



Phelan United States Centre

Annual Report
2025/26



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FACING PAGE

TOP LEFT: *Graduation celebrations on campus in July 2025*

TOP RIGHT: *LSE students on campus, by the Saw Swee Hock Student Centre, the Parish Hall and the Globe*

BOTTOM LEFT: *LSE students in class*

BOTTOM RIGHT: *The main entrance of the Old Building on Houghton Street, LSE campus*

ABOVE

TOP: *An LSE graduate celebrates with a family member at graduation*

BOTTOM: *A student in front of an LSE sign*

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Director's Message

“There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen.” This remark, often attributed to Vladimir Lenin, is frequently invoked to describe the breathtaking pace of the Trump administration’s efforts to reshape everything from trade to immigration to the federal bureaucracy. These efforts have proven deeply divisive and in several critical cases, such as Trump’s sweeping imposition of tariffs, the Courts have struck them down. Last year was a consequential one for America and for the world, and a very busy year for the Phelan United States Centre.

Image © Maria Moore



Much of the Phelan US Centre’s programming in 2025/26 focused on Trump’s presidency and its international and domestic implications. In addition to our regular programming, we ran a new public lecture series entitled *America’s changing role in the world*, bringing a wide range of international experts to LSE to discuss and debate the Trump administration’s foreign policies and what they mean at home as well as abroad. These events attracted scores of faculty, students and alumni here at LSE, as well as hundreds joining virtually from across the globe.

In this year’s annual report, we spotlight the research achievements of two Centre Affiliates, Professor Stephanie Rickard of the Department of Government and Dr Imaobong Umoren of the Department of International History. We also highlight the fruits of the Centre’s collaboration with Princeton University’s *Reimagining world order* project: the edited volume *Rethinking the 1990s: Liberal World Order-Building in the Aftermath of the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2025). This year also marks the launch of a new collaborative research initiative between the Centre and Tsinghua University’s Institute of International Relations, focused on global sustainability governance.

The Centre’s blog and podcast series continue to bring timely policy-relevant research and insights by world-leading scholars and analysts to our large, online global audience. Our student-facing programming welcomed an exciting new cohort of undergraduate research assistants, PhD summer grant winners and master’s student essayists. We’ve also expanded. Dr James Morrison of the Department of International Relations has joined the Centre as Associate Director, and in a new role, this year we also welcomed an Events Manager to the team.

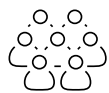
The Centre celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. It seems like only yesterday we were thinking about how to establish ourselves as the go-to source in London for analysis and commentary about the US. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many talented and dedicated faculty and staff who, along with our students and alumni, have done so much over the past decade to make the Phelan US Centre the success it is today.

Professor Peter Trubowitz

Director, Phelan United States Centre

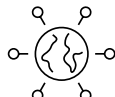
The Phelan US Centre in Numbers

Public Lectures (2025/26)



222

Average in-person audience



55

Total number of countries reached



169,298

Total audio downloads

Research and Centre Affiliates (2025/26)



57

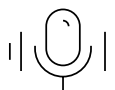
Centre Affiliate journal articles published



106

Centre Affiliate media appearances

Podcasts (2025/26)



26

Phelan US Centre podcast episodes released



180,368

Listens

Social Media Followers



7,377

X (Twitter)



1,783

Instagram



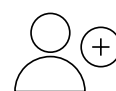
3,257

Facebook



3,550

LinkedIn



15,967

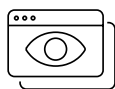
Total followers across all platforms

USAPP Blog (2025 Calendar Year)



282

Total original posts



538,434

Views



288,739

US-based pageviews



Public Engagement

Speakers at the event, End of the America era? Looking back, looking forward, 2 April 2026. LEFT TO RIGHT: G. John Ikenberry (Princeton University), Ayşe Zarakol (University of Cambridge), Stephanie Rickard (LSE Department of Government), Michael Cox (LSE IDEAS) and Peter Trubowitz, chair (Phelan US Centre)

In 2025/26 the Phelan United States Centre continued to bring together academics from across the globe in conversation about the political, economic and social issues facing the United States. As the US entered its 250th year, the Phelan US Centre has convened a series of seven public lectures under the theme *America's changing role in the world*. Speakers in this series included Charles Kupchan, Anne-Marie Slaughter and Sir Niall Ferguson. This year's LSE Festival was held with the theme *How to save the planet* and included our event *Saving the planet in an age of geopolitical rivalry*. This year also saw the Phelan US Centre support conferences including with Tsinghua University and host five seminars in our ongoing US-China series.

The Wenger Distinguished Lecture

The Phelan US Centre's Wenger Distinguished Lectures examine the role of the US in the global economy. Expert speakers including academics, business leaders and policymakers offer insights on subjects ranging from international trade to law and institutions.

