Welcome to this Summer edition of the School of Humanities Newsletter. We are thrilled for this edition to be focusing on the School’s commitment to Equality and Diversity. We hope that you enjoy reading the newsletter, and are inspired to commit even more to Equality and Diversity!

Welcome to the Summer edition HUMS newsletter

Developing an Inclusive Environment for Students

There are various ways in which we can think about developing an inclusive environment within Humanities. Good questions include the following: How accepting and inclusive are we of our colleagues across the School and beyond? How carefully do we think about differences of experience, background, subject matter and opinion? How diverse and culturally aware are our curricula and teaching examples? How are we setting the tone in the School?

The environment we foster will be influenced by our level (or lack) of awareness in relation to aspects of diversity, both obvious and more subtle. Can you list six obvious ‘categories’ of diversity? How about three more subtle aspects of difference? Can we address hitherto unconscious bias in relation to groups of students and/or colleagues? (See implicit.harvard.edu, where you can register to find out your implicit associ-
HUMS - Equality & Diversity updates

...cont. from page 1

ations about race, gender, sexual orientation, mental health and other topics.) How current is our awareness of the broad range of disabilities, evident (and sometimes less evident) across the School?

Experiences of inclusivity, and therefore student confidence and achievement across the board, can be fostered if tutors give an explicit welcome to all at the outset of any teaching unit. Welcoming varied views, experiences and backgrounds can create a positive expectation of diversity as a valuable resource. We might also want to prepare for receiving non-inclusive statements in class, and how we might thoughtfully address them.

Best teaching practice includes sending information out in advance where possible. When this happens, students are free to manipulate the information into a preferred format and process at their own speed. Building gaps and pauses into teaching also assists many students to effectively synthesise information. Mediate is another means of supporting students with a variety of potential impairments likely to affect their work. The development of varied teaching and learning activities will support diverse preferences and abilities. It’s important to consider which of our assessment processes might empower some students whilst perhaps disadvantaging others.

Our physical environment is key in terms of fostering experiences of inclusivity. Are teaching and other spaces welcoming, both physically (for anyone with a mobility issue, for instance) and in other ways? In terms of welcoming students more personally, what judgments might we be making about students who ‘fail’ (or rather find themselves unable) to attend? Our aim should be to keep all communications with our students, and our colleagues, as courteous, thoughtful and professional as possible.

The central question, for me, concerns how we might continue to remove barriers in our working relationships, in order to foster a School culture that has diversity, inclusivity and mindfulness of others at its core.

- Sarah Serning

“Why is my curriculum white?”

‘Why Is My Curriculum White?’ began at UCL, where students began to question the violent Eurocentricity they found rooted within their courses, and hoped to inspire a nation-wide conversation that re-examined the colonial legacy under which the UK’s educational institutions operate. The concept of ‘whiteness’ is associated with the enforcement of a moral and intellectual hierarchy, one that leads BME students and staff to feel marginalised, alienated and fundamentally excluded. Often topics to do with race are side-lined and sectioned as elective – they are never incorporated into the compulsory curriculum. We can see the effects of this materialisation in the form of the BME attainment gap, whereby students from BME backgrounds are 20% less likely to achieve a first or 2.1 degree compared to their white counterparts, despite having arrived at university with the same grades. BME staff, too, are also grossly misrepresented in the higher education sector, constituting only 1.54% of the total academic population: there are only 17 professors in this country who are black women. WIMCW came to Bristol this year, as the BME Association united to run a series of events that began with a panel discussion in early December. The event sold out, and it was clear that people had been waiting for this conversation to come to Bristol for some time. The guest speakers included Dr. Madhu Krishnan, Dr. Edson Burton and Malia Bouattia (NUS President-elect), who each shed light on their experiences being taught by a whitewashed curriculum and then later being involved in whitewashed educational institutions. The event was a huge success, many audience members got a chance to vent their frustrations with the education they’d received, and it was truly a testament to the power of grassroots activism in bringing about institutional change. White curriculums are limited, untruthful and racist – it is high time we took decolonisation seriously.

- Radhika Jani (1st yr English student and co-BME leader of the SU.)

