

STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE
Minutes

A Meeting of Philosophy Staff and Students was held on Tuesday 7 February 2012 at 1.05 p.m. in the Philosophy Board Room, Faculty of Philosophy, Sidgwick Site.

Present: Margrit Edwards (Chief Secretary), Heather Sanderson (Administrator), Jenni Lecky-Thompson (Librarian), Charlie Evans (Secretarial Assistant), Professor Tim Crane (Faculty Chair), Professor Jane Heal (MPhil Course Director), Dr Arif Ahmed (Undergraduate Co-ordinator), Prof Michael Potter (Director of Graduate Studies) Flora Sisman, Rachel Robertson, Vittoria Fallanca, Yiqing Hu, Beatrice Patrick and Katharine Jenkins.

- 1 Starring of items was invited.
- 2 No apologies for absence were received.
- 3 The minutes of the meeting held on 08 November 2011 were approved. These minutes had previously been circulated to all students via e-mail for information.

4 Election of Student Representatives:

It was reported that following the election on Tuesday 29th November 2011, the following three students have been appointed as Faculty Board Representatives:
Vittoria Fallanca, Part IA — Churchill College
Beatrice Patrick, Part II — Newnham College
Katharine Jenkins, Graduate (MPhil) — Emmanuel College

Council representatives – Election of 26 January 2012

It was further noted that this year, all students on the electoral roll were 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 there were no candidates for the post of graduate representative. Students have not yet been advised who the new undergraduate representative for the Council of the School of the Arts and Humanities is.

5 New appointments:

Senior Accounts Clerk:

It was reported that Mr Louis Wenham is the Faculty's new part-time Senior Accounts Clerk. It was noted that he works in room 324 late mornings on Thursdays and Fridays.

Academic vacancies: three lecturer posts:

It was reported that the Faculty is recruiting for one post for History of Modern Philosophy, one post for Ethics (broadly conceived) and one post in a central area of philosophy.

It was further noted that it is expected that all three posts will be filled by 1 October 2012.

Rescheduling of some lectures/seminars during recruitment process:

Students were informed that unfortunately there will have to be some rescheduling of lectures/seminars during the recruitment process. It was noted that students will be e-mailed with details shortly.

6 Discussion Groups for Part IB students:

It was noted that the following five discussion groups will be running from weeks 2-7 of Lent Term 2012:

Metaphysics & epistemology – Tom Simpson – Friday, 12-1pm, LB12

Ethics – Seb Nye - Monday, 4-5pm, LB11

Modern & Medieval philosophy – Alexander Greenberg – Tuesday 4-5pm, RFB 315A

Philosophy of Science – Alexis Papazoglou - Wednesday, 12-1pm, LB12

Political Philosophy - Sebastian Nye - Thursday, 3-4pm, LB11

It was further noted that for this year, IB discussion group readings and reading lists have been made available to students on CamTools.

7 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 16th March at 12 noon**. It was noted 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 were made aware that Friday 16th March is also the deadline for final 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 4th May at 12 noon**. It was noted that if students miss this deadline without prior approval from the Chair of Examiners, students will then fail that paper, as by May 4th, the final deadline would have passed for amending exam entries.

8 Philosophy Examinations in 2012

Student's attention was drawn to the publication in the *Reporter* of the revised rubrics for the essay papers:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2011-12/weekly/6251/section6.shtml>

Students were also reminded that for the Essay Papers, examiners will continue with the movement towards setting topics such as "Rationalism and sufficient reason" (not just "rationalism") or "Scepticism and self-refutation" (not just "scepticism"), "Solitary rule-following" (not just "rule-following") etc.

9 Recycling of material in the Tripos Examinations

The Faculty Board Reps explained that they wished to discuss the recycling policy agreed on at Faculty Board at its meeting held on January 30th 2012, in order to determine how the policy will be phrased. Bea Patrick explained that students were concerned that the policy might still be ambiguous, as the definition of recycling at Faculty Board had not been what all students had expected. Some students had been concerned that they would be actively penalized for repeating any material, no matter how small the amount, in one essay that had previously been used in another. Arif Ahmed circulated a document with some draft wording to be included in the Tripos marking criteria, which stated that students would "not receive additional credit for recycled material". Heather Sanderson also suggested that it might be helpful to still retain the word "substantial" as used in the current exam rubric, to make it clear that substantial amount of recycling of material would mean that they would not get credit twice. Arif Ahmed agreed that 'proportionality' would be built into this proposal, so that re-using one or two sentences, or mentioning one idea also referred to in another essay would not be prohibited, but would not gain the student extra credit. Students said that they were broadly happy with Dr Ahmed's proposed wording, but would like