How to help left behind regions and workers

The decline of manufacturing and the acceleration of technological disruption have concentrated joblessness in distressed regions and blocked many workers from access to good jobs. In this lecture Gordon Hanson addressed the origins of job loss, the reasons for its geographic concentration, and what we've learned about policies intended to help left-behind places.

Speaker Gordon Hanson
(Harvard University)

Chair Peter Trubowitz

Date 28 October 2025

“You’ve got all these unemployed workers who are willing to work for low wages. Don’t firms want to come in and hire them? No. Firms don’t like places with high unemployment because other things are broken in those places.”

Gordon Hanson, Peter Wertheim Professor in Urban Policy at Harvard Kennedy School

Image © iStockphoto



BELOW: Portland, OR, USA, 19 October 2020: Street scene outside the Central City Concern's Employment Access Center in downtown Portland amid the pandemic. Central City Concern is a nonprofit based in Portland, Oregon, that provides solutions to ending homelessness and achieving self-sufficiency.

America's Changing Role in the World Lecture Series

As the United States marked its 250th year, in 2025/26 the Phelan US Centre's *America's changing role in the world* lecture series convened academic experts from the US and abroad to discuss America's changing global role.

The promise and peril of Trump's America first



Speaker Charles Kupchan
(Georgetown University)
Chair Peter Trubowitz
Date 8 October 2025

America adrift: the end of the east coast foreign policy elite



Speaker Anne-Marie
Slaughter (New America)
Chair Peter Trubowitz
Date 12 November 2025

“America First policies are producing deep turbulence within Europe and Asia. And the outcome of that is really, we can argue about this, the deeper interconnections that are bound to emerge between Europe and Asia.”

C. Raja Mohan, Distinguished Professor,
O.P. Jindal Global University

America first and the future of Eurasian geopolitics



Speaker C. Raja Mohan (O.P. Jindal Global University)
Chair Peter Trubowitz
Date 26 November 2025

American foreign policy in the age of Trump



Image © James O'Gara

Speaker Walter Russell Mead
(Hudson Institute)
Chair Peter Trubowitz
Date 19 February 2026

“You have this European abdication on laws and norms and rules and institutions precisely at a time in which nationalism and the far right and populism are growing not just in America, but in Europe itself.”

Dr Nathalie Tocci, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali

Donald Trump and the unmaking of Europe



Image © Leonardo Puccini

Speaker Nathalie Tocci
(Istituto Affari Internazionali)
Chair Peter Trubowitz
Date 12 March 2026

The foreign policy of Donald Trump in historical perspective



Image © Chris Proctor

Speaker Sir Niall Ferguson (Stanford University)
Chair Peter Trubowitz
Date 7 May 2026

End of the America era? Looking back, looking forward

Speakers G. John Ikenberry (Princeton University), Ayşe Zarakol (University of Cambridge), Stephanie Rickard (LSE Department of Government), Michael Cox (LSE IDEAS)
Chair Peter Trubowitz
Date 2 April 2026



Image © 2026 LSE/Andrew Lunn

**AMERICA'S
CHANGING ROLE
IN THE WORLD**

LSE Festival 2026

Taking place from 15 to 20 June 2026, this year's LSE Festival's theme was *How to save the planet* and explored the impact of global challenges such as the climate crisis, conflict and artificial intelligence (AI). With these challenges transforming the way and where we live, and how our societies function, the LSE Festival 2026 looked at what we can be doing to save the Earth, its people and environment.

Saving the planet in an age of geopolitical rivalry

Is the return of great power rivalry eroding the collective capacity and willingness of the international community to address environmental, financial, and public health crises globally? Leading international relations experts from LSE and Tsinghua University discussed the global resurgence of geopolitical competition and the implications of this for strategies sustainability leaders can adopt to sustain international cooperation over climate, trade, and health in our increasingly fractured world.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Robert Falkner (LSE Department of International Relations), Tang Xiaoyang (Tsinghua University), Stephanie Rickard (LSE Department of Government), Catherine Boone (LSE Department of Government and Department of International Development), Zhao Kejin (Tsinghua University), and Peter Trubowitz, chair (Phelan US Centre)

Speakers Tang Xiaoyang (Tsinghua University), Zhao Kejin (Tsinghua University), Catherine Boone (LSE Department of Government and Department of International Development), Robert Falkner (LSE Department of International Relations), Stephanie Rickard (LSE Department of Government)

Chair Peter Trubowitz

Date 19 June 2026

LSE Tsinghua Conference – Global sustainability governance in an age of international fracture

Academic Leads Robert Falkner (LSE Department of International Relations), Peter Trubowitz (LSE Department of International Relations and Phelan US Centre), Li Bin (Tsinghua University), Sun Xuefeng (Tsinghua University)
Date 18-19 June 2026

Geopolitics is transforming the international landscape for global sustainability governance. The US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, rising trade restrictions on green technologies, intensifying US-China competition for critical resources essential to energy transitions, and growing resistance to funding global climate challenges are eroding the international community's capacity to act collectively. There is an urgent need to better understand how the resurgence of great power politics is affecting sustainability governance.

