

CULTURES OF DEMOCRACY

THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2025

13:30	Registration Room G35, Ground Floor, Senate House
14:00	Welcome Professor Kingsley Abbott, Director, Institute of Commonwealth Studies
14:15 – 15.45	Panel One. The Commonwealth and Democracy Chair: Professor Sue Onslow, King's College London - James Chiriyankandath, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Commonwealth Studies - 'Protest, Silence and Repression: Gaza and the state of freedom and democracy in the Commonwealth and beyond' - Andrea Sau (Lecturer in Politics and International Relations), Christopher Wylde (Senior Lecturer, Politics & International Relations) & Syed Kamall (Professor of Politics & International Relations,) St Mary's University, Twickenham - 'Hegemony, class and the Commonwealth' - Bright Chimedza, Doctoral Researcher, University of Leicester - 'Interrogating the Commonwealth's Observation Mission Electoral Gaze in the 2023 Zimbabwe Elections'
16:00 – 17:30	Panel Two: Commonwealth Democratic Values Chair: Dr Cherisse Francis, St Mary's University, Twickenham - Gargi Sakpal, Chevening Scholar, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine - 'Procedural Democracy: Mental Health, Social Justice, and the Crisis of Democratic Legitimacy in and beyond India's Commonwealth Context' - Shireen Mushtaq, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore - 'Generational Divide and Democratic Strain: Political Disconnect between Millennials and Gen Z in the Age of Social Media' - Kushboo Mangroo, Université de Poitiers - 'Democracy, self-determination and the 2025 Anglo-Mauritian Treaty: the Chagossians' standpoint' - David Jackson, Fellow at New York University and former Director of Local Development Finance at the United Nations Capital Development Fund, and Lucy Slack, General Secretary of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum - 'The Commonwealth local government experience and its impact on democracy.'
18:00 – 19:00	Reception

FRIDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2025

Note: the keynote lecture and presentations will all be online

9:30 - 10:30	Keynote Lecture Professor Matthew Neuhaus - 'Reinforcing Democracy? The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) 30 Years On'
11:00 – 12:30	Panel Three: Evolving Democracies in the Commonwealth: Commonwealth Case Studies Chair: Professor Mélanie Torrent, University of Jules Verne Picardie / Institute of Commonwealth Studies • Aliyu Ibrahim, Associate Professor and Acting Dean of the Faculty of Law, Umaru Musa Yarádua University, Katsina, Nigeria - 'Filing the Gap in the Nigerian Democratic System: Is Independent Candidacy a viable alternative?' • Olakunle Michael Folami, Associate Professor, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Nigeria - 'The Democracy and Ethnicity Question in Commonwealth African Countries: A Case Study of Nigeria's Situation' • Bodhi Ramteke, Founder & Director, Policy and Law Network, Gadchiroli, India - 'Caste and the Crisis of Democracy: Reimagining Equality in the Commonwealth' • Soumya Ranjan Gahir, PhD candidate, Department of Political Science, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Odisha - 'Memory as Democracy: Nation and Narration in Postcolonial India'
12:45 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 15:30	Panel Four: The Commonwealth, Democracy and New Technologies Chair: Dr Virginie Roiron, University of Strasbourg • Ashonshok Kachui, Phd candidate, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Jodhpur, India - 'Platform Politics and Digital Democracy in the Global South: Social Media, Sovereignty, and Democratic Contestations from India' • Sumit Pathak, Assistant Professor, Central University of South Bihar, India - 'Civic Space to Cyberspace: Commonwealth Strategies for Reinventing Democracy' • Meera Mathew, Associate Professor, Mar Gregorios College of Law (MGCL), affiliated with the University of Kerala, India - 'Digital populism and Ethical leadership: Navigating misinformation, accountability, and free speech in the Social media age'
16:00 - 17:00	Round Table: Current Trends & Future Research Moderated by Dr Olivia Lwabukuna, Institute of Commonwealth Studies • Professor Sue Onslow • Professor Melanie Torrent • Dr Virginie Roiron • Dr Cherisse Francis • Audience participation
17:00	Close Dr Olivia Lwabukuna, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London.