

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE

A Meeting of Philosophy Staff and Students was held on Tuesday 15 February 2011 at 1.05 p.m. in the Philosophy Board Room, Faculty of Philosophy, Sidgwick Site.

Present: Margrit Edwards (Chief Secretary), Dr Arif Ahmed (Undergraduate Co-ordinator), Jenni Lecky-Thompson (Librarian), Charlie Evans (Secretarial Assistant), Dr Michael Potter (Director of Graduate Studies), Professor Simon Blackburn (Faculty Chairman), Amanda Cawston, Flora Sisman, Mat Simpson (in the Chair), Stephen Duxbury.

- 1 Starring of items was invited.
- 2 Apologies were received from Heather Sanderson.
- 3 The minutes of the meeting held on 02 November 2010 were approved. These minutes were previously circulated to all students via e-mail for information.
- 4 Election of Student Representatives:
Council representatives – Election of 27 January 2011
It was noted that Student representatives were elected to serve on Councils of the Schools. These representatives were elected by and from the student representatives of the constituent Faculty Boards. It was reported that the new representative for the Council of the School of the Arts and Humanities is:
Marie Leger-St-Jean (Graduate) English
It was further noted that there is currently no undergraduate representative. It was reported that if the current Philosophy Faculty Board Representatives are interested in this position, they should contact Alice Benton, Alice.Benton@admin.cam.ac.uk or Maria Helming, CUSU Education Officer, education@cusu.cam.ac.uk for further information.
- 5 New appointments:
Bertrand Russell Professorship of Philosophy:
It was reported that an offer has been made but that the terms of appointment are still under negotiation.
- 6 Discussion Groups for Part IB students:
It was noted that due to popular demand a request was received by the Faculty to run three extra Part IB Discussion Groups in Metaphysics and Epistemology, Logic, and Political Philosophy. Nathan Wildman, Steven Methven and Sebastian Nye were thanked for agreeing to run these additional groups.
- 7 Possible options for coursework in Part II:
It was noted that at the last Faculty Board meeting on 22 November 2010, the deadline for (Part IB and) Part II extended essays was left unchanged – i.e. the last Friday of Lent Term.

It was also noted that it had been proposed that the deadline for Part II dissertations should be moved to a later date, i.e. the second Friday of the Easter Term, with effect from the academic year 2011–12.

It was reported that The Faculty Board had made no objections to this proposal.

In response to this, the Staff-Student Committee agreed to the proposed later deadline for Part II. It was noted that a firm proposal for the new option of submitting 40% coursework will be agreed with the Education Section and that Mrs Sanderson will report back to the Faculty Board meeting on 7 March 2011.

8 Proposed syllabus changes for Tripos 2011-2012:

It was reported that Caucuses had met in the Michaelmas term 2010 and that they are now suggesting the following changes to the Philosophy syllabus for 2011–2012.

Additions are in bold, deletions are marked as such.

History of Philosophy (3 December 2010)

Part IA, Paper 4 – Set texts (Plato, *Meno* lectures provided by the Faculty of Classics)

[Part IB, Paper 4 now Classical Tripos Part IB, Paper 8 – Greek and Roman Philosophy]

Part IB, Paper 5 – Modern and medieval philosophy

Although it had been suggested to replace Hume in Part IA and Hume and Berkeley in Part IB, it was agreed to leave the above philosophy papers unchanged for the time being. There had been strong support from students for keeping Hume on the syllabus.

Part II, Paper 4 – European philosophy from Kant

- Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* to the end of the Transcendental Dialectic (A704, B732);
- Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Introduction, Consciousness, Self-consciousness (paragraphs 73-230); *Hegel's Logic: being part of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, paragraphs 1–111; *Introduction to Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, as far as (but not including) *The Geographical Basis of World History*;
- Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ~~*The Gay Science*~~, *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

It is suggested to remove 'The Gay Science' from the syllabus but to leave it as supplementary reading on the reading list.

Students taking Part II, Paper 4, are not debarred from taking Paper C11, Metaphysics from the Theological and Religious Studies Tripos. Dr Sacha Golob has kindly agreed to liaise with Professor Sarah Coakley to ensure that there would be no significant overlap with the Philosophy paper.

Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind (29 November 2010)

Part IA, Paper 1 – Metaphysics and philosophy of mind

- God: existence of; the problem of evil; miracles.
- **Causality Causation**: regularity; necessitation; determinism and fatalism.
- Free will: ~~agency~~; concepts of freedom.
- Mind and matter; personal identity.
- Knowledge and skepticism; induction.

It had been suggested to delete 'causality: regularity; necessitation, and ;agency'. It is now suggested to leave 'Causality' but to rename it 'Causation' and to delete 'agency'. It is further suggested to steer the readings for 'Causation' by means of the reading list.

It was agreed to leave the following papers unchanged:
 Part IB, Paper 1, Metaphysics and epistemology
 Part II, Paper 1, Metaphysics
 Part II, Paper 2, Philosophy of mind
 Part II, Paper 9, Special subject: Wittgenstein

Logic and Philosophy of Science (2 December 2010)

No changes were suggested for the following papers:
 Part IA, Paper 3 – Logic
 Part IB, Paper 2 – Logic
 Part IB, Paper 6 – Philosophy of science
 Part II, Paper 7 – Mathematical logic
 Part II, Paper 8 – Philosophical logic

Part IB, Paper 6 – Philosophy of science

It was noted that HPS is in the process of revising some of their Part II syllabus paper titles and content.

Ethics, Political Philosophy and Aesthetics (3 December 2010)

Part IA, Paper 2, Ethics

It was agreed to include 'and political philosophy' in the title of this paper, i.e.

Part IA, Paper 2, Ethics **and political philosophy**

Part IB, Paper 3, Ethics

No suggested changes.

Part IB, Paper 7, Political philosophy

No suggested changes other than a small correction in a punctuation: i.e. change the colon after 'Nozick' to a semicolon.

Part II, Paper 3 – Ethics

- The ends of action: needs and interests; preference and value; prudence and time-preference; well-being.
- Metaethics: realism; expressivism and quasi-realism; irrealism.
- Biomedical ethics: prenatal screening and abortion; genetic engineering and eugenics; ~~resource allocation~~ **health and healthcare**.
- Ethics and organisations: corporate agency; corporate responsibility; trust and accountability.
- Set Text: Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, with special reference to the following topics: the categorical imperative; duty and motive; morality and freedom.

It is suggested to delete 'resource allocation' and replace it with 'health and healthcare'.

There is also a small correction in a punctuation: i.e. change the semicolon after 'Biomedical ethics' to a colon.

Part II, Paper 10 – Political philosophy

- Distributive justice: commodification; international justice; justice and age groups; justice and future generations.
- Community and culture: political liberalism; communitarianism; multiculturalism; nationalism.
- Feminism: economic justice and gender; the ethics of care; gender and difference; pornography; ~~sexual harassment~~ **masculinity and femininity**.

It is suggested to replace 'sexual harassment' by 'masculinity and femininity'.

Part II, Paper 11 – Aesthetics
No suggested changes.

It was agreed to contact Sarah Fine (Junior Research Fellow, Corpus Christi) about lecturing in political philosophy areas in 2011–2012.

It was noted that all the above suggested changes had been approved by the Faculty Board. Mat Simpson reported that he and Flora Sisman had consulted with the student body, and that they were happy with all the above proposed changes. Therefore, as the Staff-Student Committee raised no objections to these changes, they will be implemented with effect from October 2011.

9 Graduate Questionnaires

Summaries of the following two questionnaires were circulated:

- MPhil Questionnaire, end of Michaelmas Term 2010
- PhD Questionnaire, Michaelmas Term 2010

It was noted that all 17 MPhil students submitted a questionnaire. 7 students gave their course the maximum grading of 5, 8 graded it 4, 1 student graded it 2 and 1 student did not yet feel in a position to grade the course.

It was noted that nearly all students' expectations of their supervisors had been met. One student was dissatisfied.

It was agreed that a similar questionnaire, concerning MPhil students' second and third essays, be sent to MPhil students at the end of Lent Term.

It was reported that PhD students commented that the Faculty colloquium had again been excellent, although it would benefit further from the attendance of more Faculty members. One student suggested that members of the Faculty might like to convene a weekly or fortnightly seminar based on their latest book. It was further suggested that although the notes on 'Getting published' were helpful, face-to-face advice would be better.