Marking the beginning of a two-year collaborative research project, this conference brought together leading scholars of world politics from LSE and Tsinghua University. The conference started the process of mapping out geopolitical challenges and possible policy solutions in three crucial research areas: managing great power rivalry's impact on sustainability; sustaining institutional cooperation in a post-multilateral world; and mitigating potential adverse effects of resource competition on the world's resource-rich regions.

Statecraft in an Age of Fracture Conference

In partnership with Academic Exchange, the Phelan US Centre convened the *Statecraft in an Age of Fracture* Conference, bringing together a group of scholars from Europe, Israel, and the United States to explore the relationship between domestic polarisation and foreign policy through a comparative lens.

Academic Lead Peter Trubowitz (LSE Department of International Relations and Phelan US Centre)

Date 5-6 February 2026

Each of these regions has experienced significant domestic polarisation in recent years, though the specific sources and manifestations vary, as do

the implications for foreign policy. Conference discussions focused on how various forms of polarisation – partisan, ideological, cultural – impact the making and substance of foreign policy. The reverse was also explored: the impact of statecraft and the international environment on domestic political division.

Image © iStockphoto.com



Phelan US Centre Small Conference

This year, the Phelan US Centre hosted a small conference organised by Centre Affiliate Professor Stephanie Rickard of the LSE Department of Government.

The global economy in a changing world order

Academic Leads

Stephanie Rickard (LSE Department of Government) and Edward D. Mansfield (Christopher H. Browne Center for International Politics, University of Pennsylvania).

Date

28-29 May 2026

The global economy is undergoing profound transformation. Geopolitical realignments, rising economic nationalism, climate disruption, trade fragmentation, and technological upheaval are reshaping the foundations of international economic relations. Recent trends point to a US retreat from global economic leadership and a turn towards economic nationalism and protectionism. US industrial policy has become more assertive, emphasising domestic manufacturing and technological self-sufficiency, particularly in strategic sectors like semiconductors and clean energy.

At the same time, Washington is actively working to realign global economic networks, encouraging allies and partners to “de-risk” from China and adopt parallel economic strategies while asking

them to commit to restraints on export restrictions. These shifts have profound implications for multilateral institutions, global supply chains, and strategic economic alliances.

This conference directly engaged with these developments, convening leading scholars from the United States and the United Kingdom to explore the implications of US economic nationalism and strategic competition with China for the future of global economic governance. Conference sessions also considered how these policies are reshaping the US-UK transatlantic relationship and influencing economic policymaking in other advanced industrial economies. The conference is also expected to lead to publications in international peer-reviewed journals.

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Image © istockphoto.com

US-China Seminar Series

Since beginning in 2021, the Phelan US Centre Seminar Series on US-China relations has hosted dozens of expert speakers on important topics relating to the US-China relationship. These seminars have three broad themes: Geopolitics and strategic competition; Global supply chains, multinational enterprises and trade politics; and Technological innovation and domestic institutions.

Series co-chairs:
David Soskice
(LSE Department
of Government)
and Peter
Trubowitz

Autocracy 2.0: how China's rise reinvented tyranny

Speaker Jennifer Lind (Dartmouth College)

Date 14 October 2025

US-China relations in an era of illiberalism

Speaker Scott Kennedy (Center for
Strategic and International Studies)

Date 30 October 2025

China's three personality problem

Speaker Todd Hall (University of Oxford)

Date 18 November 2025

China under siege: how Beijing has changed its perception and responses to the United States

Speaker Yu Jie (Chatham House)

Date 3 March 2026

EU-China relations in the Trump era

Speaker Noah Barkin (Rhodium Group)

Date 24 March 2026

Spotlight on Centre Affiliates



Professor Stephanie Rickard

Dr Stephanie Rickard is a Professor of Political Economy in the Department of Government at LSE, a Centre Affiliate of the Phelan United States Centre and a member of the Centre's Management Committee. Professor Rickard's research and teaching interests lie at the intersection of politics and international economics, including trade agreements, subsidies, industrial policy and international financial rescues.

Professor Rickard is a member of the UK's Trade and Agriculture Commission, an independent member of the Parliamentary and Political Service Honours Committee, a member of the Executive Committee and Board of *International Organization*, and a member of the Editorial Board at the *American Political Science Review*. Professor Rickard has also appeared on various media outlets to discuss events in the global economy, including *Bloomberg* and the UK BBC Radio 4's flagship *Today* programme.

