests of the Taiwanese Academy of Science, invited to Taiwan to advise early career scholars on research and publishing in an increasingly globalized academy.

Staff are expected to contribute to the field by organizing conferences and workshops, and do so with great enthusiasm and often under the auspices of our Centre or Research Units. In 2012 RUPE organized an international conference on "Anarchism Today"; a contract has been secured with Routledge for an edited volume to be published in 2014. Menz organized a workshop at the Libre Universite de Bruxelles in 2012, entitled "Quo vadis, Social Europe?" This was funded by the UK University Association of Contemporary European Studies, supplemented by competitively tendered funding from the Belgian National Science Foundation. In 2012 he also co-organised a 2-day workshop at the College of Europe in Bruges on the crisis of the single European currency. This international workshop with participants from both sides of the Atlantic has led to the publication of a special issue of the Journal of European Integration in 2013. The Centre for Postcolonial Studies organized two conferences in London and Tokyo ("Memory, History, Trauma"), funded by the Anglo-Daiwa Foundation, with Japanese and British-based scholars, and two conferences in London and Brasilia ("The Politics of Knowledge"), funded by the British Academy, with Latin American and British scholars. The latter of these resulted in a special issue of Postcolonial Studies. In 2012, RUPE and RUGD organized an international conference an international conference on Anarchism Today with funding from the PSA.

Staff are active members of disciplinary associations and issue-specific scholarly groups, including of course the PSA but also the UK University Association of Contemporary European Studies, the US-based European Union Studies Association (Menz acts as co-director of its Political Economy Interest Section), and the European-based International Committee on the History and Theory of Historiography (Seth is an elected member of its Executive).

The contributions of staff are not limited to the academic sphere, but extend to the media and to outreach activities. Staff regularly appear in the media, including interviews on BBC Newsnight (Levy), Radio 3 (James Martin), Novara (Newman), Sky and BBC News (Dragovic-Soso), Radio 4 and London's Biggest Conversation (Seth), the Guardian, the FT, the Times, and the Evening Standard (Griffiths), Carta Capital and Veja (Newman), and Channel 4 News (Buckley).