

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE

Minutes

for the meeting 05 February 2019, 1.05 p.m. in the Philosophy Faculty Board Room

Present: Professor Rae Langton, Professor Alex Oliver (Undergraduate Coordinator), Heather Sanderson (Faculty Administrator), Charlie Evans (Graduate Secretary), Attila Kaplan, Sahanika Ratnayake, Cathy Mason (Graduate Student Rep), Senthuran Bhuvanendra, Anna Simpson (Administrative Assistant).

- 1 Sahanika Ratnayake chaired the meeting.
- 2 Starring of items was invited.
- 3 Apologies for absence were received from Clare Dickinson and Jo Harcus.
- 4 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2018 were approved. These minutes were previously circulated to all students via e-mail for information.

5 Election of Student Representatives

Following nominations received by 13th November 2018, the following two students were appointed as undergraduate Faculty Board Representatives:

Sarah Merrick, Part IB — Girton

Daniel Sharman, Part II — St Catherine's

It was noted that there were not enough nominations to warrant an election for the Graduate representative and the following graduate student representative was therefore appointed by default with effect from 14 November 2018.

Cathy Mason, Graduate (PhD) — Trinity

It was noted that the reps can be reached on phil-studentreps@lists.cam.ac.uk

Council representatives – Election of November 2018

All students on the electoral roll were also eligible to stand to be elected as either an undergraduate or a graduate representative to the Council of the School of Arts and Humanities. It was reported that the new representatives for the Council of the School of the Arts and Humanities were:

Undergraduate rep: Paul Heller

Graduate rep: Konstantinos Lygouris

6 Proposed syllabus changes for Tripos 2019-2020

Proposed changes to the syllabus from Lent Term Caucus meetings were circulated. These changes were approved in principle by the Faculty Board on 28th January 2019 and unless the Staff-Student Committee had strong objections to any of these changes they would be implemented with effect from October 2019. Feedback from students would need to be discussed at the next Faculty Board meeting on 4 March 2019.

Caucuses were asked to review borrowed papers and make suggestions for possible new papers to be borrowed. Some Caucuses recommended further exploration of certain papers as candidates for borrowed papers in the future.

Faculty Board agreed to accept the proposal to replace IB Paper 6 with HPS Part II Paper 5 “Epistemology and Metaphysics of Science”, with effect from October 2019. HPS would also need to confirm approval. One area of concern was the loss of Probability Theory from IB Paper 6 Philosophy of Science. Richard Holton confirmed that HPS were unable to incorporate Probability Theory into their courses. It was agreed that Probability Theory would be covered in one of the Part II papers in the future.

There were no comments on the proposed syllabus changes.

7 Staff news:

It was reported that Christopher Wu has been appointed to the position of Temporary Accountant, with effect from 7 January 2019, to cover Amy Blackburn’s maternity leave.

Congratulations were extended to Rob Watt who has taken up a Lectureship at Trinity College, Oxford from 7 January 2019.

8 Discussion Groups for Part IB students

It was noted that the following six discussion groups would run from weeks 2-7 of Lent Term 2019:

Logic – Benjamin Marschall – Wednesdays 3-4pm, Graduate Common Room

Metaphysics & Epistemology – Benjamin Marschall – Thursdays 4-5pm, Graduate Common Room

Ethics – Karamvir Chadha - Tuesdays, 1-2pm, weeks 2,4,5,6,7 – Graduate Common Room, week3 – Room 207, RFB

Greek and Roman – Matt Dougherty – Wednesdays 1-2pm, Graduate Common Room

Philosophy of Science – Kyle Mitchell - Wednesdays, 4-5pm, Graduate Common Room

Political Philosophy – Lucy McDonald – Mondays 1-2pm, Faculty Board Room

Students were reminded that once they had signed up to a group, they were expected to attend all 6 sessions.

9 Deadline for handing in Extended Essays/Dissertations

Students were reminded that the deadline for submitting extended essays for Part IB and Part II is **Friday 15 March at 12 noon**. It was explained that if students miss this deadline without prior approval from the Chair of Examiners, they would be required to instead sit the written exam for this paper (although it was noted that students should be aware that Friday 15 March is also the deadline for amendments to exam entries. If a student does not submit their extended essays by the deadline, and then does not ask the College to amend their exam entry to sit the written paper, they would then fail that paper).

Students were further reminded that the deadline for submitting dissertations for Part II is **Friday 3 May at 12 noon**. If students missed this deadline without prior approval from the Chair of Examiners, students would then fail that paper, as by May 3, the final deadline would have passed for amending exam entries.

