



SPIRe Newsletter



What's new in this issue?

As we move through an exciting academic term, we're thrilled to share some important updates on recent events, faculty achievements, and news from our community.

The highlights of this term include but are not limited to Dublin Political Theory Workshop, graduate students induction, ECPR Conference hosted by SPIRe, prizes and projects by SPIRe faculty, public events and panel discussions, and spotlights on alumni and internship experiences.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to staying in touch with you in future!

Editor, Elifcan Celebi

Dublin Political Theory Workshop

The Dublin Political Theory Workshop provides a longstanding forum for those interested in political theory. Typically meeting on Friday afternoons at UCD, the workshop attracts early career and senior researchers in Dublin and beyond. Our SPIRe faculty take an active role in organising the workshops. The primary focus is on work-in-progress by members, with pre-circulated papers offering a platform for thorough feedback and lively discussion. For the current schedule, please visit dublinptworkshop.wordpress.com.



Induction for master's students

The autumn term began on September 10, 2024, with a well-attended induction for incoming master's students in Newman G109. Students engaged actively, asking questions and connecting with program coordinators. Academic and administrative staff introduced themselves to the students and answered their questions.



SPIRe hosted ECPR General Conference 2024

SPIRe hosted the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference in the summer at UCD. It is the second-largest event of its kind globally. Over 1,500 political scientists from Europe and beyond gathered for four days.

The former President of Ireland Mary Robinson gave the keynote speech on "Climate, Nature, and Conflict: The Unspoken Interactions That Require Urgent Actions," which urged hope and collective action in facing the climate crisis.

Outgoing ECPR chairperson David Farrell, SPIRe staff Catriona Dowd, Jos Dornschneider-Elkink, Alex Dukalskis, and Joseph Dillon served on the Local Organising Committee. Nearly 40 UCD students served as Conference Ambassadors contributing to the event's success. The 2025 General Conference will be hosted by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece.



1,500 political scientists from Europe and beyond attended the conference.

Shifting political landscape in the Middle East

Vincent Durac lectures in Middle East politics in the UCD SPIRe, and in the last two months he actively contributed to national media on numerous occasions to discuss the shifting political and military landscape in the Middle East, in the form of opinion pieces for the [Irish Times](#) and several news and current affairs programmes [on RTE radio](#) and television. His work underscores commitment to public engagement and informed discussion on current affairs.



UCD Politics & International Relations Society's "Intro to Irish Politics" Panel Discussion

On Monday, September 16th, UCD's Politics and International Relations Society (PoISoc) hosted an "Introduction to Irish Politics" panel discussion. Representatives from various Irish political parties provided insights into the current political landscape, party priorities, and plans for the upcoming year.



Dave Banks is awarded the 2024 Basil Chubb Prize for my PhD thesis at this year's PSAI (Political Science Association of Ireland) conference.

His research interests include Sport for Peace and Development; Social Identity; Political Psychology. In his PhD thesis, Dave investigates the Effectiveness of Sports Reconciliation Projects on Post-Conflict Society.



PSAI 2024 Basil Chubb Prize received by Dave Banks



Alumni Spotlight

Pauline Lowe, Senior Public Affairs Advisor at Zurich Insurance

Pauline Lowe, a 2018 graduate of UCD's MEconSc in European Public Affairs and Law, now leads climate policy at Zurich Insurance, focusing on net-zero initiatives and policy engagement.

Reflecting on her time at UCD, she credits the program's interdisciplinary approach and her internship with Transparency International for honing her problem-solving skills and building a professional network. Her advice to current students: "Stay focused on the bigger picture. Treat every experience as a stepping stone, and build both skills and connections along the way."



ERC Project "Democracy Challenged" Started

Aidan Regan's European Research Council (ERC) consolidator grant worth €2 million for a 5-year project started. 'Democracy Challenged - How Corporate Tax Avoidance Fuels the Wealth Inequalities that Undermine Democracy.' It will investigate how lawyers and accountants exercise political power to create the complex structures of multinational profit-shifting, examine the role of the media, and assess the political consequences for democracy and wealth inequality.