In April 2026 Professor Rickard spoke at the Phelan US Centre panel event, *End of the America era? Looking back, looking forward*, as part of the Centre's *America's changing role in the world* lecture series. On 28 to 29 May, Professor Rickard organised the conference, *The global economy in a changing world order* at LSE. The conference, supported by a Small Conference Grant from the Phelan US Centre, convened leading scholars from the United States and the United Kingdom.

In October 2023, Professor Rickard spoke on the panel session *Populism and democratic capitalism* as part of the conference, *The future of capitalism in an age of insecurity*, which also featured Nobel laureate, Professor Daron Acemoglu.

Professor Rickard's book, *Spending to Win* (Cambridge University Press, 2018) was the winner of the 2019 American Political Science Association – International Political Science Association Theodore J. Lowi First Book Award and the 2021 International Political Economy Society Best Book Award.



Dr Imaobong Umoren

Dr Imaobong Umoren is an Associate Professor in the Department of International History at LSE. Dr Umoren is also a Phelan US Centre Affiliate and sits on the Centre's Management Committee. Dr Umoren's research interests, publications, and teaching focus on histories of racism, women, gender, activism and political thought in the Caribbean, Britain and the US focusing on the 19th and 20th centuries.

In October 2023 Dr Umoren chaired the Phelan US Centre event, *Recovering enslaved peoples' perspectives from archives, literature, and art* with Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr and Sir Isaac Julien CBE, where Professor Gates, Jr was awarded an honorary LSE degree.

Dr Umoren has been a faculty lead as part of the Phelan US Centre's undergraduate research assistantship (UGRA) programme, working with LSE undergraduate students in 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2021/22.

Dr Umoren's latest book, published in June 2025, *Empire Without End: A New History of Britain and the Caribbean*, explores the long-entangled relationship between Britain and the Anglophone Caribbean and received the 2020-2021 British Library Eccles Institute and Hay Festival Writer's Award. Dr Umoren's current book project is a political biography of Eugenia Charles, the former Prime Minister of Dominica.

Dr Umoren's first book, *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (University of California Press), published in 2018, won the 2019 Women's History Network Book Prize and was shortlisted for the Pauli Murray Book Prize in Black Intellectual History by the African American Intellectual History Society. She has also made frequent media appearances, including for BBC Radio 3 and BBC One.

In 2020/21 Dr Umoren was awarded a Leverhulme Research Fellowship for her project on Eugenia Charles, the first female Prime Minister in the Anglophone Caribbean and LSE alumna.



Image © 2025 LSE/Adam Razvi

Digital Content Innovation

In 2025/26 the Phelan United States Centre's digital platforms, the USAPP (*USA Politics and Policy*) blog, and *The Ballpark* podcast continued to expand their audiences and support the Centre's status as the go-to UK hub for academic commentary on the US. Our widely read USAPP blog continues to post timely commentary on current US issues, including the 2026 midterm elections, and *The Ballpark* podcast spoke to dozens of US academic experts and practitioners and gained tens of thousands of new listeners. These platforms are important, well respected, and popular forums for academics, activists, and policymakers globally to discuss critical contemporary issues about the United States, and to share their research and perspectives with an international audience.

ABOVE:
Students at the
LSE Centre Building
during Welcome
Week for the 2025/26
academic year

USA Politics and Policy (USAPP) Blog



540k

Number of views
in 2025



280

Original articles
published



52%

Audience based
in the US

About LSE USAPP

The Phelan US Centre's [USAPP – USA Politics and Policy](#) blog enjoyed a successful 12th year as one of LSE's most popular blog platforms, with nearly 540,000 pageviews and over 280 original articles in 2025. The blog includes timely commentary on the United States and its role in the world, and summaries of new social science research from a growing community of US-based and international scholars. This year, the United States continued to be USAPP's most important audience, with a 52 per cent audience share. Nineteen per cent of USAPP's audience was from the UK, illustrating the blog's continued importance as a UK-based hub for commentary and insights into the US.

In June 2025 USAPP launched a new multi-year series, *The 2026 Midterms*, which now includes more than 30 posts. This popular series brings together commentary from US and internationally-based authors on the 2026 midterm elections including state and local elections. USAPP has also continued its series on President Donald Trump's second term, posting commentary from academic experts, including Phelan US Centre Affiliates and other LSE faculty,

on important domestic and international events including the US Supreme Court, the US' relationships with China, Russia and the EU, and on US actions in Venezuela and Iran.

