Hello all!

If you are holding this magazine in your hands, this might be your very first issue of *The GradPost*. Filled with exciting stories and useful information, *The GradPost* is designed to keep you company throughout your time at the University of Kent.

Published quarterly, this postgraduate magazine presents to you the valuable work that researchers and students carry out in and around Canterbury or abroad, while sharing their research material with a growing community of postgraduates.

With this issue, we would like to draw your attention to the importance of writing, either for your general and emotional well-being, or in order to hone your academic skills by joining this magazine’s editorial team. This issue’s cover image shows the ‘Tensegritee’ structure found between the Marlowe Building and the Templeman Library. The sculpture is one of 12 Beacon Projects launched during Kent’s anniversary year to celebrate the University’s successes over the last 50 years.

As the editors-in-chief of *The GradPost*, this issue marks the last one for us. It has been an exciting time, and it is with a laughing eye and a crying one that we say goodbye, hoping that many more generations of postgraduate students will continue our legacy.

Study hard, but above all, enjoy your time and make the most of it! If you would like to get involved, please get in touch via gradpost@kent.ac.uk

The Editors

Mylène Branco  
PhD Comparative Literature

Lucy Farndale  
MA International Social Policy

**News and updates**

**The GradPost Needs You!**

Ever fancied yourself as an editor, a proofreader or journalist? Well here’s your chance! After two years my co-editor, Mylène, and I are leaving *The GradPost*, along with the majority of our team, which means the opportunity is here for you to take our places.

We have spaces open for:
- An Editor (or Co-Editors)
- Sub-Editors
- Proofreaders
- Social Media Officers
- Photographers
- Journalists
- Columnists

Personally, I have found this experience to be incredibly rewarding, and something which I never imagined I was capable of before joining the team. We started with no guidance and built our own methods and way of working from the bottom up. Luckily we won’t leave you without help; I will make sure you have all the guidance you need to continue with, and build upon, what we have made into a successful editorial process.

You don’t need experience, just a desire to create and a willingness to work within a student-led team. If getting involved with a university publication seems daunting, don’t let it be so! You will gain more from the experience than you’d ever expected, and meet some great teammates and friends along the way.

If even an inch of you is thinking ‘yes!’, then take the plunge and contact the Graduate School to find out more. *The GradPost* is written by postgraduates, for postgraduates and the opportunity is here for you to transform this publication into whatever you, and your future team, want it to be…

We look forward to seeing what *The GradPost* can become!

Lucy, Mylène  
& the 2017 *GradPost* Team

**KGSA**

A very warm welcome to all new postgraduate students joining us at Kent this year and to our returners!

Those new to the University of Kent who have come along to an open day or had a look online may have heard of the Kent Graduate Student Association (KGSA). We are your postgraduate student committee – student led and run by current postgraduates for postgraduates. We represent both taught and research students, and work closely with the Graduate School, the Woolf Master’s Office and Kent Union to help make sure you get the most out of your time here at Kent.

From helping you all to move in during Welcome Week to campaigning on issues that matter to you, we are here to help! Last year, we worked with students to build a fun and vibrant community on campus. The KGSA hosted international celebrations throughout the year: from Thanksgiving to Nowruz and even a Christmas Day dinner for students who stayed on campus. We also ran several fundraising initiatives to give back to the local community. We raised over £2,000 for charity over Christmas through gifts and food packages, with a Salvation Army food drive and a ‘Gifting Tree’ to collect gifts for children in Canterbury.

We have been hard at work planning and organising a series of events for Welcome Week to help you meet others and settle into Kent. There is an Afternoon Tea Party, a great British Pub Experience, a Canterbury City tour and much more scheduled! Events will be happening both during the day and at night, with something different each day, and the best part is it’s all free, so please do come along! Remember to pick up a Welcome Week planner and RSVP to our events (on Facebook) so we can take account of numbers and are able to accommodate you all. You can pick up a hard copy of the planner during the week in Woolf College and an electronic copy will be made available on our social media channels.

Please also join our group www.facebook.com/groups/Woolf17/ This is for all postgraduate students (new and current) to socialise and ask questions to other postgraduates. You can keep up to date by turning notifications ‘on’ in the group and by clicking ‘subscribe’ on the Kent Graduate Student Association Facebook page. We’ll be advertising all our upcoming events here so don’t miss out!

Elections for the KGSA committee are held annually and roles include President, Vice-President, Welfare Officer, Events Officer and Media Officer, as well as the postgraduate taught and postgraduate research faculty representatives. We’re always looking for new committee members to join us, so please get in touch if you’d like to get involved.

If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch with us. You can find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/kentgsa/, Twitter @kentGSAA and via email at kgsa@kent.ac.uk

We look forward to meeting you all!

