

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE

Minutes

A Meeting of Philosophy Staff and Students was held on Tuesday 6th February 2018 at 1.05 p.m. in the Philosophy Faculty Board Room.

Present: Professor Rae Langton, Dr John Filling (Undergraduate Coordinator), Dr Nakul Krishna (MPhil Course Director), Dr Tim Button (Chair of Examiners), Dr Paulina Sliwa (Director of Graduate Studies), Heather Sanderson (Faculty Administrator), Clare Dickinson (Principal Secretary), Charlie Evans (Graduate Secretary), Tara Khalid, Benjamin Marschall (PhD), Lucy McDonald (PhD), Tor Svenungsson, Isabel Hernandez-Gil Crespo, Eszter Bencsik, Nesta Smith, Ciara Taylor, Anna Simpson (Administrative Assistant).

- 1 Rae Langton put herself forward to chair the meeting.
- 2 Starring of items was invited.
- 3 No apologies were received.
- 4 The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2017 were approved. These minutes were previously circulated to all students via e-mail for information.
- 5 Election of Student Representatives:
Following nominations received by 14th November 2017, the following three students have been appointed as Faculty Board Representatives:
Nesta Smith, Part IB — Churchill College
Tamanna Malik, Part IB — Fitzwilliam College
Benjamin Marschall, Graduate (PhD) — Darwin College
It was noted that the reps can be reached on phil-studentreps@lists.cam.ac.uk

Council representatives – Election of 29 November 2017

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. The new representatives for the Council of the School of the Arts and Humanities are:

Undergraduate rep: Clara Foster
Graduate rep: Konstantinos Lygouris

- 6 a) Proposed changes to the Tripos

Two documents were circulated: the working group report, and an outline of the proposed new paper at IB, History of Analytic Philosophy. The message below from Rae Langton had already been emailed to all undergraduate students:

“We would like to let you know about a new proposal for the Philosophy Tripos which will be on the Agenda for the upcoming Staff-Student meeting. We are glad to have had input from our undergraduate students already via your student representatives at the last Faculty Board meeting, and we look forward to getting more feedback from you. At the Staff-Student meeting, Dr. Paulina Sliwa and I will both be there to answer any questions you might have.

1. The next Staff Student meeting will be at 1.05 on Tuesday February 6th in the Philosophy Board Room. One item on the agenda will be a Proposal about changes to papers in **1A in 2018-19, and 1B in 2019-20.**

We are excited about the proposed structure. We have been working together on thinking the details through, and think the proposed system has many advantages for our students. On this Proposal there will be only one compulsory paper at IB [Note: apart from the General Paper], with needed material put into one course rather than two. There will be no compulsory formal logic at IB. The proposal responds to a number of concerns and requests from our students and from our External Examiners: at IB, questions about whether formal logic should be required for two years, and requests from our students for more choice at IB; at 1A, concerns about the IA General paper, and about the current mix of formal and essay material to be examined in IA Logic. The proposed changes are interdependent: the changes at IA have advantages in themselves, but they also enable us to make these changes at IB. Inevitably there are some costs, but overall, we think that the package is a good one, balancing choice with a need for foundations.

2. I attach two documents: one is the Proposal with proposed changes to IA for 2018-19, and to IB for 2019-20. The other is a separate draft proposal for an optional IB 'History of Analytic Philosophy' paper (this is what the current IB Logic would become).

3. Office hours for questions. I am putting aside the following times for drop-in office hours, to answer in person any questions about this you may have before the meeting.

Friday Feb 2nd 3.00-4.00 pm

Tuesday Feb 6th 10.00 am

I'll be in my office, in the Faculty of Philosophy."

On the proposal in place of two compulsory papers at IB, there would be one. There would also be other changes at Part IA and Part IB. (Note: the General Paper at 1B is also compulsory, but was not being considered.) In outline:

(i) **Changes to IB.** There would be one new compulsory paper, *1B Knowledge, Language and World*. All other IB papers would be optional (apart from the 1B General paper). There would be a new optional paper, *IB History of Analytic Philosophy*.

(ii) **Changes to 1A.** The *IA General Paper* would become *IA Formal Methods* (incorporating the formal part of IA, carrying half the weight of other 1A papers). *1A Logic* would be renamed *1A Meaning*.

All other papers would remain as they are, with adjustment to content in some cases (see *Proposal*). Many topics currently in a compulsory paper have been moved to an optional paper, or (in a few cases) removed.

