



### Editorial

By Gavin E. L. Hall

***“Information is the oxygen of the modern age”  
Ronald Regan***

Welcome back to the first instalment of the GCfE Newsletter for the 2014/15 academic year. This year the conference theme will be voices, and celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GCfE, which will also be the theme of this editorial.

In 2004, 5 graduate students began “Addiopizzo” with the aim of spreading knowledge and information about the truth behind the Sicilian Mafia’s pizzo tax. Those same students now represent a massive social anti-mafia movement demonstrating the power of our voices both as individuals and a group. More recently, this year we have seen the people of Scotland contemplate the opportunity of seizing independence from the United Kingdom, opting instead to soundly reject it at the ballot box.

This is starkly contrasted against the situation facing the people of Catalonia who are afforded no such luxury and yet the Basque

separatists who had formerly relied on terrorism have lost their voice.

While Europe as a whole, has chosen to turn away from mainstream political parties in significant numbers as confidence is lost in their ability to effect positive change.

Two significant trends emerge for the coming years: increased empowerment for the individual and the dissolution of power. Information may be the key to unlocking the modern world but it is disseminated through voice. Whether that be through word of mouth, a newspaper article, a tweet or a grand political campaign. Everyone has a voice and how it is used is up to us.

In this issue of the newsletter, the first for this academic year, we shall introduce ourselves to you as a Committee. This issue also includes our annual conference call for papers and a call for newsletter articles.

### Stay up-to-date with our plans and events...

Website: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/gcfe](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/gcfe)

Blog: <http://gcfebham.wordpress.com/>

Email: [gcfe@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:gcfe@contacts.bham.ac.uk)



[twitter.com/gcfe\\_bham](https://twitter.com/gcfe_bham)



[facebook.com/graduatecentreforeurope](https://facebook.com/graduatecentreforeurope)



## GCfE STEERING COMMITTEE 2014/2015

### CO-CHAIRS



**Emma Gardner** is the Co-Chair (Events) of the Graduate Centre for Europe. She is currently a second year PhD student within the Department of Management, Birmingham Business School and holds a BA (Hons) Modern Languages and MSc International Business also from the University of Birmingham. Emma's research is looking at the future challenges and opportunities of business and professional service firms, with a particular focus on the accountancy industry, in order to assess how firms can best equip themselves to respond to these effectively.

**Zainab Naqvi** is the Co-Chair (Publications) of the Graduate Centre for Europe. She joined Birmingham Law School as an Economic and Social Research Council Doctoral Training Centre funded research student following the completion of her Masters qualification. Her research seeks to examine the viability of incorporating polygamy into the United Kingdom's legal definition of marriage from a feminist perspective. The research will be undertaken through an examination of English case law pertaining to polygamy. The project also involves a qualitative study of women's experiences of and attitudes towards polygamous and monogamous marriages along with a discussion of any possible reforms to existing law on this area.

### ACADEMIC DIRECTOR



**Dr Nick Martin** has served as the Academic Director for the forum since its 2005 inception. He is a reader in European Intellectual History in the Department of Modern Languages as well as the Director for the Institute for German Studies. His research and teaching interests include modern German history, culture and the history of political violence in 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany. He completed his first degree and doctoral research at the University of Oxford. He held a Junior Research Fellowship of Jesus College, lectured at the University of St Andrews and held visiting professorships at both California State University Long Beach (2004) and Loyola University

Maryland (2011-12). Contact: [n.c.martin@bham.ac.uk](mailto:n.c.martin@bham.ac.uk).

### EVENTS AND JOURNAL TEAM



**Enrico Vanino** is currently a 3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD student in the Department of Economics at the University of Birmingham under the supervision of Professor Robert Elliott and Dr Liza Jabbour. His research is focusing on the changing patterns of European international trade, in particular vis-à-vis the new emerging countries such as China. He is holding an MSc (2011) in International Economics always from the University of Padua. During his studies he has been exchange student both in France (Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis – 2008) and in China (Guangzhou University – 2011). In 2014 he spent a period at the Hong Kong University as visiting researcher. Before starting his PhD in Birmingham he has acquired professional experiences working in Brussels first for the Italian

Permanent Representation to the EU (2010) and then for the European Commission DG Trade in the Far East Unit (2012). Contacts: [exv200@bham.ac.uk](mailto:exv200@bham.ac.uk)



**Gavin E L Hall** is currently a 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD student in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Birmingham. His research is focusing on the role of NATO, as an institution, in the provision of cyber-security. He completed an MA in Terrorism, International Crime & Global Security with Distinction at Coventry University in 2013, where he won the Postgraduate Course Tutors Prize and completed the Global Leaders Programme. His dissertation focused on whether the UK's cyber-security strategy represented a missed opportunity. He holds a BA(Hons) in War Studies from King' College, London. Contacts: [geh430@bham.ac.uk](mailto:geh430@bham.ac.uk), [@GavinELHall](https://twitter.com/GavinELHall) and <http://www.gavinellhall.com>.



