

STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE

Minutes

A meeting of the Philosophy Staff and Student Committee was held on Tuesday 3rd February 2015 at 1.05 p.m. in the Philosophy Faculty Board Room

Present: Jane Clare (Principal Secretary), Heather Sanderson (Administrator), Jenni Lecky-Thompson (Librarian), Charlie Evans (Secretarial Assistant), Professor Richard Holton (Faculty Chair), Prof Rae Langton, Dr Angela Breitenbach (MPhil Course Director), Prof Alex Oliver (Undergraduate Co-ordinator), Dr Clare Chambers, Alexander Murphy, Theo St John-Stevens, Sophia Cruwell, Jasmine Walter, Tessa Standen, Melissa Botes, Christopher Lynch, Elina Karastie, Dr Tom Dougherty, Hannah Graham, Teresa Baron, Shyane Siriwardena (Chairing the meeting), Amy Provan, Rebecca Moore.

1 Starring of items was invited.

2 No apologies were received.

3 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2014 were approved. These minutes were previously circulated to all students via e-mail for information.

4 Election of Student Representatives

It was noted that following the nominations received by Tuesday 18th November 2014, the following three students were appointed as Faculty Board Representatives:

Elina Karastie, Part IA — Newnham College

Francis Smallwood, Part IB — Churchill College

Shyane Siriwardena, Graduate (PhD) — Newnham College

Students were reminded that the reps can be reached on phil-studentreps@lists.cam.ac.uk

Council representatives – Election of 25 November 2014

It was reported that 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 noted that the new representatives for the Council of the School of the Arts and Humanities are:

Undergraduate rep: Ms Meenakkhi Bhattacharyya – mb976@cam.ac.uk

Graduate rep: Ms Talitha Kearey - tezk2@cam.ac.uk

5 Academic vacancy

The Committee noted that the Faculty is seeking to appoint a temporary teaching associate in Philosophy from 1st October 2015. It was reported that the limit of tenure is twenty-one months, ending on 30th June 2017. It was also noted that this covers the period resulting from Dr Tim Button's award of a Philip Leverhulme Prize. It was noted that the Faculty also intends to appoint a two-year temporary lecturer as part of the project, 'New directions in the philosophy of mind', funded by the John Templeton Foundation. It was reported that the successful lecturer will start their appointment as near as possible to 1 July 2015. It was noted that the deadline for applications was **10am on Monday 19 January 2015**.

6 Discussion Groups for Part IB students

It was noted that the following eight discussion groups would be running from weeks 2-7 of Lent Term 2015:

Metaphysics & epistemology, Group 1 – Lucy Campbell – Thursday, 4-5pm, RFB Room 331

Metaphysics & epistemology, Group 2 – Lucy Campbell – Thursday, 3-4pm, RFB Room 331

Ethics – Nora Heinzelmann - Monday, 10-11am, LB9

Logic, Group 1 – Dan Brigham – Wednesdays, 3-4pm, RFB Room 331

Logic Group 2 – Dan Brigham – Wednesdays, 1-2pm, RFB Rm 331
Formal Logic – Michael Gabbay – Thursdays, 1-2pm – RFB Rm 332
Philosophy of Science, Group 1 – Georgie Statham - Mondays, 3-4pm, RFB Room 332
Philosophy of Science, Group 2 – Georgie Statham - Tuesdays, 10-11am, RFB Room 326 (and in LB12 in week 6 only)
Political Philosophy – Paul Raekstad – Weeks 2,3 & 4 - Thursday, 2-3pm, LB7
 Weeks 5,6 & 7 - Thursday, 3-4pm, LB7
Early Modern Philosophy – Alexis Papazoglou – Tuesdays 1-2pm – LB12
Greek and Roman Philosophy – Carlo Rossi – Tuesdays 11-12pm – LB9

IB discussion group readings and reading lists can be accessed 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 13th 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 should be aware that Friday 13th 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 1st 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 1st, the final deadline would have passed for amending exam entries.

8 Philosophy Examinations in 2015

Students were reminded that the Philosophy Faculty now uses a numerical marking scheme.

