William Stewart, PhD

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UCL Profile: William Stewart

PROFILE

Interdisciplinary researcher in political geography and STS, specialising in space diplomacy, outer space governance, statecraft, and more-than-terrestrial relations. My work examines how infrastructures, legal frameworks, atmospheres, and political imaginaries shape relations on Earth , the Moon, and cislunar space. I combine archival, interview-based, policy-facing, and scenario-based methods, with experience in multilateral diplomacy, interdisciplinary collaboration, workshops, and public engagement.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Feb 2026 - Present **Visiting Research Fellow**

Department of Geography, UCL

Developing doctoral research into publications and a monograph project, *The Space Station Gap*, which examines how the end of the space station era is reshaping power, strategy, diplomacy, and economic relations across orbit, the Moon, and cislunar space. Mentoring postgraduate students on geopolitics, qualitative methods, research design, and the development of independent research projects.

2020 - 2025 **Doctoral Researcher**

Department of Geography, UCL

Designed and completed qualitative research and conceptual analysis on infrastructure, governance, law, and diplomacy in outer space, with a focus on the International Space Station. Developed this work into publications, conference papers, and a wider research agenda connecting political geography, international relations, and off-Earth politics. Conducted interviews with current and former NASA-affiliated space-sector professionals. The research develops a historically informed account of space infrastructure as a site of statecraft, strategic cooperation, and geopolitical competition.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2021 - Present **Postgraduate Teaching Assistant**

Department of Geography, UCL

Taught undergraduate and postgraduate seminars across modules including Geopolitics, Environmental Geopolitics, Qualitative Methods, Space and Society, Geography, Culture and Materiality, Geography in the Field, and Human Geography Field Class. Planned seminars, assessed coursework, provided formative feedback, and supported independent student research. Designed scenario-based teaching on orbit, the Moon, planetary futures, and questions of politics, conflict, and governance beyond Earth.

2023 - Present **Tutor**

The Brilliant Club, London

Designed, taught, and assessed a ten-week module on the outer space environment for secondary school students underrepresented in higher education, with full

responsibility for curriculum design, teaching delivery, assessment, and feedback, contributing directly to widening participation.

ACADEMIC CITIZENSHIP AND OUTREACH

2022 - Present **Speculative Worlds Research Collective**

Co-Founder and Director

Co-founded and directed an interdisciplinary research network across six universities, using workshops, exhibitions, and collaborative events to co-produce research on futures, the environment, and off-Earth politics with policy, academic, and creative stakeholders. Organised events including *Off-Earth Futures*, *Beyond Borders, Beyond Earth 2035*, *What is Speculation?*, and *Reimagining Anthropocene Futures*. Led event planning, partner coordination, communications, and collaborative dissemination, generating outputs including conference papers, exhibitions, films, and publications.

2021 - 2024 **Student, Faculty, and PGTA Rep**

Department of Geography, Social and Historical Sciences, UCL

Represented Geography doctoral students, Faculty of Social & Historical Sciences students, and PGTAs at departmental, faculty, university, and union levels. Chaired Doctoral School welcome events, organised PGR/PGTA forums and training activities, and worked with senior leadership to improve student and teaching-staff experience. Advocated for self-funded students during the Covid-19 and cost-of-living period, contributing to additional financial support.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed journal articles

Stewart, W. (2026) 'Assembling Transnationalism in Orbit: Off-Earth Atmospheric Politics and the International Space Station', *Territory, Politics, Governance* (accepted).

Stewart, W. and Dittmer, J. (2023) 'More-than-Human Space Diplomacy: Assembling Internationalism in Orbit', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 18(2–3), pp. 219–252.

Book chapters

Stewart, W. (forthcoming 2026) 'Gravity' and 'More-than-terrestrial', in Anderson, B. and Zhang, V. (eds) *Concepts for Cultural Geography*. Bristol: Cultural Geography (Un)limited Editions.

Stewart, W., with Mary Yacoob (forthcoming Jan 2027) 'Affordance Futurism', in Buchli, V. and Pitrou, P. (eds.) *Off Earth Atlas: A Guide to the Social Study of Outer Space*. Bristol: Intellect Books.

Submitted articles

Stewart, W. 'From Handshakes to Moonjoy: the Cultural Geographies of Outer Space Diplomacy', submitted to *cultural geographies*.

Work in progress

Stewart, W. 'On Becoming a Geopolitical Subject', (in preparation).

EDUCATION

2026 **PhD, Human Geography**
University College London
Thesis: *More-than-Terrestrial Diplomacy: Modular Politics of the International Space Station*

2020 **MSc, Environment, Politics & Society**
University College London

2019 **MA, International Relations; MA, Managerial Economics**
University of Oklahoma

2008 **BA, Political Science**
Oklahoma State University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Feb - May 2018 **US State Department Graduate Fellow**

US Mission to the United Nations, New York City

Supported multilateral negotiations and high-level meetings through policy analysis, briefing preparation, and event coordination. Contributed to work on sustainable development, peacebuilding, and space-related affairs in a practitioner-facing multilateral diplomatic setting.

2010 - 2017 **Intelligence Analyst & Non-Commissioned Officer**

US Air Force, Washington, DC

Led teams delivering analytical reporting and briefings for U.S. and international defence and intelligence stakeholders in high-pressure environments. Produced strategic analysis for senior decision-makers under conditions of uncertainty, experience that continues to inform my work on security, strategy, and civilian/military relations in space. Co-designed and delivered a large-scale training programme, contributing to curriculum development, instruction, and staff development.

AWARDS AND RESEARCH FUNDING

2026 Social and Historical Sciences PGR/ECR Seminar Funding (£1,500)
2022 - 2025 Secured funding for Speculative Worlds annual programme (£10,500 total).
2024 The Hague Journal of Diplomacy Article Award (€500)
2023 Frank Carter Travel Grant (£500)
2023 Northwestern University Special Issue Funding (£450)
2018 Fellowship funding for US Mission to the United Nations ($2,000)

SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPERS, PANELS, AND INVITED TALKS

'ISS as More-than-terrestrial Diplomatic Assemblage', Space Studies: How to Build Cross-Disciplinary Cooperation between France and the UK, London, June 2025.

'Gateway to Space: The Oklahoma Spaceport as Microcosm of American Final Frontier Mythos', RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, London, August 2024.

'Assembling the ISS: More-than-terrestrial Geopolitics', Off-Earth Geopolitics, University of Oxford, September 2023.

'More-than-Human Space Diplomacy', Space Education and Strategic Applications Conference, Policy Studies Organization, September 2023.

The Hague Space Diplomacy Symposium, Leiden University, June 2023.

UCL Leaders, Politics of Outer Space Panel, January 2023.