The IVth Year Honours thesis is about 18,000 words based on original research and exposition by the student. It is examined at a professional standard. Students also complete units of study in the IVth year Honours. Many are enrolled in combined award courses.

Honours graduates from Government and International relations have gone on to careers as problem solvers in public service, international affairs, public policy and administration, consultancy, journalism and media, lobbying organisations – domestic and international, and more.

Recent graduates have been employed by Aristocrat Technologies, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australian Federal Police, Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority, Bearing Point, BT Financial Group, Citi-Group, Clayton Utz, Clubs NSW, Commonwealth Bank, Department of Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Housing NSW, Elektroskandia AB, Fox Communications, GHC entertainment, HarperCollins, Macquarie Group, NSW Parliament House, RailCorp, SBS Television, Westpac Banking, and World Vision.

Many graduates pursue a post-graduate degree shortly after graduation. Honours Graduates in Government comprise a long list of distinguished contributors to Australian society and its place in the region and the world. They contribute to all walks of life.

Previous panellists at Best and Brightest have been Rhodes Scholars, Menzies Fellows and have pursued higher degrees at Harvard University, Oxford University, Cambridge, Yale University, Queen Mary (London) University, the University of Toronto, and the University of Sydney. A former panellist is now a documentary film-maker in London, a senior advisor to a cabinet minister, a portfolio manager at a major accounting firm, a policy advisor to the NSW Farmers’ Association, an ABC producer, and several are legal practitioners.
### IVth Year Honours Program

#### Welcome and call to order

MC: Eda Gunaydin - current PhD candidate in the Department of Government and International Relations, 2017 Best and Brightest presenter and University medallist.

#### The Panellists

1. Gemma Viney  
   From Coexistence to Collective Resistance: A Study of Gomeroi and Farming Environmental Justice Coalitions in Rural NSW

2. Jennifer Khamo  
   Inverting Western Statehood: The Islamic State’s Counter-Theory of the Sovereign

#### Interim Question Time  -  first two speakers

3. Ryan Hawkins  
   Towards Monarchic Democracy? Heralding the American Era of Unmanned War Machines

4. Harriet Goers  
   Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A Game Theoretic Analysis of Australia’s Role in the South China Sea Dispute

5. Olivia Aitken  
   Australia Day and #ChangeTheDate: A Critical Whiteness Analysis

#### General Question Time  -  all speakers

#### Closing Remarks

#### Reception at Nicholson Museum
Gemma Viney

From Coexistence to Collective Resistance: A Study of Gomeroi and Farming Environmental Justice Coalitions in Rural NSW

This thesis investigates environmental justice networks emerging in North-West NSW between Gomeroi and farming communities in opposition to extractive industry projects being developed in their regions. It employs a content and thematic analysis of community submissions regarding extractive industry projects to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

This study finds that these communities have mobilised around concepts of environmental justice, establishing organic environmental justice movements that have rarely been observed in Australia. What is notable about these relationships, is the history of conflict and colonization that preceded them. Existing environmental justice scholarship discusses the collective mobilisation of communities who share some basis of demographic overlap. In contrast, the Gomeroi and farming relationships have both historical and ongoing divisions based on their respective roles as the colonised and the colonisers.

This thesis examines how shared experiences and concerns have facilitated a cross-cultural dialogue, bridging the historical division between these communities.

- Supervisor: Professor David Schlosberg
Jennifer Khamo

Inverting Western Statehood: The Islamic State’s Counter-Theory of the Sovereign

Is the Islamic State a state? In attempting to settle this question, Western political commentators have made implicit assumptions about the meaning of both sovereignty and statehood, taking both terms in their broadly ‘Westphalian’ or ‘modern’ sense. This has obscured the crucial fact that the Islamic State has its own unique conception of both sovereignty and the state, one that is, significantly, a comprehensive and deliberate inversion of the Western understanding of statehood.

Analysing the group’s primary literature helps remedy this oversight, revealing a model of sovereignty that is not only the reverse-image of Westphalia, but also a wholesale subversion of the core political principles often attached to sovereignty in the Western political imagination, like the liberal notion of consent to government. This engagement with Western sovereignty suggests the Islamic State is reacting against modern ways of theorising politics, which, I argue, are reified in the state. Its theory, therefore, is properly a counter-theory of sovereignty.