Students were informed that details of the current marking guidelines and criteria are now also available on the Faculty website at:

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

9 Proposed syllabus changes for Tripos 2015-2016

The Committee noted the syllabus changes listed below, proposed at the Faculty Board meeting held on Monday January 26th 2015, following Caucus meetings:

Part IB, Paper 1, Metaphysics and Epistemology

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

- ~~Reality: idealism and Mind-dependence~~; primary and secondary qualities; **idealism**
- Metaphysics of modality: possible worlds, modal realism.
- **The nature of knowledge**: externalism and internalism; theories of warrant and justification.
- Scepticism: the problem of scepticism and responses.
- Sources of knowledge; evidence; perception; a priori knowledge; testimony.

Part IA, Paper 2, Ethics and political philosophy

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

- ~~Introduction to~~ Metaethics; Fact and Value, Objectivity and Subjectivity
- **Normative ethics**; Consequentialism, Deontology, Virtue Ethics
- ~~Egoism and Altruism~~

- **Moral psychology**
- ~~Political obligation, authority and dissent: what is (the problem of) political obligation?; attempted justifications of political authority; anarchism; civil disobedience and political dissent.~~
- **Political obligation and authority**
- ~~Rights: analyses of rights; natural rights; rights and utility; rights and interests; rights and choice.~~
- **Equality of opportunity**

Part IB Ethics, Paper 3.

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

- ~~Helping and Harming: demands and limits of beneficence, aggregating interests, consent, collective harms, poverty, climate change, abortion~~
- ~~Promising: contractualism, conventionalism~~
- **Helping and Harming; beneficence I: demands; beneficence II: aggregation; normative powers I: consent; normative powers II: promise; contractualism**
- ~~Reasons for Action: Humean Theories, Intellectualist Accounts~~
- ~~Kantian Constructivism~~
- **Early modern moral philosophy: natural law; rationalism; sentimentalism**
- **Moral Psychology: Moral Motivation, Virtues, Vices, Moral Learning, Practical Reasoning**

Part II Ethics, paper 3.

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

- ~~Theories of the Good: Intrinsic versus Extrinsic Goodness, Fitting Attitudes Incommensurability~~ **Sidgwick's Methods of Ethics, Goodness and Axiology, Well-being**
- ~~Well-Being: needs and capacities, preferences, happiness, disability, developmental aid~~
- ~~Metaethics: realism; expressivism and quasi-realism; irrealism~~ **metaphysical foundations of ethics, moral epistemology**
- ~~Kant's Ethics and Kantian Ethics: the categorical imperative, duty and motive, morality and freedom, autonomy~~
- ~~Topics in Moral Psychology: Trust, Implicit Bias, Epistemic Injustice~~ **ethics of knowing, responsibility.**

Part IB Paper 7 - Political Philosophy

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

- ~~Power: what is power?; who has power? Power, justification and violence.~~
- ~~Democracy: justifications of democracy; deliberative democracy; paradox of democracy~~ **forms of democracy.**
- ~~Equality: equality of what?;~~ **egalitarianism; libertarianism; the value of equality;** (retains coverage of Marxist contributions to this debate by G. A. Cohen) ~~equality and efficiency; equality of opportunity and positive discrimination.~~
- ~~Liberty: positive and negative liberty; the value of freedom; autonomy and paternalism.~~ **classical theories of liberty; contemporary theories of liberty**

Further detail on IB sub-topics:

Democracy: Forms of Democracy: direct/aggregative democracy; representative democracy; deliberative democracy.

Equality: Egalitarianism: Rawls; incentives and egalitarian ethos; luck egalitarianism

Equality: Libertarianism: Right libertarianism (Nozick, Tomasi); Left libertarianism self-ownership (including Marx on self-ownership and exploitation, Nozick, Cohen, Okin)

Equality: The value of equality: Equality, priority and sufficiency

Liberty: Classical theories of Liberty: Rousseau: Kant: Bentham

Liberty: Contemporary theories of Liberty: Kant; Republicanism; Two Concepts of Liberty

