

# FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

## STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

A Meeting of Philosophy Staff and Students was held on Tuesday 30 October 2012 at 1.05 p.m. in Raised Faculty Building Room 326, Sidgwick Site.

Present: Margrit Edwards (Principal Secretary), Heather Sanderson (Administrator), Jenni Lecky-Thompson (Librarian), Charlie Evans (Secretarial Assistant), Professor Tim Crane (Faculty Chair), Fraser MacBride (Director of Graduate Studies), Huw Price (MPhil Course Director), Adam Lalak, Rachel Robertson, Vittoria Fallanca, Mike Hastings .

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- 1 Starring of items was invited.
- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Peter Zhokovsky and Neal Carrier.
- 3 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2012 were approved. These minutes were previously circulated to all students via e-mail for information.
- 4 Tim Crane suggested that Vittoria Fallanca might like to act as Chair of the Committee. Vittoria said that she would be happy to do this, and this was agreed on by all present.
- 5 Staffing Matters:  
It was noted that the Principal Secretary, Margrit Edwards, is retiring on 31 December 2012. It was further noted that this post is currently being advertised.
- 6 Old Library:  
New students were reminded that the Old Library is a common area where undergraduate students can meet informally, have coffee/tea and discuss philosophy. Due to the nature of the location it was emphasized that discussions will have to be kept fairly quiet because of the various offices adjacent to it.
- 7 Election of Student Representatives:  
*Faculty Board in class (f)*  
It was noted that the elections for student representatives on the Philosophy Faculty Board will be held on **Tuesday 27 November 2012** with the closing of nominations a week earlier on **20 November 2012**.

It was reported that this year, as agreed at the Open Meeting of the Staff-Student Committee held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012, the Faculty will continue to use an online voting system for the student elections. It was noted that more details about this voting system will be sent to students in due course.

### *Council representatives*

It was noted that all students on the electoral roll will also have the chance to be elected to serve on Councils of the Schools. It was further noted that these elections will use the on-line ballot and will be managed by the Education Section. Students were informed that the date of these elections has yet to be confirmed by the Council of the Schools, but is likely to take place on the same day as the elections for Faculty Board Representatives. Students were also informed that CUSU and the Education Section will contact them directly about this.

- 8 Faculty of Philosophy – Casimir Lewy Library Committee:  
It was noted that the date of the meeting will be announced in due course.

Elections for Student Representatives take place in November, as above. It was reported that the Library Committee meeting takes place in the Lent Term to ensure that newly elected Faculty Board Representatives can be present at that meeting.

The Library Committee consists of the following members:

The Librarian  
 The Chair of the Faculty  
 The Secretary of the Faculty  
 The Director of Graduate Studies  
 The Undergraduate Co-ordinator  
 The Chair of the Staff Student Committee  
 The two Undergraduate Representatives on the Faculty Board  
 The Graduate Representative on the Faculty Board

9 Library Opening Hours

Students were informed that the Philosophy Library is now open from 9 am Mon-Fri during full term on a trial basis for this academic year, in response to requests from students.

10 Part II, Paper 6, Philosophy of science:

It was noted that at the meeting of the Faculty Board on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October, a proposal from Dr Arif Ahmed was circulated, together with a specimen reading list and an exam paper. This proposal was also re-circulated ahead of the SSC Meeting.

It was further noted that Dr Ahmed suggested at the meeting that the Faculty revive Part II, Paper 6, Philosophy of Science, with effect from October 2013. The paper had been suspended from Tripos 2006 on the grounds of lack of teaching resources. It was reported that Dr Ahmed said that the teaching strength in this area had grown stronger since then and that the Faculty should now decide either to abolish the paper or to revive it.

It was noted that The Faculty Board welcomed Dr Ahmed's proposal and it was agreed to reinstate the paper with effect from October 2013. Dr Ahmed circulated a document at the SSC meeting setting out the discussion that had taken place at Faculty Board, and showing the proposed syllabus, reading list, etc. Dr Ahmed said that he would welcome student feedback on his proposal (especially as the proposal to revive the paper was in response to a request from students made last year), and that in particular he would like feedback on the details of the syllabus, and on what the special subject could be. Dr Ahmed explained that there would be a caucus meeting at the end of November (Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November) to discuss this proposal further, and so he would like to have student feedback by then. Vittoria Fallanca said that she would email Dr Ahmed's proposal to students so as to get their feedback.