Throughout this year, USAPP's authors have included academics, researchers, and activists who have collaborated with the blog team to produce articles that are easy to understand and reach a wide audience, such as students, policymakers, and scholars. USAPP has also been able to support Early Career Researchers at LSE and beyond and LSE PhD students, including recipients in the Centre's PhD Summer Research Grant scheme, publishing seven articles from PhD students this year. The USAPP blog has continued to help promote the Centre's activities by featuring essays from its master's student competition on America's changing role in the world and publishing reports by LSE master's students about Phelan US Centre events.

USAPP impact

The USAPP blog continues to have a significant footprint at LSE and beyond. In 2025, USAPP article pageviews accounted for 10 per cent of the pageviews of, and featured the most and fourth most widely read LSE articles across, LSE's 42 active blogs. USAPP also continued its significant media role this year, with a number of USAPP authors reporting that their articles have helped them to engage more closely with the media, including interviews. USAPP has also continued to be cited in policy reports including from the UK Parliament and Public Services International. In 2025/26 USAPP articles were mentioned in popular outlets such as *Slate*, the *Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, *Rolling Stone*, *Wired*, *Salon* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.



Image © Shutterstock

The Ballpark Podcast

In 2026, along with the Phelan US Centre, *The Ballpark* podcast celebrated its 10th anniversary. This year has seen significant growth in listenership for *The Ballpark* with over 180,000 podcast listens for 2025/26, compared with 50,000 for the previous year. Maintaining our biweekly publication schedule, *The Ballpark* published 26 episodes this year, continuing to feature in-depth interviews with academics and policymakers discussing issues related to US domestic policy and America's changing role in the world. The podcast also interviewed speakers in the Centre's *America's changing role in the world* seminar series and has continued to host conversations with speakers in our US-China seminar series.

Photo © Dekler Ph on Unsplash



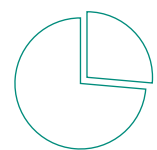
Highlights from this year include a discussion of LSE's long-standing relationship with the United States for the School's 130th anniversary celebrations with Professor Michael Cox, as well as interviews with Professor Anne-Marie Slaughter (New America), Professor Gordon Hanson (Harvard Kennedy School) and Professor Charles Kupchan (Georgetown University).

This year, *The Ballpark* also continued its new series on artificial intelligence (AI) and the United States. Across seven episodes this timely series has explored the implications of AI technology for US society and politics covering how AI is

affecting society through topics such as deepfakes, the workplace and workplace automation, and intellectual property.

The Ballpark and supporting Phelan US Centre programmes

The Ballpark continued to support the Phelan US Centre's work through interviews with Visiting Professors Ian Shapiro and Kathleen McNamara, enabling them to promote their work to a wide non-academic audience. *The Ballpark* has also continued to publish interviews with the winner and runners-up in our master's students essay competition.



180,000

In 2025/26 there were over 180,000 podcast listens, up from 50,000 the previous year



Student Programmes

The Phelan United States Centre continued our popular student-focused programmes throughout 2025/26. We welcomed a new cohort of nine Undergraduate Research Assistants, who have collaborated with Centre Affiliates on interdisciplinary research aimed at addressing challenges facing the United States. Our PhD Summer Research Grants scheme also continued to support PhD students from across LSE departments to undertake internationally-oriented research on the US. Our essay competition for master's students, now in its fourth year, invited participants to analyse how democratic citizenship can shape America's global role.

ABOVE:
LSE students with the
globe on campus

Undergraduate Research Assistantships

In 2025/26 the Phelan US Centre's Undergraduate Research Assistantship (UGRA) programme entered its ninth year of pairing students from across LSE departments to work with our Centre Affiliates on their research or project. This past year, Centre Affiliates have been supported by nine undergraduate students. Students undertook tasks such as social media analysis, working with text databases, literature reviews, and case study research.

1. Winning, losing or drawing: legal disputes over US public lands

Research Assistants: Emma Giuliana Giacchini Heijnen, Department of Government; Ishaan Devalla, Department of International History
Faculty Research Lead: Professor Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey, Department of Government

2. How governments build domestic coalitions for trade liberalisation

Research Assistant: Nicolas Valladolid, Department of International Relations
Faculty Research Lead: Dr Boram Lee, Department of International Relations

3. How prisoners of war (POWs) shape war termination processes and domestic interpretations of conflict

Research Assistant: Thuy Khuc, General Course
Faculty Research Lead: Dr Jonny Hall, Department of International Relations

4. How economic inequality-related TikTok content influences political attitudes and polarisation in the US

Research Assistant: Blanche Boomla, Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science
Faculty Research Lead: Dr Melissa Sands, Department of Government

5. Incumbency and infrastructure for climate change adaptation in the coastal US

Research Assistant: Maria Huang, General Course
Faculty Research Lead: Dr Rebecca Elliott, Department of Sociology