Rowena Bicknell  
President of the Kent Graduate Student Association
I started writing about my own experiences as a human being when I was twelve years old. This is how I became a writer and I have never stopped writing since. Writing was, and still is, my favourite way to express myself, because as I write I process my feelings and thoughts, and I make sense of my inner reality. Ultimately, this leads me to a better understanding of my mind, what happens in my daily life, and it also sheds light on the relationships I have with others. It helps me to cope, but most of all, it brings me back to who I am every time I get lost.

Drawing from my personal experience, I have always believed that writing has many therapeutic benefits, especially because it can help us to discover and have a greater sense of who we are. Writing can be a pure invitation to let yourself be who you are, and share whatever there is in your mind and heart. It is a way in which you can connect with yourself and understand what your needs, desires and dreams as an individual are.

Thus, writing can be one great way to start what we call ‘the journey of the self’, the inner path that each one of us can take to find out who we are, as well as what gives us meaning, purpose, and happiness in life. While we are on this journey, we can find out many things that we were not even aware of. We can come across negative beliefs and emotions that we have been carrying around, or we can realise that we have not been living according to our greatest potential. Nonetheless, we create and unfold our journey as we write. We become aware of important life areas that require a little bit more of our attention, and we can see that we have the power to edit the way we deal with life’s circumstances. In this sense, a blank page is never daunting: there is always something more to find out and to look at.

Over the years, research in psychology has scientifically proven how expressive writing can be of benefit to us in many ways. I still remember my amazement at finding out that writing was one of the therapeutic tools that I had to learn about on a Health Psychology module that I took as part of my training. If you are curious and want to know more about it, I suggest you read ‘Finding Happiness in Negative Emotions’ (2011) by Rebecca J North et al, in which expressive writing was tested as an effective way to cope with negative emotions. Furthermore, you can have a look at Stephen J Lepore and Joshua M Smyth’s book The Writing Cure: How Expressive Writing Promotes Health and Emotional Well-Being.

Vanessa Dias  
PhD Psychology
When I moved to Canterbury to start my Master of Arts, I knew I wanted to be involved in some form of campus publication. Having stuck my nose into proofreading during my undergraduate degree, I knew I wanted to gain more experience in an editorial role. The GradPost appealed to me because, unlike other publications on campus, it is purely written by and for the postgraduate community. Being part of such a big university cohort, I felt that the chance to be involved in the compiling of a collective postgraduate voice was such a wonderful opportunity.

The initial meeting was very welcoming, and our superb editors Lucy Farndale and Mylène Branco made us all feel relaxed. I was really nervous moving somewhere new and meeting new people, so it was really nice to be in such a friendly environment. What surprised me most was the diverse range of postgraduate students who had put themselves forward for the team. We have a fair few English and Comparative Literature postgraduates, but other subjects are also represented, such as International and Social Policy, Genetics, and Electronic Engineering.

This makes the team so much more interesting, because we come from various academic backgrounds, and each of us has different strengths. I have really enjoyed meeting people throughout the year, and I am proud to be part of such a diverse team.

In our last issue alone we had contributors who are students of the following subjects: Psychology, English, Drama and French. Not to mention the regular contributions we have from Kent Union and the Kent Graduate Student Association. This means the material that we, as an editorial team, edit for you to read is incredibly varied and interesting. It has been an honour to work with the articles provided by such an active postgraduate community.

It is also important to note that the skills that I have developed as a sub-editor have been exceptionally useful, not only in a personal capacity to self-edit my own academic writing, but also as something different to include in job applications. As much as I have not wanted to think too hard about life after university this year, my sub-editor role has played a big part when communicating to potential employers my desire to begin my editorial career. It is definitely something to consider doing as a generally great extra-curricular activity, but it is also really appealing to have on your CV, even if you do not want to go into publishing.

Whether it is proofreading or sub-editing that you are interested in being involved in this academic year, I urge you to do it. You will be part of a publication that gives a voice to the postgraduate community, and you will gain skills that will take you above and beyond your academic life.

The GradPost is seeking postgraduate students to join the editorial team. If this is of interest to you, please contact gradpost@kent.ac.uk

Claire Margerison
MA The Contemporary
We are now living in a society made up of individuals from all different cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic status backgrounds. This makes it nearly impossible not to interact with individuals from a different background to your own. With such a diverse society, researchers from different fields, particularly in the social sciences, have explored the impact of diversity on society as a whole and directly on individuals themselves.

One question the researchers in psychology have asked is what impact these diverse social environments have made on intergroup relations (interactions between members from different backgrounds). We have learned that these interactions can be either positive or negative and lead to different outcomes, such as decreased or increased prejudice towards out-group members.

One question that I focus on in my PhD research is how these environments have impacted intergroup romantic relationships. Now that exposure to and opportunity for intergroup contact has increased, are individuals more willing to date out-group members?