The inter-disciplinary research team (pictured above) includes two senior ERC research fellows: Rafael Quintero Godinez (PhD in Law) and Oscar Barrera Rodríguez (PhD in Economics), two doctoral researchers on SPIRE's Quantitative and Computational Social Science PhD programme: Linus Zechlin and Lakshmi Sunil Menon, and a project manager: Lorraine Marrey.

Two new members joined the SPIRe faculty

Nikita Khokhlov joined SPIRe as a Teaching Fellow in September 2024. Nikita works on comparative authoritarianism, political communication and elite behaviour with a regional focus on Russia and countries of the former USSR. Nikita has recently completed his PhD at Dublin City University. Before joining UCD, he was a lecturer at DCU and Trinity College Dublin. His publications have been published or accepted for publication in *American Journal of Political Science*, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *Europe-Asia Studies* and *Cross-Cultural Research*.



Elifcan Celebi joined SPIRe as an Assistant Professor in January 2024. Elifcan was previously a Postdoc at the University of Cologne. She received her PhD from Max Planck Institute, Germany. Her research focuses on the politics of social policy, feminist political economy and de-democratisation. Her recent academic podcast [Transnational Care](#) investigates complex links between migration, labor, and technology within the global care economy.



Public Event

Inside US Elections, by the Centre for Democracy Research

The Centre for Democracy Research hosted a special public event on October 22nd, featuring Biko Koenig from the University of San Diego and Shane Greer, co-owner of Campaigns and Elections magazine.

Two speakers shared insights on the present and future of electoral politics in the US. They discussed various aspects of running US election campaigns and electoral politics drawing from their experiences in political ethnography, publishing and consultancy.



Gendered Dimensions of Hunger in Peacebuilding Project Meeting

As part of her Irish Research Council-funded project SPIRe staff member, Caitriona Dowd, welcomed research partners from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg to Dublin in June. The team met with policy and civil society stakeholders to disseminate findings from [the project's recent working paper and policy brief](#) on the integration of food security in the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

The research team met with the Oversight Group on Ireland's National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security and representatives of the South African Embassy in Ireland to discuss the project's findings and their implications for gender and security policy. For more information, please visit: www.genderhungerpeace.com.

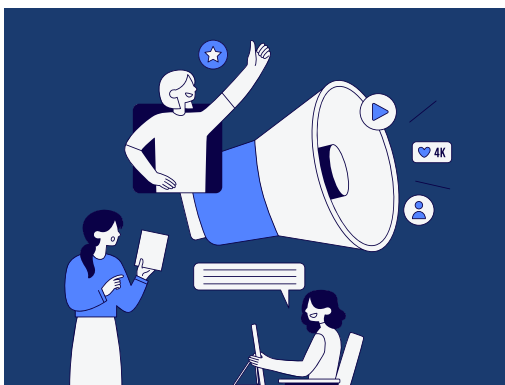
Mariia is a Communications and Research intern at the Latin America Solidarity Centre in Dublin. She updates social media and the website of the centre, manages correspondence with the partners and researches on global issues for the article. When we asked about her internship experience, she said:

“The research part of my internship is quite connected with my Politics and Economics studies, the last research I did was about the trial five El Salvador water defenders from Santa Marta. Also, I consider that the communications experience is necessary for many professional fields and is a transferable skill to have. Most governmental assistance jobs require around two years of Communications experience and this internship is a start towards the competence. Being a student gives you time to learn and try different options. If it didn't work - at least you know you did your best.”



Internship Spotlight

Mariia Kurova, Politics and Economics, 3rd year student



Alumni Network

Stay engaged!

As an important part of our strategy for the coming years, we want to significantly increase engagement with our alumni network. You can stay in touch with us through our new LinkedIn group:

www.linkedin.com/groups/12728409



ucd.ie/politics



politicalscience.ie



[ucdpolitics](https://www.facebook.com/ucdpolitics)



ucdspire



ucdpolitics@sciences.social

New mailing list !

In addition to this, we now also have a new mailing list for alumni of the School of Politics and International Relations - and its original constituent units, the Department of Politics, the Centre for Development Studies, and the Dublin European Institute - which you can sign up to here: www.ucd.ie/spire/about/alumni

Please note that subscription to the SPIRe alumni list is entirely voluntary. It is different from UCD's general alumni list. Any request under GDPR to end communication on the UCD general list will not affect membership on the SPIRe list. You can withdraw separately from the SPIRe list at any time.