6. Anglo-American financial cooperation and the "passing of the torch" from the UK to the US

Research Assistant: Xin Yi Mu, Department of Economic History
Faculty Research Lead: Dr James Morrison, Department of International History

7. Night work and the politics of freedom

Research Assistant: Francesca de Grazia, Department of Government
Faculty Research Lead: Professor Paul Apostolidis, Department of Government

8. Development challenges in US territories and freely associated states

Research Assistant: Iyla Joy Ceelen Davis, General Course
Faculty Research Lead: Dr Ryan Centner, Department of Geography and Environment

9. The State of the States

Research Assistant: Charlie Bradshaw, Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method
Faculty Research Leads: Professor Peter Trubowitz and Chris Gilson, Phelan United States Centre



2025/26 UGRA programme participants. LEFT TO RIGHT: Nicolas Valladolid (Department of International Relations), Ishaan Devalla (Department of International History), Emma Giuliana Giacchini Heijnen (Department of Government), Francesca de Grazia (Department of Government), Xin Yi Mu (Department of Economic History), Charlie Bradshaw (Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method), Blanche Boomla (Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science), Maria Huang (General Course).

Centre PhD Summer Research Grants

The Phelan US Centre's PhD Summer Research Grant scheme, now in its eighth year, has consistently helped PhD students from various LSE departments conduct internationally-focused research on the United States. These grants offer LSE's early career scholars resources to assist them with their research projects.

Research Grants in 2026

1. Deals and debt in New York City's rental housing market Pratap Jayaram, Department of Sociology

2. Discovering Brazil: class, adventure, and US global engagement in the late 19th century Joss Harrison, Department of International History

3. Climate policies of abandonment: interrogating the uneven everyday impacts of climate progress in precarious places Allison Reilly, Department of Geography and Environment

4. Networks, neighborhoods and place-based identities across the urban-rural divide and their effect on political behavior Lara Charlotte Kuberka, Department of Government

5. Domestic drumbeats, distant echoes: assessing alliance credibility from the outside in Alexander Davies, Department of International Relations

6. Simulated contact, real empathy: can dialogues with AI correct Americans' misconceptions about immigrants at scale? Chris Cai, Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science

7. Expedited drug approvals, demographic representation, and FDA governance Constance Viehbeck, Department of Health Policy

8. Mediated civic becoming: Filipino American cultivation of civic agency through social media Stephanie Rodriguez, Department of Media and Communications

9. Digital finance's double edge: when transparency, complexity, and capability undermine the systems they should strengthen Philipp Gagel, Department of Management

Image © 2026 Tanusha Muwa/LSE



LEFT TO RIGHT, BOTTOM TO TOP: 2025/26 PhD Summer Research Grant recipients. Allison Reilly, Stephanie Rodriguez, Pratap Jayaram, Joss Harrison, Philipp Gagel, Arianna Parisi (2024/25 grant recipient), Lara Charlotte Kuberka and Constance Viehbeck

“It’s a fantastic programme that provides invaluable support, not just financially, but also by lending the Centre’s prestige to your work. It creates opportunities to elevate your research and connect with a broader community.”

Ali Glisson, PhD Grant recipient, 2024/25

Master's Students Essay Competition: What role can democratic citizenry play in shaping America's role in the world as it enters its 250th year?

In 2026 the United States marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. For the US, during this important year, there are increasingly questions about its role in the world and how its citizens can shape its domestic and foreign policy.

For its fourth year, the Phelan US Centre's master's students essay competition addressed America's changing role in the world. This year's prompt was: "What role can democratic citizenry play in shaping America's role in the world as it enters its 250th year?" Master's students from across LSE's departments were encouraged to enter, with essays interpreting this prompt from a variety of perspectives. Phelan US Centre staff conducted the initial shortlisting of essays, which were then sent to a faculty judging panel, which included Professor Peter Trubowitz.

Alexander Minford (LSE School of Public Policy) wrote the winning essay, "The most important act of American global leadership may be winning a local primary" and received a £500 prize. The runners up, Iman Shaikh (LSE Department of Government), and Kristýna Šimonová (LSE Department of International Relations), each received a £250 prize. All three essays were posted on the Centre's USAPP blog.

In April 2026 the winning student, Alexander Minford, presented his essay to members of the British-American Parliamentary Group (BAPG) in the UK Parliament in Westminster, including The Lord Fox (Chair), Dame Chi Onwurah, MP, The Lord Kirkhope, Gurinder Singh Josan, CBE, Luke Akehurst, MP and Christine Jardine, MP.

"Presenting that case to parliamentarians whose work depends on the transatlantic relationship, and having them push back and engage with it seriously, was the most rewarding academic experience of my time at LSE."

Alexander Minford, 2026 master's students essay competition winner



LEFT TO RIGHT: Essay competition runner up Kristýna Šimonová, winner Alexander Minford and runner-up Iman Shaikh.