The Proposal is the outcome of an extensive consultation process over several months, involving Directors of Studies, several Faculty Board meetings, several meetings of student reps, and the results of a student survey from last year. There have also been three Faculty Working Parties, four Caucuses and two meetings of permanent UTOs.

Given their interdependence, changes to 1A would be in 2018-19, changes to 1B would be in 2019-20.

The Proposal has been designed to satisfy many different desiderata and has substantial support from the Faculty Board.

Comments were invited and discussion followed. A variety of points were made by students and staff members. Some of the points are noted below.

The current two compulsory subject IB papers are big and unwieldy. The proposal aims to consolidate the core material. There was some concern from students about their capability of choosing for themselves at IB on the new system. Other students have quite forcefully expressed views that there should be more choice, and are not happy with what is currently compulsory. Students who would prefer not to make more choices at IB could ask their Director of Studies for advice on their options. There was some concern from students about the IA General Paper being removed, but other feedback shows that some students have found this paper more daunting. The General Paper will remain at IB and II. Questions on the General Paper have helped to inspire some students into other areas. Some students said there would be some additional exam preparation at IA. The Faculty would need to monitor feedback from students.

b) Proposed syllabus changes for Tripos 2018-2019:

Other syllabus changes proposed at the Faculty Board meeting held on Monday January 29 2018, following routine Caucus meetings. Proposed changes were circulated. There were no objections.

Note that these will depend on the course of action taken under item 6a.

7 Staff news:

It was reported that Miss Anna Simpson has been appointed to the Administrative Assistant post in the Faculty Office from 15 January 2018 to 30 June 2019. There were a total of 28 applications for the post (5 male, 23 female). This appointment is a secondment, covering Charlie Evans' move to the Graduate office.

8 Discussion Groups for Part IB students:

The following six discussion groups will be running from weeks 2-7 of Lent Term 2018:

Logic – Katie Monk – Mondays 3-4pm, Graduate Common Room

Metaphysics & Epistemology – Li Li Tan – Mondays 1-2pm, Faculty Board Room

Ethics – Claudia Baisini - Tuesdays, 3-4pm, Faculty Board Room

Greek and Roman – Carlo Rossi – Wednesdays 1-2pm, Graduate Common Room

Philosophy of Science - Benjamin Marschall - Thursdays, 1-2pm, Graduate Common Room

Politics – Lucy McDonald – Thursdays 10-11am, Graduate Common Room

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

8 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 16 March at 12 noon**. It was explained that if students miss this

deadline without prior approval from the Chair of Examiners, they will be required to instead sit the written exam for this paper (although students should be aware that Friday 16 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 4 May at 12 noon**. If students miss this deadline without prior approval from the Chair of Examiners, students would then fail that paper, as by May 4, the final deadline would have passed for amending exam entries.

9 Philosophy Examinations/Marking Criteria in 2018

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>

All students should have now also received an email outlining the various exam resources available on the Faculty website.

10 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>

11 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.

12 National Student Survey 2018

The National Student survey was launched in January 2018. 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. The results will not be published unless at least 50% of Philosophy students participate. It was noted that the closing date for completing the survey was 30 April 2018.

13 Graduate Questionnaires

It was reported that the results of the MPhil questionnaire for Michaelmas Term 2017 are available to current graduate students. Please email Charlie Evans first if you wish to see them.

14 Summary Evaluation Sheets for Lectures etc

It was noted that Summary Evaluation sheets for Lectures, Discussion Groups and Logic Classes held in Michaelmas Term 2017 will shortly be available for consultation at the Library Issue Desk. A copy of the general comments made by students during Michaelmas 2017 was circulated for information.

15 Lecture Questionnaires:

Students were reminded that questionnaires will be distributed again at the end of all lecture series' in Lent Term 2018, as well as used to assess Logic Classes and Discussion Groups. Students were reminded that if they would like to give feedback, but miss the session when questionnaires are handed out, questionnaires can also be downloaded from the Faculty website at: <http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/questionnaires/ugrad-questionnaires> Students were also reminded that there is a box on the questionnaire for comments on other aspects of the Philosophy Course, and students are encouraged to use this box for any comments on lectures they attend that are borrowed from other Faculties.

- 16 Use of the Graduate Centre
It was noted that the 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.
- 17 Cambridge Open Days:
It was noted that the Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduate students will be on Thursday 5 July and Friday 6 July 2018.
- 18 Any other business
- 19 Date of next meeting
1 May 2018