NB: Special credit to Noha Abou El Magd (BME Officer) - the main driving force behind organising the WIMCW event series

HUMS - News & Events

Student successes

- Third year English and Philosophy student Bea Paterson Achenbach has had a paper accepted to the CHLA Children’s Literature conference in Ohio in June. The paper is called ‘Shaping the Woman through animation: the case of Snow White’ and is about the transition from text to screen of Snow White, looking at the (sometimes accidental) alterations made by Disney and the impact they have had on subsequent Disney culture and the wider expectations of female beauty.
- Faith Douglas, 2nd Year English student, has been awarded a University Research Committee Interdisciplinary Research Internship giving her 8 weeks of paid research (£270/week) time during the coming summer to work on “A social psychological approach to Literature to investigate factors influencing character identification” under the supervision of John Lee (English) and Justin Park (Experimental Psychology)

Staff successes

- Ralph Pite’s edition of Thomas Hardy’s Jude the Obscure has just been published as the Third Norton critical edition. See more details here: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/english/news/2016/judetheobscure.html
- Josie Gill has been awarded Briggstow Institute seed corn funding (as Co-I), together with PI Professor Julia O’Connell Bourdon in SPAHS for the collaboration ‘Slavery: Interdisciplinary Dialogue on its Memory and Afterlives’. More details here: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/humanities/news/josie-gill-briggstow-funding.html

Transition: Urban Landscapes from the RWA collection

19 May—19 June at RWA, Queen’s Road, Clifton

This exhibition explores the relationship between industrialisation and a sense of transition that can be found within the urban environment. Showcasing a selection of works chosen from the RWA’s permanent collection, the exhibition explores the various ways in which artists have represented the industrial heritage of this country or responded to the changing urban environment around them.

More details: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arte/events/2016/may/transition-rwa-collection.html

INFO: Current recruitment processes

- Teaching Fellow in Ancient History (Presentations & interviews 15th June)
- Lecturer in History of Middle East and/or the Islamic World (Presentations & interviews 28th June)
- Lecturer in History of Migration and/or Slavery (Presentations & interviews 29th June)

Recent recruitments:

- Lecturer in Modern British History (Announcement to follow shortly)
- Lecturer in East Asian Religions (Announcement to follow shortly)
- Chair in Latin (Announcement to follow shortly)

HUMS at the Bristol 10k run—Sunday 15th May

Staff and students from the School and Faculty participated in the Great Bristol 10k, an annual run for charity, which was held around the Harbour and foreshores on Sunday 15 May. Training and organisation was support- ed by Sarah Buttery for the HUMS Rockets and Team History led by Erika Hanna. Massive congratulations to all who competed!!!
Conversations with Iphigenia: Agamemnon & Clytemnestra

Old Council Chambers, Wills Memorial Building, Tuesday 17 May, 5-8pm

Bristol will host Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, one of four adaptations of classic tragedy Iphigenia to be performed throughout May. Guest speakers will include Vanda Zajko (Bristol), Katja Krebs (Bristol), David Bullen (By Jove Theatre/Royal Holloway).

For more information here or on the IGRC website or contact emma.cole@bristol.ac.uk.

The Poetry
Arch Lunchtime Readings
6th-10th June, 1-2pm.
Ivy Gate, Royal Fort Gardens
- 6th June: Launch Reading
- 7th June: Bristol Poetry
- 8th June: Shearsman Poets
- 9th June: Raceme
- 10th June: Closing Reading

For more information, see the Bristol Poetry Institute website.

ANIMALS: Non-Human and Human Alike

IAS Public Lecture—The Wild Within
17th May, 5.15 pm. Peel Lecture Theatre.
Geographical Sciences, University Road

Literature’s Animals conference
18th May, 11am—6.30pm. 3-5 Woodland Road
Panel Discussion - Animals and People – is coexistence possible?
24th May, 4-6 pm, Bristol Zoo

Messiaen’s Music of Animals
24th May, 7.30 pm, Clifton College, Guthrie Road

The Future of Animal Rights
24th May, 8 - 9 pm, Watershed

Animals under Capitalism Conference
25th May, 9am–3.30pm. The Old Council Chamber, Wills Memorial Building
Postgraduate Roundtable—Animals under Capitalism
26th May, 9.30 - 12.30 pm, Verdon-Smith Room, Royal Fort House

Animals in Art
26th May, 1pm-4pm. Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery

Discovery Through Drawing
26th May, 2 - 3.30 pm. Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery

Animals in Art Panel Discussion
26th May, 4 - 5.30 pm, Verdon-Smith Room, Royal Fort House

All events are free, but please note booking is required

More information on all of these events here.