Part II, Paper 10 - Political Philosophy

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

- ~~Distributive justice: commodification; international justice; justice and age groups; justice and future generations.~~ Global Political Issues: immigration; international justice, nationalism and cosmopolitanism, global environment.
- Community and culture: political liberalism; communitarianism; multiculturalism; nationalism.
- Feminism: economic justice and gender; the ethics of care; gender and difference/intersectionality; pornography; rape; masculinity and femininity
- ~~Marxism: historical materialism; ideology; alienation; exploitation and justice.~~
- Radical Political Theory; Marxism (alienation, ideology), Power, Realism vs. Moralism/Ideal and non-Ideal Theory; Anarchism and civil disobedience; Moral limits of markets

Part II, Paper 11 - Aesthetics

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

- ~~Aesthetics: aesthetic experience; realism and anti-realism; imagination and originality; art and morality.~~
- ~~Art criticism: the nature of art and ontology of art; understanding, interpretation and criticism; representation, expression.~~
- ~~Set texts: Plato, Ion, Symposium, and Republic (Books II, III, X). Hume, 'On the Standard of Taste' in Essays, Moral, Political and Literary.~~

Thematic:

Aesthetic experience; realism and anti-realism; imagination and originality; art and morality; the nature of art and ontology of art; understanding, interpretation and criticism; representation; expression

Set texts:

Plato, Ion, Symposium, and Republic (Books II, III, X). Hume, 'On the Standard of Taste' in Essays, Moral, Political and Literary.

Part IB Paper 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.~~
- Scientific explanation and laws: what, if anything, distinguishes scientific explanation?; the deductive-nomological model of explanation and its rivals; 'best system' vs anti-reductionist views of laws.
- Concepts of probability: subjective probability; logical probability; frequency interpretation; propensity interpretation.
- Introduction to Philosophy of physics: spacetime and relativity; time and thermodynamics; puzzles of quantum theory.

Part II Paper 6 Philosophy of Science

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

- Philosophy of Physics I: the metaphysics of space and space-time; geometry and conventionalism absolute and relational theories of space; space and space-time.

- Philosophy of Physics II: the interpretation of quantum mechanics; non-locality.
- Philosophy of Biology: biological kinds, the nature of species; biological laws; functional and causal explanation in biology.
- Philosophy of Social Science: social science versus natural science; rational choice theory and social science; social ontology.
- ~~Annual topic (2014-15): Explanation: pragmatics of explanation; unificatory explanation; statistical explanation.~~ (2015-16): Philosophy of cognitive science; explanation in cognitive science; the role of neurotechnologies; embodied cognition; conceptual change, with special reference to mental illness.

There was substantial discussion of the proposed changes to the Ethics and Political Philosophy Syllabus, and student concerns were addressed by Dr Clare Chambers, and Dr Tom Dougherty. Student reps reported that there was a lot of upset amongst students at the proposed changes – signified by the number of students attending the meeting, and the fact that even more students had sent apologies and would have attended if they didn't have to be elsewhere. The main student concerns discussed were:

- The feeling that proposed changes would mean that topics previously spread across the three years of the Tripos, such as Anarchism and Power, have now been condensed into the final year of study, so there was a concern that students wouldn't be able to build on their knowledge over three years.
- There was a sense that "Equality of Opportunity" wouldn't be as interesting or stimulating as the topic of "Rights" that it is replacing in Part IA.
- Students felt that Marxism is a very popular topic, and felt that members of staff need to take into account student interest, rather than just their own areas of interest when deciding on topics.
- Students were concerned that the proposed broadening of the syllabus would mean that topics would be covered in less depth, and that topics, such as Marxism might only be covered by one or two lectures.