it made clear that including some recycled material in an essay in an exam would not make the whole essay inadmissible. Jane Heal also explained to students that it would be acceptable for a student to report in one essay an argument used in another, as the premise for then continuing and expanding on ideas in another essay. Michael Potter explained that by making it clear that recycling would not receive additional credit, the Faculty was not in any way aiming to penalize conscientious students, but to try to discourage students from trying to get away with doing minimal preparation for exams. Flora Simpson raised the issue of there being some overlap in the syllabus between papers in Part II – for example the topic of rule following, and whether this would make it more difficult for students to avoid recycling material. However, it was explained that this is why there are asterixed questions stopping students from answering questions where themes overlap.

10 Proposed syllabus changes for Tripos 2012-2013:

Students were asked to note the syllabus changes proposed at the Faculty Board meeting held on Monday January 30th 2012:

Part IA

3. *Logic*

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least eight set, including at least one from each section.

Section A: Formal Logic

- Basic concepts: formalized languages; object-language and metalanguage; use and mention; validity, implication and consistency.
- Propositional logic: truth-functions, tautologies, proof; soundness and completeness.
- Introduction to predicate logic: the language of quantifiers and variables; validity and counterexamples; elements of the logic of identity.
- Classes and relations.
- Elements of probability calculus.

Section B: Philosophical logic

- Problems of translation between natural and formal languages.
- ~~The elements of arguments: sentences, statements and propositions.~~
- The theory of descriptions.
- Necessity, analyticity and the a priori.
- ~~Meaning and verification.~~ , **intention and conventions.**

Part IB

Metaphysics and epistemology

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Perception: direct and representational theories ~~of perception; primary and secondary qualities.~~
- **Primary and secondary qualities.**
- **The metaphysics of modality.**
- Knowledge, including a priori knowledge; externalist and internalist theories of justification; the possibility and significance of scepticism; transcendental arguments.
- ~~Truth: semantic, redundancy, correspondence and coherence theories of truth.~~
- Theories of the nature of mind: marks of the mental; dualism; behaviourism; mind-brain identity; functionalism; anomalous monism; eliminativism; mechanism and computation.

Logic

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Theories of meaning: compositionality of meaning; **meaning, truth and intentions; force and content. verificationism.**
- **Truth: semantic, redundancy, correspondence and coherence theories of truth.**
- Quantifiers: the semantics of quantified sentences; referential and substitutional readings.
- Logical form: the purposes of formalisation; logical form and theories of meaning.
- Names and descriptions: sense and reference; Russell's theory of descriptions; causal theory of names; identity.
- Variants of classical logic: elements of modal logic; **the uses and nature of possible worlds; intuitionistic logic; problems with intensional contexts.**
- Theories: the axiomatic method; informal and formal theories; examples.

5. Modern and medieval philosophy

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least fifteen set.

- ~~Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* Book 5.~~
- ~~William Ockham, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents.*~~
- **Abelard *Collationes***
- **Ibn Tufayl *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan***
- Descartes, *Meditations on first philosophy.*
- Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics and The Monadology.*
- Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding.*
- Berkeley, *The Principles of Human Knowledge, and Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous.*
- Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I and Appendix.

Some comparative questions may be set.

6. Philosophy of science

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

- Realism, for and against: underdetermination of theory by data, the pessimistic induction, constructive empiricism, structural realism, **incommensurability.**
- Confirmation: the hypothetico-deductive model; the 'ravens' paradox; the 'grue' paradox; Bayesian responses; **falsificationism.**
- Explanation and laws: the deductive-nomological model; causal and other models of explanation; 'best system' vs anti-reductionist views of laws.
- ~~Popper vs Kuhn; falsificationism; Kuhn on scientific revolutions; incommensurability.~~
- Philosophy of biology: **adaptation, fitness and natural selection; biological function; evolution and altruism. biological kinds, the nature of species, biological laws, functional and causal explanation in biology.**
- Concepts of probability: subjective probability; logical probability; frequency interpretation; propensity interpretation.
- **Philosophy of physics: spacetime and relativity; time and thermodynamics; puzzles of quantum theory.**

Part II

Metaphysics

Candidates are asked to answer three questions.