11 Proposal for a NEW Part II paper: Philosophy in the long middle ages:

It was reported that at the meeting of Faculty Board on Monday 15 October 2012, a proposal from Professor John Marenbon was circulated.

It was noted that his proposal is for the introduction of a paper covering the period c. 400 to c. 1700, entitled 'Philosophy in the Long Middle Ages'. The chance to study Descartes, Locke, Spinoza and Leibniz would help to make the paper more popular.

It was reported that Prof Marenbon writes in his proposal:

"In order to delimit and give order to work in such a large area, the paper would pick two themes, which could change quite frequently, so as to give variety to the teaching available (e.g. Theme 1: years 1, 2, 3; Theme 2: years 1, 2; Theme 3: years 3, 4, 5; Theme 4: years 4, 5, 6 etc.)" It was noted that Prof Marenbon suggested the following possible themes: Substance, Conceptions of Necessity and Possibility, Time and Eternity, Universals, Mind and Body, Scepticism, Emotions, the Good, Natural Law.

It was reported that Professor Marenbon would provide the main (and probably the sole) teaching for the paper at no cost to the Faculty. It was noted that his initial idea was that the teaching would be by seminars/classes with no supervisions.

Students were informed that the medieval texts in the current Part IB, Paper 5 (Modern and medieval philosophy) would be removed and Professor Marenbon's teaching would concentrate on the new Part II paper.

It was also noted that Prof Marenbon envisages a paper which would be open, if possible, to students taking Divinity Part II and Classics Part II.

It was noted that Professor Marenbon assured members of the Board that there were other specialists available in Cambridge, and that he particularly mentioned Dr Tony Street in the Faculty of Divinity.

It was reported that initial opinion from the student representatives on the Faculty Board was that they would not be keen to take a paper where no supervisions were offered. It was also felt that some students might regret the deletion of the option to study medieval philosophy at Part IB.

It was noted that members of the Board voted unanimously in favour of the introduction of a new Part II medieval philosophy paper.

It was also reported that Professor Marenbon agreed to bring back a proposal with a paper option that would allow examining by extended essays AND by sitting an exam paper. This would then also include supervisions for the paper.

It was noted that in the meantime, Mrs Sanderson will consult with the Education Section and the Council of the School about the timeline and approval process required.

Students at the SSC meeting were asked for feedback on the proposal for this paper. Vittoria Fallanca said that at the same time as she would be contacting students by email for their views on the proposal to reinstate Part II, Paper 6, she would also ask for feedback on the paper proposed by Prof Marenbon.

12 Suspended paper:

Students were informed that it was agreed at the Faculty Board meeting on October 15<sup>th</sup> that instead of listing papers as 'Suspended until further notice' in the *Guide to Courses* on our website, the Faculty agreed to list them as 'Not available until further notice'.

13 M.Phil. Questionnaire:

It was noted that the summary was circulated to Faculty Board for information.

Six out of sixteen MPhil students submitted an exit questionnaire.

The following is a report of the main points raised.

*Introduction and training*

*Presentation Skills Seminar:*

The most positive comment received was that there was some helpful advice but that this did not translate into practical skills. Other students commented that the practical element of the MPhil seminar was more effective than this dedicated seminar.

*View on Resources*

The Graduate Handbook, availability of journals, Philosophy Library, computing facilities, Philosophy information provided on the web and working space all received comments of adequate to good. The comments for the Graduate Handbook varied from 'brilliant' to 'adequate'.

Graduate students would welcome a longer borrowing period from the Philosophy Library.

*Lectures and seminars*

The MPhil seminar, the graduate seminar, the MSC and other seminars were generally praised.

Graduate students requested a weekly graduate seminar (rather than fortnightly).

#### *Research Time*

Most graduate students thought this tight but doable. One student thought that it should be emphasized that graduate students meet with their supervisors for Lent and Easter terms before the end of the preceding term. It was noted that this information has subsequently been added to the Handbook.

#### *Supervision*

All students commented that their expectations had been met.

Most students had received 4 supervisions for each piece of work, but some had received more, especially for their thesis.

#### *Assessment*

Students commented that the assessment criteria had been made clear.

