

PESGB Roehampton Postgraduate Summer School 2011

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Earlier this summer the 5th PESGB Postgraduate Summer School gathered graduate students and scholars from across the globe at Roehampton University to pursue the theme of civic education. Yet given the variety of cultural and educational backgrounds, range of academic and professional pursuits, and commitment to the higher aspirations of philosophers of education to speak to multiple audiences and traditions adhered to by the participants, the week of seminars, speeches, and informal conversations reached many of the central preoccupations of the field (including the days of industrial action across English educational institutions that closed the weeks' events, of which I'll return to later).

Dr. Meira Levinson of Harvard University, who guided participants through the thornier aspects of debates over civic education in liberal democratic societies, led the Summer School. One of the highlights of the week was the chance to discuss several chapters from Dr. Levinson's forthcoming book *No Citizen Left Behind* (Harvard University Press, *forthcoming* 2012), which draws on a variety of disciplines (political theory, critical race theory, sociology, multiculturalism) and eight years of experience teaching in the public schools of Atlanta and Boston to speak to issues of youth empowerment, fulfilling the demands of democratic education, and furthering commitments to social justice and racial equality. In addition to the lively discussions held at Roehampton, the Summer School was able to open up the conversation to London's vibrant Philosophy of Education community at the Philosophy of Education Research Seminar (held at the Institute of Education), where Dr. Levinson closed the summer program of speakers.

However, Dr. Levinson was not alone in establishing a productive and collegial atmosphere amongst graduate students and faculty in the field. This year's Summer School featured the opportunity for participants to present their current research interests, profiting initially from individual consultation with Roehampton faculty (Mary Healy, Roger Marples and Muna Golmohamad) before discussing their topic with the wider community. By the end of the week this community had grown to include Dr. Michael Merry (University of Amsterdam, who delivered a provocative paper on voluntary segregation), Dr. David Carr (University of Edinburgh, who delivered a paper on virtue and moral education) and Judith Suissa (Institute of Education), with appearances by Richard Davies (de Montfort University) Carrie Winstanley and Lorella Terzi (both of Roehampton University).

Anecdotally I can state with confidence that both the graduate students and faculty left the Summer School with a renewed enthusiasm for tackling the difficult issues occupying contemporary philosophers of education. This confidence was punctuated by the very real stresses on teachers and academics in the humanities that underscored protests in educational sectors unfolding across England. In such an environment, gatherings like the Summer School are essential to accomplish what Hegel took to be one of the offices of philosophy – to comprehend our own time in thought (or we can add, in discussion, in our work as teachers, students, researchers, and citizens).