Don’t miss!
8th June @ 2pm Next Equality & Diversity talk. Top speaker to be confirmed shortly.

Widening Participation

This year, in addition to Access to Bristol, and coordinating teaching activities for Years 7-11 in 3 local schools (St Katherine’s, Pill: Colham; Fairfield High) as part of the new Faculty-level Aspire to Arts scheme, have been engaged with a number of projects from across the School which are partially or wholly funded from the School’s widening participation budget.

Ways Into History is a short course offered in the History Department over 15 evenings. It is designed as a pathway into study for local, mature students. Dr. Richard Stone from History leads the course, with contributions from Madge Dresser, Edson Burton and Mark Horton. In its first year of running, it has recruited 16 students, 4 of whom received a bursary from the School WP fund. Students plan to progress to the Foundation Year in Arts and Humanities, and the BA and MA in History.

In History of Art, two workshops have been delivered within the Cabot Learning Federation, one at Kings Oak Academy where Catherine Hunt together with three undergraduates delivered a workshop to year 10 and year 12 students on the subject of portraiture, and another at Bath Community Academy, where Catherine and two undergraduates presented a talk to two groups of year 9 students about Futurism. Lizzie Robles has also organised a meeting with the Roche Foundation to support the ARTculation scheme, which is a well-established and nationwide competition in public speaking on the subject of art history.

The Bristol Classics for All outreach programme, now in its fifth year, sends undergraduate and graduate students from the Classics department out into local schools that have no history of teaching classical subjects but who are looking to establish a place for them in their curriculum. We try to make the project beneficial for all its participants, and to this end we select our teaching fellows on the basis of their passion for teaching and offer them tailored training to support them in delivering the course and in pursuing a teaching career. As part of their training our teaching fellows devise ten-course sessions to cover the different aspects of the ancient world as a way of capturing the interest of the pupils; off the back of these courses we have assisted local schools in starting to offer Latin teaching and GCSEs in Classical Civilisation.

For some years the English Literature and Creative Writing Short Courses team have designed and delivered courses in collaboration with local community groups, and this year we have supported them in developing a partnership with the Babbasa Youth Empowerment Project. Babbasa work with young people from local disadvantaged communities, and we will be running a course with them over the summer, analysing literary and media responses to migration.

Meanwhile we have also committed funds to a planned programme of events provisionally titled ‘Atlantic Shakespeare’. We hope that this will lead to a number of workshops with partner schools in the autumn, focusing on what Shakespeare makes of the spaces between Africa, the Caribbean, and Bristol. Students will examine The Tempest in the context of Bristol’s colonial past and present, and will develop creative responses in collaboration with local writers.

- David Leech

Of Invisibility and Inclusiveness

Would you disclose an invisible disability in the workplace? Maybe one that causes only temporary or intermittent difficulties, like some forms of epilepsy? A couple of years ago, I took a closer look at why many UK undergraduates with epilepsy decide not to disclose their condition in their university applications. Discrimination and patronizing attitudes were often cited in their interviews as negative past experiences that informed non-disclosure.

It was a call for anticipatory equality practices, rather than ad hoc adjustments.

Going over my own teaching methods, I had to admit that I expected my students to have perfect term memory to absorb new concepts and vocabulary, and constantly concentrate for at least the first hour of class. There are many useful resources that will help you embed inclusive practices in your curriculum, and I thoroughly recommend many of them in the resource list.

If you would like to attend, please sign up using this doodle poll. Please RSVP by Weds 25th May.