About the Phelan US Centre

2025/26 marks the 10th anniversary of the Phelan United States Centre at LSE. For the past decade, the Centre has grown to become the go-to hub for global expertise, internationally-oriented scholarship, and timely, policy-relevant analysis and commentary on the United States.

As the United States marks its 250th anniversary in 2026, the demand for rigorous, clear-eyed, and independent analysis of the United States has never been greater. The Phelan US Centre's diverse, international and multidisciplinary approach to understanding contemporary America is well placed to meet this demand. Central to our approach is the expertise of the more than 35 Phelan US Centre Affiliates, who are drawn from across LSE's departments.

ABOVE:
LSE students on the
main stairwell of the
Centre Building (CBG)

About the Director

Peter Trubowitz is Professor of International Relations at LSE and Associate Fellow at Chatham House. He writes and comments frequently on world affairs and American politics. His published work includes: *Geopolitics and Democracy: The Western Liberal Order from Foundation to Fracture* (Oxford, 2023); *Politics and Strategy: Partisan Ambition and American Statecraft* (Princeton, 2011); and *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago, 1998).

An award-winning teacher, Professor Trubowitz has lectured on world affairs to universities worldwide as well as to government bodies, think tanks and private companies. A frequent television

guest on Bloomberg, CNBC and other international media outlets, he has undertaken research supported by grants and fellowships from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the John M. Olin Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Social Science Research Council, among others.

Before joining LSE, he was Professor of Government at the University of Texas at Austin. He has held visiting positions at Harvard, Princeton, Universidad de Chile, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) in Mexico City, Tsinghua University, and Beijing Foreign Studies University, where he was the J. William Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer in American Foreign Policy.

BELOW:
Professor Larry Kramer
(LSE President and
Vice Chancellor),
Professor Peter
Trubowitz (Phelan
US Centre) and
Professor G. John
Ikenberry (Princeton
University) at the
Phelan US Centre's
10th anniversary event,
2 April 2026