Candidates also taking Paper 9 may not answer questions in this paper on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, which will be marked with an asterisk (*). The paper will be set in such a way that there are at least ten questions not marked with an asterisk.

- Realism and idealism: varieties of realism; **relativism and alternative** conceptual schemes.

- Particulars, properties, and facts: the contrast of particular and universal, and of abstract and concrete; the constituents and roles of facts; nominalism; conceptualism; realism; tropes.
- Causation: ~~causation and explanation; indeterministic causation~~ **causation and agency; realism about causation, for and against; direction of causation.**
- Time: tensed and tenseless theories; differences between time and space.
- Persons: their persistence and unity; their metaphysical status.
- *Set text: Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

9. *Special subject specified by the Faculty Board*

In **2012 2013**: Wittgenstein

Candidates are asked to answer three questions out of at least ten set.

Candidates taking this paper are barred from answering asterisked (*) questions in Paper 1, Metaphysics and in Paper 2, Philosophy of mind.

- *Tractatus*
- *Philosophical Investigations*
- *On Certainty*
- Study of the following topics is also included: the development throughout Wittgenstein's work of his views on solipsism and the self, and the nature of philosophy.

It was reported that all the above suggested changes had been approved by the Faculty Board and that unless the Staff-Student Committee had any strong objections to any of these changes they would be implemented with effect from October 2012. Katherine Jenkins queried the reasoning behind taking verification of the IA Logic syllabus when Quine's "Two Dogma's" was still on the IA reading list, but it was confirmed that this will now be moved to the IB reading list, and the whole topic in fact moved into the IB syllabus. Apart from this query, students agreed with the suggested syllabus changes.

11 Potential Workshop for Undergraduates on how to "Self-Mark

It was explained that when new graduates become supervisors they are given advice on how to assess undergraduate essays. It was reported that it had been suggested in a previous Faculty Board that it might be useful to duplicate some of this material and have a workshop for undergraduates so that they could learn how to "self mark" better, building on the Exam Technique sessions that were previously run by Prof Jane Heal. It was explained that such sessions could also help to make the marking scheme more transparent, especially as supervisors don't usually give marks for essays during the year, meaning that students would like to get a sense of the standard required before going into the exams. Prof Tim Crane said it would be useful to reflect on what is already offered to students in this regard. For example, students are offered revision supervisions, organised by their DOS's, which give the opportunity for a student to write an essay under exam conditions, and then be given feedback on this essay, which Prof Crane argued would be much more individually tailored than holding a more general workshop. Prof Crane also suggested that it would not be beneficial to have a rule where supervisors were required to mark essays, as this could be misleading. Most supervisors are not experienced in marking exam scripts, and so the mark they would give would not necessarily be reflective of the mark that essay would get during an exam. It is also important for students to remember that all essays written during exams are assessed by two markers – there is not a "mechanical process" for marking exams, and it wouldn't be right to give students this impression. Katharine Jenkins said from the point of view of being a supervisor, she also felt it was important not to expect supervisors to mark essays, as she wouldn't feel comfortable doing this. Tim Crane

explained that broadly, during exams, some students get a first, more get a 2:1, and some get a 2:2. He said that if a student was at risk of getting a 2:2, this would be picked up during the year and could be addressed. Tim Crane felt that what students were more interested in was how to write a first class essay, and he hoped that the guidelines which Dr Hallvard Lillehammer is currently working on will make this clearer. Heather Sanderson and Margrit Edwards explained to students that they had spoken with both Jane Heal (who had previously run the Exam Technique workshops), and Clare Chambers, (who will run the session at the end of Lent Term 2012) to ensure that Jane Heal would pass on to Dr Chambers examples from actual exam scripts which she had used in her sessions, and which students had previously found very helpful. Jane Heal agreed with Tim Crane that requiring supervisors to give marks would not be helpful, and also agreed with the value of revision supervisors. However, she did say that it is sometimes difficult to advise students on how to improve their essays – it is one thing to say something like “try to be more concise” or “order your points better” and another thing for a student to actually grasp how to do this. Jane Heal explained that she felt that there is a lot of value in confronting students with other people’s work, in order for them to see concrete examples of how to improve. She recommended that students get together and exchange essays, and discuss the comments they had received for their work. Building on this, Michael Potter suggested that it might be helpful to post up on the Philosophy website actual examples of exam essays, explaining why the essay was graded a 2:1, 2:2, etc. There was discussion of whether to ask IA students if they would be prepared to give their permission for their answers to be used (anonymously) on the Philosophy website in this way. It was suggested that students might want to agree for their essay to be used, but perhaps after a year or two, in case they were unhappy with the mark their essay received. It was suggested that in the first instance, Arif Ahmed (who had previously written two sample essays for his students – one of a high standard, and one of a low standard) and Jane Heal (who had previously obtained the permission of some students to use excerpts of their exam scripts) would pool resources to see what they could make available to students online. It was agreed to ask this year's Part IA students at the end of their exam period whether they would be willing to make their anonymised work available on the philosophy website so future students may see examples of work achieving the whole range of grades. Students needed to be asked if there should be a waiting period before their work can be used in this way.