- Maria Vaccarella
The first lunch for the Global Feminisms Arts Research Cluster was held on 20 April. Colleagues from across Arts as well as Law were represented. Members introduced themselves, their research interests, and their thoughts about directions the cluster might take. From the conversation, it became apparent that two strands of activity need to be cultivated simultaneously: scholarship and teaching, and work focused on mechanisms for achieving institutional change. It was clear almost immediately that women in the academy still need better systems of support and strategies for affecting institutional advances to counter a pervasive and systemic culture of sexism and racism. These might include better mentoring relationships, coordinating more with the gender research cluster in Social Sciences, organizing reading groups and writing workshops, learning tools for managing bias in the workplace, and seeking funding for projects focused on gender. We noted how important it felt for us to be creating a space for women to meet regularly, collaborate, laugh and discuss work in an environment that seemed inherently more free from conflict, competition and micro-aggression than we have become used to in some other parts of our working lives. There was also a lot of energy for developing new theoretical and pedagogical models for thinking about and teaching feminisms in global contexts, and a desire for more interdisciplinary and cross-institutional work, as well as motivation for recruiting and training more young scholars in the fields of feminism, gender and sexuality. We hope to seek funding through the DTP and GW4 to support these kinds of projects. Longer term visions include initiating a multidiscipline MA programme, and the development of a Bristol Institute for Global Feminisms, so that the study of gender, sexuality and feminism can be integrated into the intellectual life and ethos of the university.

Next meeting we will begin to organize our first event, an international, multidiscipline conference called ‘What Would a Feminist University Look Like?’, to be held in the summer/autumn 2017. A special thanks to Tara Puri for posing that question in the first place, one that engendered much imaginative joy in the room. It is our hope that this conference will both combine activist elements for thinking about how to achieve institutional change and foster international collaboration on new theoretical and scholarly explorations of the study of global feminisms.

- Rowena Kennedy-Epstein and Jane Wright

Equality and Violence against Women

What does it mean for men and women to be equal? And how successfully has women’s liberation been implemented? These are the central questions of my research into gender-based violence in Germany after 1945. Violence against women has been a central issue for women’s rights activists, campaigning against the systemic failure to listen and respond effectively to women’s claims of abuse. As recent cases and research, such as the Ghomeshi case in Canada and the findings of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, have highlighted even after 45 years of feminist activism, survivors of domestic assault and sexual violence still face significant stumbling blocks when trying to access legal and social support mechanisms. What I am interested in examining in my work is the ways in which creating gender equality and protecting women from violence has often led to the entrenchment of a limited vision of women’s rights, where women are only afforded protection from assault based on ideas of their feminine vulnerability and defencelessness. In doing so, the base inequalities that enable the ongoing abuse of women are upheld and sustained.

- Jane Freeland

Embracing Diversity: Investigating the Benefits of Inclusive Teaching Practices

Richard Stone presented a conference paper on his pedagogical research entitled ‘Embracing Diversity: Investigating the Benefits of Inclusive Teaching Practices’. It was at the Academic Staff Development’s inaugural ‘Going Public’ symposium on 13th April. You can see more on the Symposium Website [here](#), and Richard’s presentation is available online [here](#).

HUMS E&D information available

Notes from all E&D Committee meetings are available to all HUMS staff on Blackboard under the “School Committee Minutes” heading. You can also find there useful links in relation to several E&D topics, including slides from talks given previously as part of the School’s E&D series.

HUMS - Equality & Diversity updates

Global Feminisms Research Cluster

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- Rowena Kennedy-Epstein and Jane Wright

IDEAL Community Action

This year I am working one day per week with IDEAL Community Action ([http://www.ideal-cl.org.uk/](http://www.ideal-cl.org.uk/)), a charity in Barton Hill, running reading groups and short courses. Barton Hill is part of the most deprived ward in the southwest of England, with very high levels of child poverty and unemployment. It is also an area with a historic link to the university: the Barton Hill Settlement was founded there by the university in 1911 and at one time university staff and students lived there and delivered courses, and there was a small library on site. IDEAL works with individuals whose lives have become chaotic for a variety of reasons, including addiction, homelessness, long-term unemployment and offending. Their main project is the Domino Effect, which encourages participants not only to learn new skills but also to pass them on to others. The work I am doing with IDEAL is part of my wider interest in how literature is read in community settings. This partnership with IDEAL started through a student project. Damien Moran, who was a student on the English Literature and Community Engagement (ELCE) degree, set up a reading group as part of the Domino Effect in 2011.

Since then, several ELCE students have run the reading group and Domino now includes regular philosophy courses (run by PhD students) and a new enterprise course, initiated by the Business Base Camp at the university. Since 2011, dozens of participants from IDEAL have progressed on to short courses in the School, including Reading English Literature and Ways Into History, and also on to the Foundation Year and on to other colleges and universities. I’ve learnt an enormous amount from working with IDEAL this year and hope to be able to bring some of their ideas about education and participation back into my teaching in English next year.

- Tom Sperlinger