10 Lecture Handouts

It was reported that Faculty office and Library staff have had several requests from students for making lecture handouts easier to find. Some of these requests were from students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A common recommendation on the Student Support Document (SSD) provided by the Disability Resources Centre (DRC) is that copies of power points, handouts, and discussion documents, should be made available in advance. Some lecture handouts are available on the Faculty website, eg <https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/IA/IA-lecture-notes>. Others may be found on lecturers' own web pages.

It was reported that Jo Harcus is working on a crib sheet so that lecturers can upload their material on to Moodle directly, but would be willing to assist with this in the meantime. Access to material on the Moodle page for each course is limited to the relevant students and staff.

Suggested strategies from the DRC for inclusive teaching can be found here:

<https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/staff-supporting-disabled-students/teaching-disabled-students/inclusive-teaching>

Sahanika Ratnayake supported the idea of compiling lecture material on Moodle for easier access. Rae Langton stated that the issue of lecture handout availability would be raised at Faculty Board.

11 Philosophy Examinations/Marking Criteria in 2019

Students were reminded that the Philosophy Faculty uses a numerical marking scheme. Details of the current marking guidelines and criteria can be found on the following webpage at:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/marking-criteria-pdf>

It was noted that all students should have received an email outlining the various exam resources available on the Faculty website.

12 Exam scripts available on the Philosophy website

Students were reminded that several sample exam scripts have been made available on the website, anonymised and with the permission of the authors. They can be found on the following web page:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/sample-answers>

13 Philosophy Student Surveys 2018-2019

An undergraduate Student Survey was run in LT 2017 and it was reported that the Faculty plans to run a repeat survey of undergraduate students, and a new survey of graduate students in 2018-2019.

14 Performance of Cohorts

A document comparing the performance of cohorts of students from the Department of HPS, the Faculties of HSPS, Classics and Divinity was circulated. Data showing distribution of classes by gender was included. A graph was also circulated showing results for Part II Philosophy by class and gender.

15 National Student Survey 2019

The National Student survey was launched in January 2019. All part II students, and any affiliated students in their second year of study, should have been emailed a link to this survey, which will run until April. The NSS is an independent survey asking

students to rate the quality of their Higher Education experience, and the results of this survey help prospective students, their families and advisors to make study choices. Students were strongly encouraged to take part in this survey. It was reported that the results would not be published unless at least 50% of Philosophy students participate. It was noted that the closing date was 30 April 2019.

16 Graduate Questionnaires

It was reported that the results of the MPhil questionnaire for Michaelmas Term 2018 are available to current graduate students. Students were asked to email Charlie Evans first if they wished to see them.

17 Summary Evaluation Sheets for Lectures etc

It was noted that Summary Evaluation sheets for Lectures, Discussion Groups and Logic Classes held in Michaelmas Term 2018 would shortly be available for consultation at the Library Issue Desk. A copy of the general comments made by students during Michaelmas 2018 was circulated for information.

18 Lecture Questionnaires

Students were reminded that questionnaires would be distributed again at the end of all lecture series' in Lent Term 2019, as well as used to assess Logic Classes and Discussion Groups. Students were reminded that if they would like to give feedback, but missed the session when questionnaires were handed out, questionnaires could also be downloaded from the Faculty website at: <http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/questionnaires/ugrad-questionnaires> and handed into the Faculty Office.

Students were also reminded of the box on the questionnaire for comments on other aspects of the Philosophy Course, and students were encouraged to use this box for any comments on lectures they attended that were borrowed from other Faculties.

19 Use of the Graduate Centre

It was noted that computers in the Graduate Centre are reserved for Graduate students and visiting graduate students. Computers in the Philosophy Faculty Library are available for use by all students and visiting scholars.

20 Cambridge Open Days

It was noted that the Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduate students would be on Thursday 4 July and Friday 5 July 2019.

21 Any other business

A request to change the timing of the Graduate Seminar was raised and it was agreed that this could be progressed directly with Charlie Evans.

The following information was circulated, on behalf of Jo Harcus:

As the 7th of March is University Mental Health Day, Library staff encourage you all to take a break that day and join them for Philosotea in the Old Library (time to be confirmed). Come along to enjoy a free hot drink, biscuits and healthy snacks and get to know other Philosophy staff and students a little better. We will also be promoting our Wellbeing and Fiction Collections that week in the Library along with other ideas for maintaining good mental health and wellbeing. We hope you can join us but, in the meantime, have a look at the new Wellbeing tab on our Philosophy LibGuide at: <https://bit.ly/2RNV28I>.

A new self-service machine will also shortly be in operation in the Library (hopefully at the end of this week) to allow you to issue and return your own books although you will still have the option to do this at the desk.

Also, don't forget to add your feedback and suggestions to the feedback wall at the library entrance. We welcome your ideas and in response to those already received are busy ordering new chairs, beanbags and blankets and working on a staff photo board. Please keep your feedback coming via the wall, via email or in person.

22 Date of next meeting
7 May 2019