The work of past MPhil students, available in the Philosophy Library, had been consulted very little.

#### *Summary*

Suggested improvements:

- a) To allow an MPhil student to present their work once a term;
- b) to break up 'the monolithic philosophical logic' category;
- c) a "Students' Handbook" compiled by former MPhils, covering topics such as supervision and surviving Lent Term. This would be especially useful for international students.

#### *Future*

All six students hoped to do a PhD.

Three students said the MPhil was relevant in every way to what they hoped to be doing in the future.

Mike Hastings commented that the fact that only six out of sixteen students responded to this questionnaire seemed like quite a low response. He queried whether it might be sensible to make it a requirement that students completed this questionnaire before they could pass (a system used in his previous University). Heather Sanderson explained that currently, students are asked to fill in the exit questionnaire when they come to hand their work in.

#### 14 Numerical Marking Scheme

It was noted that at the Faculty Board meeting of July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012, Dr Lillehammer proposed to introduce a numerical marking scheme as follows:

70 – 80 and plus 80	80 or above 75 to 79 70 to 74	First, higher range First, middle range First, lower range
60 – 69	65 to 69 60 to 64	Upper second, higher range Upper second, lower range
50 – 59	55 to 59 50 to 54	Lower second, higher range Lower second, lower range
40 – 49	45 to 49 40 to 44	Third, higher range Third, lower range
0 – 39	30 – 39 10 – 29 0 – 9	Fail, higher range Fail, middle range Fail, lower range

It was further noted that after a short discussion, the Faculty Board was in agreement that the new numerical marking system be introduced from Tripos 2013.

- 15 Feedback to graduates on their supervisions for undergraduates:  
It was reported that Directors of Studies, at their meeting on 1 October 2012, were reminded that the quality of graduate supervising depends on reliable feedback from Directors of Studies to the supervisors they employ. It was noted that such feedback is also helpful to the graduate students' own supervisors.
- 16 Extended Essays in Part IB/Extended Essays and Dissertations in Part II:  
Students were reminded that examples of good work are available for perusal from the library issue desk. (It was pointed out that this is also mentioned on page 15 of the Undergraduate Handbook).  
Students were also reminded that the deadline for application to do extended essays and/or a dissertation is  
16 November 2012.

**It was noted that all titles have to be approved by the Chair of Examiners before students leave for the Christmas break.**

**Students were also asked to note that at its meeting on 23 May 2011, Faculty Board agreed that any students who do not submit their Extended Essay on time, will have no option but to sit the corresponding exam paper. Students who do not submit their dissertation on time will effectively fail the paper, as the deadline for submitting dissertations is after the final deadline for amending exam entries.**

- 17 Changing in to Philosophy at Part IB and Part II (from Tripos Examinations 2013):  
It was reported that students who obtained honours in another Tripos and changed in to Philosophy were previously let off one paper (i.e. they studied for one paper fewer than students who followed the three year Philosophy Tripos).

It was noted that the Faculty established that cognate faculties such as History, Classics and Divinity do not make such an allowance. It was further noted that the Faculty Board, at its meeting on 17 October 2011, therefore agreed that all Philosophy candidates would take the same number of papers with effect from Tripos 2013 (i.e. 5 papers).

Students changing in and taking Part II in two years will not be affected since they already take 5 papers.

- 18 Examiners' reports:  
Students were informed that the reports for 2012, including external reports, have been posted up on the following website along with other previous exam reports:  
[http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/u\\_grads/u\\_grads\\_exams.html](http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/u_grads/u_grads_exams.html)
- 19 Discussion Groups for Part IA students  
Students were informed that following discussions at the SSC meeting of 1 May 2012, for 2012-13 there will be six discussion groups instead of five, with the aim of making it easier for all students to contribute.
- 20 Discussion Groups for Part IB students:  
It was noted that the Faculty is in the process of arranging discussion groups for Part IB for the Lent Term 2013. It was further noted that the topics and leaders of these groups are:

**Metaphysics & epistemology** – Michael Hannon

**Logic** – Lucy Campbell

**Ethics** – Chris Cowie

**Modern & Medieval philosophy** – Alexander Greenberg

**Philosophy of Science** – Nicholas Teh

**Political Philosophy - Sebastian Nye**

Students were informed that timings of the groups will be confirmed shortly. They were also told that they may sign up for as many groups as they wish, but need to bear in mind the additional work involved. Once a student has signed up, it is expected that s/he attends all the sessions.

