'Global Societies' 1st Annual Student Conference

Posted on Tuesday 14th June 2011

This is the first annual conference organized by the POLSIS department and is dedicated entirely to students. This year, the conference offers both undergraduates and taught postgraduates a fantastic opportunity to debate contemporary themes that permeate the dynamics of "global societies". This conference is hence designed to stimulate a multi-disciplinary debate across a wide range of topics which currently animate and challenge the whole body of knowledge regarding 'global societies' (thus emphasizing the need for further and sustained research).

By encouraging students to submit their own papers for peer presentations, this conference endeavours to allow them to freely engage in debate and critical discussion, thus boosting their vocationally relevant skills. Above all, the spirit of this conference is embodied in the belief of promoting student development by giving students the incentive to freely express their valuable opinions and insights on key themes early in their career, in an encouraging, interactive and stimulating environment.

In addition, we are pleased to announce (in order of appearance) that we have secured the following 'expert speakers' for the conference:

Keynote Speaker – Diane Abbott MP

We are lucky enough to have Diane Abbott, MP, Shadow Minister for Public Health and generally popular political personality as our keynote speaker. Diane has been an MP since 1987, in which time she has developed a reputation for standing up for civil liberties, speaking out on issues such as tuition fees and the Iraq war. She has been a frequent guest on the BBC's *This Week*, and has appeared on other prominent TV shows. Diane has also founded the *London Schools and the Black Child* initiative, which aims to raise the educational achievement of black children in London. Aside from politics, Diane has also impressively performed Chopin's Prelude No. 4 in E minor to an audience of piano enthusiasts. The conference committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Diane for coming to speak to us.

Keynote Speaker – Dr Peter Kerr (/staff/profiles/government-society/kerr-peter.aspx)

Dr Peter Kerr, who I'm sure we're all familiar with, has kindly agreed to give a short speech and to give out the prizes (see below.) Peter is the author of *Postwar British Politics: From Conflict to Consensus* and has written numerous journal articles on British Politics.

Keynote Speaker – Professor James Curran

James Curran is Director of the Goldsmiths Leverhulme Media Research Centre, supported by a £1.25 million grant from the Leverhulme Trust. He has held a personal Chair at Goldsmiths since 1989.

Professor Curran's attendance has been organised by the Sociology SSLC, and we would like to thank them for agreeing to combine their event with ours and giving everybody a chance to see Professor Curran's Lecture. In addition, we would, of course, also like to thank Professor Curran for coming.

The Conference Committee

- Ioana-Cristina Moraru – 1st year representative and Finance Officer
- Jon Robinson – 2nd year representative and Logistics Officer
- Deborah Bazeley – 3rd year representative and Marketing Officer
- Ranieri Maglione – Taught PG representative and Executive Officer
- **Dr Emma Foster (/staff/profiles/government-society/foster-emma.aspx)** – Staff Representative and Conference Coordinator

Structure of the Student Presentations

The structure of the student presentations is divided into four main panels - International Security, Political Economy, Perspectives on Gender and Sexuality and respectively, Culture, Diversity and the International. The abstracts associated with these presentations can be found at the end of this programme.

Prizes

- The best three speeches from across the panels will receive prizes of £100. This will be judged by an independent academic panel.
- The Sociology SSLC is giving away two Valefest tickets to the best question from the audience, so please ask away!

Student Political Groups "Question Time" debate

As you will notice on the schedule of events (featured on the following page), we have also arranged a "Question Time" style debate between Birmingham University Conservative Future, Birmingham University Liberal Democrats, and Birmingham University Labour Society. Two representatives from each society will be appearing on a panel for an hour-long debate/argument. We would like to strongly encourage the audience to be as involved as possible and ask as many questions as they can come up with.

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