12 Professor Geuss's Lectures Michaelmas Term 2011

It was reported that a number of students had complained that Professor Geuss held one of his lectures in the Lady Mitchell Hall during the occupation and strike last term. It was noted that Professor Geuss has now confirmed that he will give 'two further lectures at the beginning of the Easter Term for anyone who felt they were disadvantaged by his decision – or for that matter, for anyone else who wished to attend'.

13 Gender within the Philosophy Faculty

The Faculty Board Reps explained that they would like to discuss a proposal to set up a working group to draw up some best practice policies, especially for discussion groups and seminars. Bea Patrick said that she had received feedback from students indicating that they felt that discussion groups were often dominated by male voices. Students felt that some discussion group leaders do not make a concerted effort to hear voices who haven't spoken. It was felt that guidelines were needed to address

this – Katherine Jenkins suggested that a working party was needed to reflect on best practice for both discussion groups and logic classes, and to consider holistically best gender practice within the Faculty. Arif Ahmed explained that there are already current guidelines/aims for the running of discussion groups in the Faculty, and asked whether the aim of this working group would be to add or subtract from these aims. Katharine explained that she felt that as this was an area where women were particularly affected, guidelines needed to be drawn up that would specifically address this gender issue. There was some discussion over whether this did in fact need to be treated as a gender issue, or should be seen more as working towards positively including all students within the discussion groups without focusing on any one group. Arif Ahmed, in his position as undergraduate co-ordinator, noted that no concerns relating to gender issues in discussion groups or logic classes had been brought up in the questionnaires returned at the end of Michaelmas Term 2011. Michael Potter explained that leading discussion groups and seminars is very hard especially for graduate students who might be more accustomed to running one to one supervisions. There might be a tendency to encourage anyone who wishes to speak, but this can then lead to someone dominating the group. Michael Potter suggested that just coming up with more guidelines for group leaders wouldn't be the solution. Instead, he suggested that mentoring of group leaders – ie having a more experienced member of staff sitting in on at least one session to give feedback on how to improve inclusion within that group would be beneficial. It was also suggested that recognized techniques for including all students in discussions could be stressed/mentioned in the initial session for discussion group leaders at the beginning of Michaelmas term. Jane Heal mentioned that at the first meeting of a discussion group, it would be helpful to get everyone to speak on a non threatening topic, or to get groups to work in pairs initially to help people in the group to feel relaxed. Arif Ahmed also mentioned that there is a lot of useful information on the Education Section website

(<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/lts/examples/index.html>)

with regards to techniques to be used to encourage participation, and it was felt that mentoring discussion group leaders would help to underline the effectiveness of these techniques. Katherine Jenkins mentioned that some female undergraduates had reported, and she agreed, that there is a particular gender problem in logic classes because there is a stereotype of men being better at logic than women.

Katherine felt that this problem could be addressed by ensuring as far as possible that female leaders or markers are spread out across the groups. It was decided that the student representatives would contact the Faculty's Gender Champion, Jane Heal, to discuss instigating a working group to consider the potential gender issues linked to discussion groups/logic classes, and to come up with some more concrete proposals to bring back to the Staff-Student Committee, and then potentially to take to Faculty Board. Dr Arif Ahmed indicated that he would also be on this group, in his role as undergraduate co-ordinator. It was also emphasized at the end of the discussion, that it was felt that in any case it would be helpful to move forward with the idea of mentoring discussion group leaders.