10 Sharing of lectures with HPS- Provision of reading material.

It was reported that HPS are increasingly using CamTools to provide electronic access to journal articles and book chapters for HPS courses. It was noted that access is restricted to the students to whom the reading list applies to due to copyright restrictions. It was further noted that this makes it difficult for Philosophy students to access HPS readings. It was reported that it has therefore been agreed that HPS send relevant readings to the Philosophy librarian so that they can be put on the Philosophy CamTools site.

11 Lecture Questionnaires:

Students were reminded that the Faculty has reverted to using paper questionnaires, and that these will be distributed at the end of all lecture series in each term, as well as being used to assess Logic Classes and Discussion Groups. It was noted that if students would like to give feedback, but miss the session when questionnaires are handed out, then questionnaires can also be downloaded from the Faculty website at: http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/u_grads/questionnaires/ugrad_questionnaires.html

It was noted that two slight changes have been made to the Lecture Questionnaire from Lent Term 2011, in response to discussions held at Faculty Board on Monday 31st January. It was reported that these discussions had centred on the fact that there is currently no mechanism for the Faculty to obtain feedback from philosophy students attending recommended lectures

provided by other faculties/departments or for papers philosophy borrows from other faculties. It was noted that there is also no mechanism for the Philosophy Faculty to pass on feedback from non-Philosophy students attending Philosophy lectures to their own departments/faculties. It was further noted that this may be of particular interest where other faculties/departments borrow philosophy paper(s), but may also be relevant for cross-listed lectures.

It was reported that in response to this, at the top of the lecture questionnaire, there is now a section for students to record which Faculty they are from, so that lecturers can take on board feedback from students from Faculties other than Philosophy.

It was reported in addition that in order to give students the possibility to comment on lectures they attend that are run by other Faculties, the wording of Section 9 of the lecture questionnaire has been amended. It previously read:

If you have any comments about aspects of the philosophy courses other than this one, please state them here

The wording is now:

If you have any comments about aspects of the philosophy courses other than this one (including those run by other Faculties), please state them here:

The Committee was invited to give further comments on this issue of lecture feedback. Flora Sisman reported that students had given her some email feedback on lectures they attended that are put on by other Faculties. It was noted that (limited) feedback on Divinity lectures had been positive, but that there had been some negative feedback about Classics lectures, with students in particular commenting that quote and terminology in lectures would sometimes not be translated from Greek, which would make it very difficult for Philosophy students to follow. It was reported that there had been mixed feedback on HPS lectures, and it was agreed that copies of this feedback would be passed to the Faculty Office. Mat Simpson felt that the best way of getting feedback from lectures run by other Faculties would be to further publicise to students that the Faculty's lecture questionnaire is available at all times on the Faculty website, and can be used by students to comment on lectures external to the Philosophy Faculty which they might have concerns about. It was clarified that completed questionnaires can be left anonymously in a box by the photocopier just outside the Faculty Office. Students were also reminded that they can contact the Faculty Office direct with any concerns relating to lectures by emailing phil-admin@lists.cam.ac.uk. Students were also reminded that comments/concerns can be submitted by filling in a suggestion slip and leaving it in the suggestion box, located next to the water cooler in the Old Library area.

12 Part II References

It was reported that Mat Simpson had received an email from a Part II student and an associated graduate who felt that there is a disparity in contact with senior members of staff for Part II students, often depending on the student's College and Director of Studies. It was noted that this becomes an issue when students are applying for post-graduate study; as some are lucky enough to have a senior referee, whilst some will not. It was further noted that whilst the student representatives do not believe that having a graduate student as a supervisor is detrimental to supervision quality, they do think that a reference from a senior member is more valuable, or at least is perceived by students as more valuable, than a reference from a graduate student. It was also reported

that some students who the student representatives have spoken to have pointed out that you can choose supervisors at Part II, while others have agreed that the system seems unfair.

Mat Simpson reported that he had received feedback from 12 students on this topic, with 7 saying they thought it was a problem, 2 who felt it wasn't, and 3 who weren't sure. Mat then asked the Faculty staff at the meeting to clarify whether there is choice of supervisor at Part II, and if there was anything else they could do about this, because it seems to mean that for some people, their choice of College could genuinely affect their prospects after their degree. Dr Michael Potter explained that students can have an input on who their supervisors are, although they cannot formally choose them, as this is the job of their Director of Studies. Michael Potter also acknowledged that it is true that a reference from someone like Simon Blackburn would have more impact than a reference from a graduate supervisor. It was agreed that for a student planning on graduate study, it would be reasonable for them to ask their DOS to ensure that not all their supervisors were graduates. Dr Arif Ahmed recommended that for students considering graduate study, they should contact their Director of Studies straight after their Part IB exams to explain that they would not want all their supervisors to be graduates, and then there shouldn't be a problem in arranging this.