— Supervisor: Associate Professor Alex Lefebvre
This thesis investigates America’s use of unmanned combat aerial vehicles. The revolutionary technology has become the centrepiece of U.S. counterterrorism strategy and is the latest development in the trend towards military tactics that distance soldiers and society from the battlefield. The case poses a puzzle for conventional understandings of democracy regarding the relationship between the state and society in conflict.

This study sheds light on this central theoretical issue by investigating the under-examined nexus between democracy, war, and unmanned systems. It explores the implications of three inter-related phenomena: the state’s reliance on society in combat, society’s incentive to influence conflict policy, and the relative moral positions of the state and society in the context of international force.

The thesis demonstrates the necessity for continued enquiry into the impact of unmanned weapons in order to preserve the proper functioning of democracy in an era of automated war machines.

− Supervisor: Dr Gil Merom
This thesis examines how Australia, as a middle power, can affect the outcome of US-China great power competition in the South China Sea dispute.

To do this it develops a hybrid game theoretic model of interstate bargaining, using Robert Powell’s conflict model incorporating elements of James Fearon’s rationalist model of war. This provides an analytical tool for considering the likely effect of a commitment by Australia to join future US-led military action against China in the South China Sea on a bargained outcome to the dispute.

The model demonstrates that Australia can significantly change the dynamics of the great powers’ conflict bargaining. By committing support to US-led military action against China prior to the outbreak of war, Australia would shift the balance of power towards the US in the event of war.

However, this signalling is not costless for Australia and there are several challenges that it, as a middle power, must overcome for this to be in its best interest.

– Supervisor: Dr Ryan Griffiths
Olivia Aitken

Australia Day and #ChangeTheDate: A Critical Whiteness Analysis

This thesis is driven first by a desire to understand the themes that underpin the current White led movement to change the date of Australia Day. Secondly, to ascertain whether those themes fit within an existing trend of symbolic action by White people on behalf of Aboriginal peoples within Australia.

Employing critical Whiteness theory as a guide, it analyses both the movement itself and the resistance to it in order to establish the state of anti-racist action in this country within the context of past action. It re-centres on White people and highlights the ongoing anxiety they experience around the interaction of unceded Aboriginal sovereignty with the settler state. In doing so, it contributes to existing critical Whiteness scholarship with a new loose framework against which future anti-racist action can be measured. It also identifies a number of shortcomings in Australia’s current and past social movement endeavours.

- Supervisor: Professor Ariadne Vromen
The Department of Government and International Relations

The Department of Government and International relations is a large and active group of students, teachers, and researchers covering all aspects of government and politics from the local to the national to the international.

Its work reflects current developments and activities in the ever-changing world of politics, but it offers in-depth perspectives that go to the enduring structures that determine the day-to-day reality of government, politics, and international relations. Politics is always local and it is never only local. That is the paradox that political science unpacks. Everything arises in a local context and everything has parallels, roots, and implications beyond the local in time or in space. Terrorism, human rights, globalization, voting and elections, environmentalism, immigration, defence, ethics, leadership, power, gender, the rise of China, these are only some of the specifics analysed in the department.

At the same time, the department does not lose sight of the fundamentals and so Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, Harriet Taylor, Ayn Rand, Hannah Arendt, and other enduring thinkers also play a part in teaching and research.

In 1910 the university first recognized political science and it has been offered continuously since then. When students join us today they are also joining the thousands of alumni who have majored or completed Honours in Government and International relations, or a post graduate degree in either a professional or research masters, or a Ph.D.

We prepare students for life, not just the first job!

Find out more

The Department has a small suite of prizes for outstanding students like those who presented tonight. These prizes do much to encourage students to do their best work, but, sadly, most are underfunded.

To discuss a financial contribution contact: Dr Michael Jackson, Emeritus Professor at michael.jackson@sydney.edu.au or on 0412 194 672
Retired Associate Professor Michael Hogan’s history of the Department of Government and International Relations is available from Connor Court Publishing

- www.connorcourt.com

It includes profiles of many graduates and staff members, as well as an account of the evolution of the Department from the Twentieth Century to the Twenty-First. In addition, Hogan shows how the Department fostered the systematic study of government and politics in other Australian universities.

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