In 2001, 7% of individuals living in England and Wales were in an interethnic romantic relationship. In 2011 this number increased to 9%. Evidence from the percentage of interethnic romantic relationships would suggest that yes, individuals’ willingness to date out-group members has increased. However, given the opportunities that are available (especially through online dating) to develop a romantic relationship with an out-group member, you would expect the percentage of interethnic relationships to be larger than 9%. Therefore, people might be actively choosing to date only in-group members.

Through my research I investigate why individuals are or are not willing to date people from different backgrounds. To answer this question, I explore several social psychological factors (social approval, social identity, dating experience, disgust sensitivity) that may be associated with individuals’ willingness to date an out-group member. Additionally, my research investigates whether out-group dating preferences vary across different backgrounds (ethnic, religious, socio-economic status).

From my studies, my results reveal that, within the UK, individuals give the highest out-group dating preference to out-group ethnic individuals, followed by out-group socio-economic status individuals, and give the lowest preference to out-group religious members. This suggests that out-group dating preferences do vary across backgrounds.

Furthermore, I have found that one of the strongest factors influencing people’s willingness to date out-group members is social approval. Social approval is how much we perceive that our family, friends, and potential partner’s family and friends would approve of being involved in an intergroup romantic relationship. Results from my research studies have demonstrated that when social approval is perceived as being negative then individuals are far less willing to date an out-group member from any background.

Thus far, my research demonstrates that even though our diverse society provides substantial opportunities for people to date individuals from different backgrounds, factors such as type of background and perceived social approval play a crucial role in our willingness to date outside our in-groups.

Courtney K Allen
PhD Student, School of Psychology
A personal experience

Working as a PhD tutor for The Brilliant Club

Working for The Brilliant Club as a PhD tutor this past academic year has been a very positive and rewarding experience. The Brilliant Club, for those who are unfamiliar with it, is a charity organisation, founded in 2011, whose sole purpose is to alleviate the alarming differences observed between the educational success of pupils from advantaged backgrounds and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. To give an example of the problem, 1 in 4 individuals from advantaged backgrounds progresses to a highly selective university, while only 1 in 50 individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds progresses to a highly selective university.

To help combat this problem, The Brilliant Club has developed the Scholars Programme, which employs PhD researchers as tutors to deliver university-style tutorials to pupils with high potential from disadvantaged backgrounds. Through this programme, pupils are exposed to university culture and the plethora of opportunities that higher education has to offer. The Brilliant Club currently works with over 600 PhD students and roughly 300 non-selective state schools around the country.

As a PhD tutor you have an important role in helping the selected individuals to develop and expand the knowledge, skills and ambition required to continue their education at a highly selective university, if they choose to do so. The course the pupils participate in is completely designed and delivered by the PhD researcher and aims to enhance their capabilities to learn challenging material and complete higher-level coursework. Through this work, PhD researchers are making a positive impact on the pupils’ current and future academic successes, and are helping to eliminate barriers to higher education.

Additionally, PhD tutors are enhancing their own skills. Tutors are trained to develop the ability and necessary skills needed to design a unique course based on their own research. The training also provides PhD researchers with the tools and knowledge required to teach effectively. Another benefit to being a PhD tutor is gaining the skills, confidence and professionalism needed to teach and disseminate your research across different age levels.

Since being employed as a PhD tutor by The Brilliant Club, I have worked with four different groups of pupils from secondary schools located in London. I designed a social sciences course entitled 'Us versus Them: An Introduction to Intergroup Relations'. Through this course, pupils learn about prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. Additionally, they are introduced to several psychological theories, research and ways to eliminate negative intergroup interactions. I have been working with highly intelligent, motivated and passionate pupils who certainly have the capability to gain access to a highly selective university. They are brilliant!

If you are passionate about your research and would like to share it with high-achieving pupils, are interested in paid teaching experience, or want to help promote equal opportunities in higher education, then you should consider working for The Brilliant Club.

Find out more about The Brilliant Club and how to get involved at www.thebrilliantclub.org/

Courtney K Allen
PhD Student, School of Psychology

The Global Skills Award programme

Designed to increase your employability and enhance global awareness

Are you a Master’s student looking to enhance your global awareness and improve your employability in a competitive job market? The Global Skills Award gives you the opportunity to attend a series of interesting lectures and discussions on a variety of topics, develop your employability skills and network with other Master’s students from all academic schools. The programme runs from November to April, and you must attend six lectures/events and six workshops in order to complete the Award. The lectures and discussions will be delivered by experts in their field, and in previous years have included topics such as ‘The Wisdom of Psychopaths’, ‘Brexit’ and ‘Cancer research and treatment: past, present and future’.

There are also a variety of workshops on offer to help you develop your employability and career skills. Workshop topics include CV writing sessions, Careers Management, Mock Assessment Centres, and Negotiation Skills.