**21 Lecture questionnaires:**

Students were encouraged to complete the questionnaires which will be distributed in final lectures (in weeks 4, 6 or 8 as appropriate) in Michaelmas Term. Students were also encouraged to complete questionnaires circulated in Discussion Groups and Logic Classes. Students were informed that if they miss the final lecture, or do not get the opportunity to complete a questionnaire in their lecture, it is possible to download questionnaires from the Faculty website:

[http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/u\\_grads/questionnaires/ugrad\\_questionnaires.html](http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/u_grads/questionnaires/ugrad_questionnaires.html)

Students were also told that Questionnaires can be used if they wish to comment on any lectures they attend which are cross listed on the Philosophy Lecture list, but run by other Faculties, such as HPS. These should then be completed and returned to the box next to the photocopier outside the Faculty Office.

**22 Lecture Questionnaires evaluation sheets:**

Students were reminded that evaluation sheets for completed lecture questionnaires are available for consultation from the Library issue desk. Attention is drawn to this on page 11 of the current undergraduate student handbook.

**23 Website redesign:**

It was noted that the Philosophy web site has now been reorganized. It was also noted that the Undergraduate-Handbook has been considerably slimmed down and more information has been put on the Philosophy web site. Ms Marie-France Moss was thanked for the efficient implementation of the new lay-out for the start of Michaelmas Term 2012.

Students were informed that they might find the dates on the calendars helpful

Undergraduates:

[http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/u\\_grads/u\\_grad\\_calendar.html](http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/u_grads/u_grad_calendar.html)

Graduates:

[http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/grads/grad\\_calendar.html](http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/grads/grad_calendar.html)

**24 Social events for undergraduates**

It was noted that at the SSC Open Meeting on 16 October 2012, there was some discussion of the provision of social events for undergraduates. It was mentioned that at the Open Meeting on 12 November 2002, it was agreed that it was up to the undergraduate representatives of the Staff Student Committee to organise the setting up of a Social Committee consisting of two undergraduate students each year who would be willing to organize social events for undergraduates. The setting up of such a committee would depend entirely on students' enthusiasm and willingness to serve. It was also noted that the Faculty had agreed to make a small yearly financial contribution to the Social Committee. It was reported that if students are interested in setting up such a committee, they should let the Faculty Office know.

**25 Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduates:**

*Thursday and Friday 5 and 6 July 2012*

[FB 21 May 2012, item 33]

Everyone who helped with the Arts Open Day was thanked, and in particular Dr Arif Ahmed and Ms Charlie Evans for the organization of the smooth running of the events for these two days.

26 Sutton Trust Summer Schools:

It was reported that the Department of Theology and Religious Studies hosted a summer school jointly with Philosophy from 14–17 August 2012.

Warm thanks were given to Claire Benn, Emily McTernan and Alexis Papazoglou who presented the Philosophy sessions. Dr Arif Ahmed was also thanked for presenting the Admissions Session for Philosophy.

It was noted that a similar arrangement with Divinity will be made for 2013.

27 Introductory Day, 3rd October 2012

It was reported that the Introductory Day for all new Philosophy students took place on Wednesday 3rd October 2012. Vittoria Fallanca and Rachel Robertson were thanked for giving a very informative talk on what is involved in being a student rep, as well as running an informal Q&A session back at the Faculty, and showing students round the lecture block, which new students found very helpful. It was noted that it is hoped that a similar talk will be given by a student rep at the next Introductory Day in October 2013, and that subsequent reps may also be interested in continuing with the extra activities organised by Rachel and Vittoria.

28 Amoral Sciences Club

Students were informed that the contact name and President for the ASC is: Stephen Duxbury, [sjd76@cam.ac.uk](mailto:sjd76@cam.ac.uk)

29 Inaugural Lecture

Thursday 1 November 2012, 5.30 p.m., Lecture Block Room 3, Sidgwick Site.  
Professor Huw Price's Inaugural Lecture: 'Where would we be without counterfactuals?'

Further details are available from: <http://www.talks.cam.ac.uk/talk/index/40238>

30 Any other business.

There was no other business raised.

The meeting ended at 13.15 hrs.