

Morality and media: Silverstone's Global Legacy

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Polis exists because [Professor Roger Silverstone](#) believed that we should all think a lot harder about our global media. As head of the [Media Department](#) at LSE he was a gentle and urbane visionary. He inspired individuals to a deeper critical understanding of media but he also wanted ideas to have influence. Hence, Polis.

Two years ago on July 16th, just months after Polis was set up, Roger died. This summer I like to think that he would have been particularly pleased with at least one aspect of our work. It's a small example but take the [Polis Summer School](#). Today we had 28 intelligent young people from around the world discussing how the news media covered the [Burma cyclone](#). They heard about the kind of big ideas outlined in Roger's book [Media and Morality](#), about the moral duty of the news media to help citizens understand what is going on in the world and how they can change it. The book is at the core of Polis' purpose.

[media-and-morality_9780745635033.jpg](#)

This morning the students heard from the head of media at a major international NGO about how it tries to communicate appeals for support in a world easily distracted by entertainment. Were they right to use celebrities to get a political message across?

And then the students spent the afternoon analysing mainstream news coverage and comparing it with the shocking citizen journalism pictures of cyclone victims available on [YouTube](#). How much reality should you show?

I was also pleased that our [Silverstone Scholar](#) Nina Bigalke has been at the Summer School to present her very topical research work on [Aljazeera English](#). Roger would have been proud of her fascinating insights into what is a truly global news phenomena.

Roger would have relished the opportunity to engage in conversation with the excellent summer students we are

hosting from around the world. But in a sense that is what is happening. His legacy is the ideas that continue to fascinate and challenge media scholars.

My thoughts are with his wife Jennifer and his family.

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