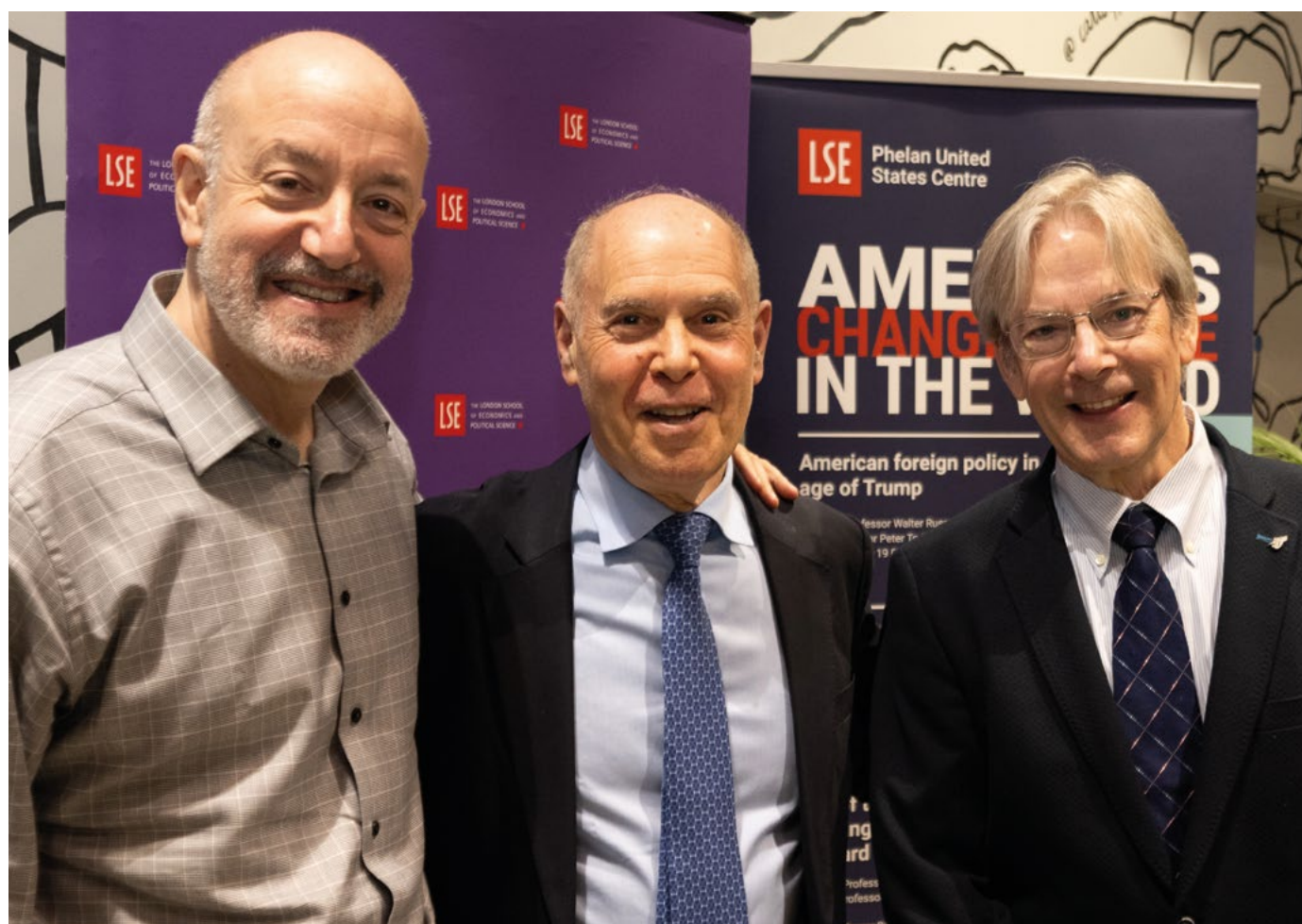


Image © 2026 LSE/Andrew Lunn

Advisory Board

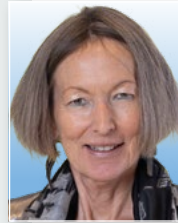
The Advisory Board provides external perspective and guidance on the Centre's mission and work.

CHAIR – G. John Ikenberry, Princeton University



John Ikenberry is the Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs in the Department of Politics and the School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. He is Co-Director of Princeton's Center for International Security Studies.

Nicola Lacey, LSE



Nicola Lacey is School Professor of Law, Gender and Social Policy at LSE. Before joining LSE, she was Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College and Professor of Criminal Law and Legal Theory at the University of Oxford.

Tim Besley, LSE



Sir Tim Besley is School Professor of Economics and Political Science and W. Arthur Lewis Professor of Development Economics in the Department of Economics at LSE.

Tracey L. Meares, Yale University



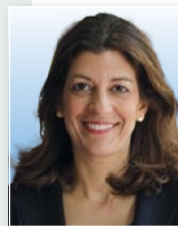
Tracey Meares is Walton Hale Hamilton Professor at Yale Law School and a Founding Director of Yale's Justice Collaboratory. She served on President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Lloyd Gruber, LSE



Lloyd Gruber is the former Dean of LSE's Institute of Public Affairs and an Associate Professor of Public Policy (Education). Before joining LSE he was an Associate Professor at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy.

Leslie Vinjamuri, Chicago Council on Global Affairs and SOAS



Leslie Vinjamuri is President and CEO of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and Professor of Practice in International Relations and Diplomacy at SOAS, University of London. She has previously held a number of senior roles at Chatham House, Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Matthew Jones, LSE

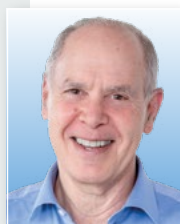


Matthew Jones is Professor of International History and former Head of the Department of International History at LSE. He is the Cabinet Office Official Historian of the UK strategic nuclear programme.

Management Committee

The Management Committee is made up of LSE faculty who monitor our programming, research and operations.

CHAIR – Peter Trubowitz



Director of Phelan US Centre
Professor, International Relations

Stephanie Rickard



Stephanie Rickard is Professor of Political Economy in the Department of Government at LSE. Professor Rickard's research examines the domestic and international politics influencing trade policies, including tariffs, state subsidies and "buy national" programmes.

Jeffrey M. Chwioroth



Jeffrey M. Chwioroth is Professor of International Relations and Head of the Department of International Relations at LSE. Professor Chwioroth's research examines the international political economy of international money and finance.

David Soskice



David Soskice is LSE School Professor of Political Science and Economics Emeritus, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at Duke University, Fellow of the British Academy, Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Member of Academia Europaea, and of the LSE International Inequalities Institute.

Elizabeth Ingleson



Elizabeth Ingleson is an associate professor of international history. She is the author of *Made in China: When US-China Interests Converged to Transform Global Trade* (Harvard University Press, 2024).

Imaobong Umoren



Imaobong Umoren is Associate Professor in the Department of International History at LSE. Dr Umoren's research focuses on histories of race, gender, activism and political thought in the Caribbean, Britain and the US during the modern and contemporary periods.

James Morrison



James Morrison is Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations at LSE. He specialises in international political economy. Dr Morrison's work examines the role of ideas and intellectuals in foreign economic policy. His first book is *England's Cross of Gold: Keynes, Churchill, and the Governance of Economic Beliefs*.

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Georgetown University

(A-Z by surname) A list of Centre Affiliates' publications is available on our website

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