14 Introductory Day

The Faculty Board Reps wished to discuss the format of the Introductory Day, in particular the possibility of having a female member of the Faculty speak in the introductory talk to make the whole day feel more gender balanced, as well as to discuss ways for the new undergraduates to get to know each other better through some activities on the day. Vittoria Fallanca reported that some students might have come away from the Introductory Day in October 2011 with the feeling that the

Philosophy Faculty is very male dominated, as only male members of the Faculty spoke to students (although Flora Sisman, the current Faculty Rep, addressed new students and spoke briefly about being a student representative). It was pointed out that it is the Chair of the Faculty and the Undergraduate Co-ordinator who speak, so it just depends on who holds that role in any one year. It was suggested that the Gender Champion could also speak at the Introductory Day, or at least be identified. Flora Sisman suggested that it might be helpful to provide, in students Introductory Packs, a list of key members of staff, such as the Gender Champion, along with their photographs, to help students get to know members of staff. Katharine Jenkins underlined how the drop off rate for females continuing to graduate study and beyond in Philosophy is high, and so the visibility of female academic staff for new undergraduates is important. Vittoria Fallanca went on to suggest that it might be helpful to have more involvement from Faculty Reps during the tea and coffee section of the Introductory Day – such as an informal question and answer session, etc, just to give this part of the day a bit more structure, and to get students talking to each other. It was agreed to involve students reps in the Introductory Day more in the future.

15 Graduate Questionnaires

MPhil Questionnaire, end of Michaelmas Term 2011

It was reported that 12 out of 17 students completed a questionnaire. 7 of these students gave the course the highest overall ranking, the remaining 5 students scored the course 4 out of 5.

It was noted that the MPhil seminar was praised in that it provided a forum for discussing ideas and mutual support. It was further noted that a possible improvement to the course would be an additional informal MPhil seminar to discuss work; splitting the philosophical logic, metaphysics and epistemology categories as they are currently too encompassing.

No particular concerns were raised.

PhD 7th Term Questionnaire, Michaelmas Term 2011

As only 2 out of 7 questionnaires were returned initially, it was noted that a summary will be submitted to the Faculty Board on 5 March 2012.

16 Lecture Questionnaires:

Students were reminded that questionnaires will be distributed again at the end of all lecture series' in Lent Term 2012, as well as 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, questionnaires can also be downloaded from the Faculty website at:

http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/u_grads/questionnaires/ugrad_questionnaires.html

17 Lecture Evaluation Sheets:

It was reported that summary Evaluation sheets for Lectures, Discussion Groups and Logic Classes held in Michaelmas Term 2011 are now available for consultation at the Library Issue Desk.

18 Library Committee meeting:

It was noted that the date for the meeting this year will be Thursday 1st March at 1.05pm in the Philosophy Faculty Board Room.

19 Library Questionnaire

It was reported that the annual library questionnaire will run between 13- 24 February. Students were encouraged to complete one to provide valuable

feedback about the library and its services. All completed questionnaires will be entered into a prize draw with a chance to win £25 Amazon vouchers.

20 Careers Service:

It was noted that Mr David Ainscough from the Careers Service would be holding a lecture for mainly 2nd year Philosophy students in the afternoon on Tuesday 7th February with information specifically tailored to Philosophy students, used to ensure 2nd year students are actively engaged in their career process. Prof Tim Crane encouraged students to attend, and emphasised that this would be a useful tool. It was further noted that after the lecture Mr Ainscough would be giving one-to-one guidance interviews to those who wished it in the Faculty.

21 Cambridge Open Days:

It was noted that the Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduate students will be on Thursday 5 and Friday 6 July 2012.

22 Event reminder:

It was reported that Professor Susan Wolf, University of North Carolina, College of Arts & Sciences, Chapel Hill, has agreed to give the 7th Routledge Lecture in 2012/2013. Date to be announced.

23 Any other business

Style Guide for Dissertations and Extended Essays

Flora Sisman mentioned that when looking through examples of extended essays and dissertations in the library, she had noticed that they did not adhere to the guidelines in the the style guide (which can be found at: http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/u_grads/u_grads_intro.html) which suggests that there should be no spaces between paragraphs. Prof Potter, who wrote the guidelines, underlined that they were not prescriptive, and simply a suggestion of how best to present work.

The meeting ended at 1.55pm.