13 Exam Rubric - Essay Paper

Mat Simpson reported that he had been contacted by a student who had pointed out that the rubric on the Essay Paper is ambiguous and that it has varied from year to year. It was reported that the Faculty has previously been made aware of this, but that the student wished to discuss the issue fully because it was not clear exactly what the restrictions are for the essay paper. A document was circulated to explain this issue properly. Mat further explained that the change in the rubric had caused problems for students revising from past papers, and expecting the rubric to still be the same in the 2010 exams. (It was noted that the rubric had changed from:

Your essay must not overlap substantially with the content of any essay that you submitted for assessment in place of taking another paper to:

Your essay must not overlap substantially with the content of any other essay that you have submitted as part of this examination.)

Mat Simpson asked for clarification on this matter. Dr Arif Ahmed agreed that the Faculty needs to take a decision to make sure that the guidance on the overlapping of essays written for the Essay papers is unambiguous. Dr Ahmed agreed that he would raise this matter at the next Faculty Board meeting on 7 March 2011, so that clear advice could be given to all three year groups. Mat Simpson also noted that the IA Essay paper does not mention the issue of overlapping, but that he had been made aware of this by his Director of Studies. However, it was not clear if all Directors of Studies would give the same advice, which further underlined the need for clarification. Dr Michael Potter reported that overlapping material in the essay paper is in fact not often a problem, and that examiners are more concerned by the use of "regurgitated" answers. However, it was agreed that the current rubric could

still be confusing for students who were trying to stick to the guidelines, and wanted to be clear on what content was acceptable for their essays.

14 Library Committee meeting:

It was noted that the date for the Library Committee meeting this year is Tuesday, 22 February 2011 at 1.05 p.m. in the Faculty Board Room.

15 Careers Service:

It was reported that the Careers Service gave a short presentation at the Faculty's Introductory Day in October 2010. Students were reminded that the Careers Service provides careers advice and information to all current University of Cambridge undergraduate and postgraduate students. Students were further reminded that they can register with the Careers Service to receive news and vacancies direct to their mailbox:
<http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/>

16 Cambridge Open Days:

It was noted that the Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduate students will be on Thursday 7 and Friday 8 July 2011.

17 Sutton Trust Summer School – 2011:

It was reported that the Summer School course in Theology, Religious Studies and Philosophy has been allocated the week of 18 – 22 July 2011. There will be 10 participant places (reduced from 15 in 2010).

It was noted that academic sessions will take place at various times (to be confirmed) on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and on Friday morning.

It was further noted that Heather Sanderson is liaising with the Faculty of Divinity about the timetable, and will email all current graduate students in due course with an invitation to lead sessions (for which they will be paid).

It was also reported that the Admissions Office have factored in time for a subject and department/faculty specific admissions talk, as there has been strong participant feedback asking for this across all summer schools. Dr Arif Ahmed (Undergraduate Co-ordinator) has agreed to do the session on Philosophy admissions on Friday 22 July 2011. It was further reported that this talk will also be supplemented by a general admissions and student finance talk, organised by CAO, during the week.

18 Cambridge Festival of Ideas:

It was noted that the third Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Festival, the 'Cambridge Festival of Ideas' will take place from 19 October – 30 October 2011. It was also noted that Professor John O'Neill (Manchester) will give a talk on environmental ethics, provisional date 28 October 2011.

It was reported that Professor David Luban (Georgetown) will give the 6th **Routledge Lecture** on torture on 21 October 2011.

19 Alumni Weekend 2011, (23–25 September 2011):

It was noted that Professor Derek Matravers agreed to give a talk on aesthetics.

- 20 Event reminder:
5th Routledge Lecture: (Please note the change of time from 5.15 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.)
The 5th Routledge Lecture will be on 15 March 2011 at 5.30 p.m. in Little Hall. The speaker is Professor T M Scanlon from Harvard University. The title of the lecture: Value in Morality and Politics.
- 21 Any other business
There was no other business raised.

The meeting ended at 13.15 hrs.