**Fabrizio Di Maio** is currently a 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD student in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Birmingham under the supervision of Dr Clodagh Brook and Dr Charlotte Ross. His doctoral project offers the first complete overview of Wu Ming, a collective of four contemporary Italian writers of "cross-historical" novels. He graduated from the University of Rome 3 (Italy) in 2002, obtained a MA in Comparative Literature at the University of Sorbonne Paris IV (France) in 2005, and a PhD in Italian Studies at the University of Rome 2 (Italy) in 2010. He has been an Erasmus student in France at the University of Angers in 2000. He taught Italian Language and Literature at the University of Gabès (Tunisia) in 2010-2012, and at the University of Grenoble (France) in 2012-2013. He has published two books and several articles on contemporary Italian writers like Pasolini, Pavese and Ottieri. Contact: [fxd445@bham.ac.uk](mailto:fxd445@bham.ac.uk)



**Ivor Bolton** is currently in the final year of his PhD with the Institute for German Studies at the University of Birmingham. He is researching the representation of the German Democratic Republic through museums and memorials. In his first year as part of the GCfE (2012-2013) he served as the Co-Chair (Journal) managing the committee's publications team. He has continued on with the committee working with the events and publications committees, organising workshops/seminars and the annual conference, editing the *Birmingham Journal for Europe* and contributing to the forum's new newsletter publication. Ivor is enthusiastic about European studies and endeavors to support EU interest in educational curriculum. Contact: [IMB127@bham.ac.uk](mailto:IMB127@bham.ac.uk).



**Amir Qamar** is at the end of the second year of his PhD within the University of Birmingham Business School. He holds an MSc in Economic Policy & International Business and a BSc (Hons) in Economics, both from the University of Birmingham. His research is funded by the Midlands Excellence Organisational Improvement (MidEx) Programme. Amir is researching into the impact of various manufacturing strategies on business performance levels in the automotive sector. In particular, he aims to understand how the West Midlands automotive industry has developed manufacturing strategies to compete with a volatile and competitive market. This work will be invaluable to businesses determining which strategy to undertake within their own organisation. Contact: [AXQ861@bham.ac.uk](mailto:AXQ861@bham.ac.uk)



**Gail E. Mobley** is a third year PhD student in English Literature supervised by Dr Hugh Adlington. Her research discusses ideas about the development of the English literary canon in the seventeenth-century. Approaching the topic from both literary and historical perspectives, her thesis investigates early modern intellectual perspectives on literary preservation and authorship in England. Her aim is to shed light on how the canons that still focus literary scholarship and curricula currently were shaped before the term canon was applicable to literature. Originally from California, Gail completed her BA at the University of California at Davis and her MA in English Literature at the University of Birmingham. In 2013/2014 she was the Co-Chair (Publications) for the GCfE. In this capacity Gail served as the Chief Editor for the *Birmingham Journal for Europe* overseeing the publication of the third issue. In addition to this she also launched both a blog page for the forum as well as this newsletter. Contacts: [gem087@bham.ac.uk](mailto:gem087@bham.ac.uk), [@Gemobley\\_UobPhD](https://twitter.com/Gemobley_UobPhD) and [www.birmingham.ac.uk/gailmobley](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/gailmobley).

## Graduate Centre for Europe Newsletter Call for Articles

Are you engaged by a particular debate or event happening in Europe? If so, then we would like to hear from you!

The Graduate Centre for Europe Committee invites short article contributions for our next newsletter. Articles can be either informative or opinion pieces, and potential topics might include discussions about European projects and politics, a conference review, details about an upcoming workshop/seminar or a short brief on your research. Submissions should be approximately 500 words in length and will be published in our March newsletter. For an idea of articles submitted to our previous news bulletins please see the news tab on our webpage available here:

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/gcfe/news/index.aspx>.

So if you have something you want to say or share about Europe or your work then please send us a short piece by 15<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

## Advertising Events with the Centre

The GCfE blog can be found at: <https://gcfebham.wordpress.com/>. If you would like us to advertise an event, such as an on-going seminar or an upcoming conference on our webpage please send us an email with: event type (e.g. conference, workshop, seminar), name, relevant discipline(s), date(s)/venue (if applicable) and webpage/contact info.

Additionally, if you want us to post a more detailed event blurb (including a flier/image) on our main page we will be happy to do this as long as the event/cfp/etc. is relevant research in/about Europe and the information is sent to us at least a week in advance.



## Call for Papers

### **Graduate Centre for Europe**

University of Birmingham

**9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

*“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”*

Søren Kierkegaard

### **Dissident Voices? Europe Past, Present and Future**

25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Looking back over 2014, it can be said that it was a remarkable year for the United Kingdom. With Scotland’s referendum on independence and as the centenary of World War One, it was a year in which the British public contemplated huge future change, while remembering the events of many decades ago. In Europe, tensions and transitions in Ukraine dominated the headlines and elections to the European Parliament took centre stage.

The coming year will be very interesting both from a UK and European perspective. The month of May will see the UK’s next general election, which may not only change the political landscape of the British Isles, but have repercussions for Europe given the promise of an in-out referendum on Europe if the Conservative Party win by a majority.

In Europe’s Year of Development we welcome discussion on the past, the present, and what the future may hold. The Graduate Centre for Europe’s Ninth Annual Conference aims to promote dynamic cross-disciplinary dialogue, foster valuable links between postgraduates and academics across different areas, and develop new and exciting ways of thinking within ‘European’ research.

We would welcome proposals for individual papers and panels on any aspect of travel, tourism and space within Europe in relation to politics, economics, history, law, literature, education, geography, environmental sciences etc. Panels have been proposed on the following themes and further panels or individual papers are also invited on, but are certainly not limited to the following topics:

- Voices of the Past: Lessons from History
- European Policy In Practice
- Voices on the Page
- Debate and Dialogue across Europe

Participants are also encouraged to submit their conference papers for publication in the Graduate Centre for Europe's postgraduate journal, the *Birmingham Journal for Europe*.

Lunch and refreshments will be provided throughout the conference, as well as a conference dinner on the first evening by invitation only. A limited number of bursaries will also be available to assist with travel and accommodation expenses.

If you would like to present at the conference, please send an abstract of 200-300 words, along with your contact details, to [gcf@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:gcf@contacts.bham.ac.uk) by **23rd January 2015**.