For more information, please email skills@kent.ac.uk or visit www.kent.ac.uk/graduateschool/skills/programmes/gsa.html
I studied in Southampton initially, completing a BA in Graphic Design, and I loved what I learned. I wanted to further my learning, and decided to come to Kent to pursue a second degree in Digital Arts.

During my time here, I was lucky to get experience working as a student staff graphic designer in Kent Union’s Marketing Department. I was paired up with another student to work on artwork for a wide range of customers, from Summer Ball to the Advice Centre. I gained some valuable experience in creating artwork, and absolutely loved seeing my designs being put out in campaigns!

Working for Kent Union was an important part of my time at the University of Kent, as I met a lot of new people and gained amazing experience, so when the position of graphic designer came up towards the end of my degree, I knew that I had to apply. I am now working alongside a fast-paced team as a full-time graphic designer and I absolutely love it!

Staying on campus has also meant that I am able to continue the things I enjoyed while at university, particularly Taekwondo. I was a member of the Taekwondo club as a student, and have been able to carry on grading and training alongside my full-time job, which is brilliant for me.

If I could give one piece of advice to a current Kent student, it would be to gain as much experience as you can while you are studying. Without my experience in the Kent Union Marketing Department, I would have been in a competitive job market without anything to make me stand out. Now, I am working in a role I enjoy every day. Sometimes, the workload can be overwhelming, but I have a great team that supports me every day, and I can build on the experience I gained while I was studying.

Anja Eline Hynninen
Graphic Designer for Kent Union

Work experience with Kent Union

Eastern ARC Funding

The Graduate School invites applications to the Eastern ARC Student Mobility Fund from all postgraduate students (taught or research) to support their attendance or participation in workshops, events, courses, training or conferences with relevance to the Eastern ARC. There is no deadline for applications and these can be submitted at any point during the academic year. For further details, please visit www.kent.ac.uk/graduateschool/easternarc.html

Photo competition

Finally, for all you amateur photographers out there, we are bringing back the photography competition! Following the success of the Graduate School’s PG Minds Wellbeing Programme, the theme will be Wellbeing: Mind and Body and we are looking for beautiful images of places and people in Kent and Canterbury. The winning photo will be printed on the cover of the forthcoming Winter issue of The GradPost, so get snapping if you wish to show off your photography skills!

Submit entries to Gradpost@kent.ac.uk by 31 October 2017.
What’s on

Got spare time or need a break? The GradPost team recommends these events...

**Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2016**
8 Jul – 29 Oct 2017
The Beaney House of Art & Knowledge, Canterbury
Organised by the National Portrait Gallery, this exhibition showcases the portraits of professional photographers and gifted amateurs.

**5 Day Landscape and Place Workshop**
4 Sep – 8 Sep 2017
Conquest House Gallery, Canterbury
Do you feel like being creative?

**War Horse**
15 Sep – 14 Oct 2017
The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury
War Horse is coming to Canterbury!

**Canterbury Food and Drink Festival**
22 Sep – 24 Sep 2017
Dane John Gardens, Canterbury
A compulsory event in Canterbury!

**The Alternative Comedy Show**
26 Sep 2017
The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury
An exciting night of comedy with original performers.

**Exhibition**
27 Sep – 3 Oct 2017
Horsebridge Arts and Community Centre, Whitstable
Inspired by J M W Turner, Ann Palmer’s paintings depict local scenes and seascapes.

**Dead Guilty**
2 Oct – 7 Oct 2017
Little Theatre, Herne Bay
A play by Richard Harris.

**Student Shopping Night**
5 Oct 2017
Whitefriars Shopping Centre, Canterbury
With most shops open from 6pm to 9pm, and big discounts up to 50%, this is the perfect opportunity for students to go on a little spending spree. Live music and goody bags included.

**Produce and Craft Market**
8 Oct 2017
William Street, Herne Bay
Authentic products made by locals and guest producers, for all those who enjoy healthy, quality food.

**RSC Live: Coriolanus**
11 Oct 2017
Gulbenkian Cinema, Canterbury
A tragedy by Shakespeare, live from London.

**Canterbury’s Gruesome Tales**
14 Oct 2017
Westgate Towers, St Peter’s Street, Canterbury
A spooky walking event around ‘medieval’ Canterbury.

**Expand Your Creative Writing Skills**
14 Oct 2017
Conquest House Gallery, Canterbury
For all those who enjoy digging into the past.

**Canterbury Postcard and Collectors Fair**
14 Oct 2017
Westgate Hall, Canterbury
Are you a collector of postcards, stamps, books or antiques? Then this is the place for you!

**Sleepy Hollow**
19 Oct – 21 Oct 2017
Gulbenkian, Canterbury
With Halloween just around the corner, you might want to see Washington Irving’s classic on stage.

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**The GradPost team Spring 2017**

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