Dr Chambers and Dr Dougherty responded to these concerns by seeking to outline why they were making the proposed changes. The particular points that they made were:

- They felt that students believed that the Faculty was seeking to make the Ethics and Political Syllabus narrower, when in fact they explained that the aim is to broaden it, although they did accept that this might mean some topics would be covered in less depth.
- There is no necessary connection between the proposed changes and the number of lectures or seminars offered on any part of the syllabus.
- They explained that a key motivation behind the proposed changes is to make the course more interesting for students – Dr Chambers and Dr Dougherty explained that are very excited about being able to teach topics such as Equality of Opportunity, and feel that in some instances, students need to try these topics first to see whether they enjoy them. They also explained that Rights, one of Dr Dougherty's research interests, will still be covered, though in less depth, in the deontology sub-section of the Ethics part of the 1A paper.
- Dr Chambers and Dr Dougherty explained that another key aim of the changes is also to introduce topics that are at the cutting edge of Philosophy, especially in the field of Global Political Issues.
- They explained that aim of the changes is also to make clearer the connections between topics, and to place them together in a logical fashion. Dr Dougherty explained that by grouping topics together in a way where the connections between them are more logical, it will allow lectures to explore

connections between topics and make it possible for staff to set broader exam questions, which can be approached from different perspectives, which should give students more confidence when preparing for exams.

- Dr Chambers addressed the three areas where she felt students were most concerned, being the changes relating to the topics of Anarchism, Power, and Marxism. She explained that Anarchism had been moved out of the IA syllabus and into the Part II syllabus purely to make the workload easier for IA students, since the IA syllabus will now include more focus on difficult primary texts by Hobbes and Locke. However, she explained there was scope to move this topic back if that is what students want. With regards to Power, Dr Chambers explained that it was a new topic which had been placed in Part IB in a year when the only political philosophy UTO at the time (Dr. Chambers) was on leave, and that it was felt that it is better put in Part II where it connects to topics such as Marx on ideology, and Feminism. Finally, Dr Chambers explained that with regards to Marxism, the Marx topics on alienation, ideology and exploitation will still be taught and examined in Parts IB and II, and students have the opportunity to go into this topic in depth in either Part IB or Part II by choosing to write an extended essay or dissertation. The changes involve *increasing* the options to study and write extended essays on Marx, something which is currently possible only in Part II, as Marx on exploitation now falls under the topic of egalitarianism in Part IB. She also reassured students that there would be staff available to supervise and mark extended essays on the topic of Marxism.

Overall, Dr Chambers and Dr Dougherty emphasised that there was no topic that students would no longer be able to study under the proposed changes, and that a greater breadth of topics would be covered. They explained that they would be open to feedback on how the topics were received by students once the changes were in place, and Dr Dougherty also explained that at the next Ethics and Political Philosophy Caucus meeting, staff members would be discussing reading lists, and that students were welcome to make informal suggestions ahead of this meeting. Mrs Sanderson also suggested that it would be helpful to make sure that sub topics were included for the new area of the syllabus being introduced into the Part IA paper, such as Moral Psychology, to make sure supervisors know which areas to cover.

There were no comments on any of the other proposed syllabus changes.

10 Part II students at Seminars

Melissa Botes reported that some Part II students had contacted her to explain that they often feel that seminars are dominated by graduate students, particularly in the case of the Metaphysics seminar. She explained that Undergraduates sometimes feel that the discussion moves off at tangents on topics which they find difficult to follow. Melissa suggested that it might be helpful to pair undergraduates and graduates together at the start of seminars so they could discuss ideas and share knowledge. Shyane Siriwardena offered to speak to her fellow graduate students to flag up this issue. Prof Alex Oliver explained that he felt the best solution was for undergraduates to speak to seminar leaders at the end of a seminar if they felt that topics had gone beyond the limit of their knowledge, and that they shouldn't feel embarrassed to do this, as their feedback would be welcomed. Prof Richard Holton seconded this by explaining that sometimes seminar leaders might get carried away with the discussion, and not be aware that undergraduates weren't able to follow, so would be glad of feedback to make sure that the seminars are presented in a balanced way that both graduates and undergraduates can benefit from. It was agreed that it is very valuable for undergraduates to be able to mix with graduates at such seminars, and that it might just be helpful for seminar leaders to set out expectations from the seminar at the beginning. Melissa Botes agreed to feedback to undergraduates that they should always approach the seminar leader if this issue affects them.

- 11 Exam scripts now available on the Philosophy website
It was reported that following discussions at the SSC meeting held on 7th February 2012, two sample exam Part IA scripts have been made available on the website, anonymised and with the permission of the authors. It was noted that they can be found on the following web page:
<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/sample-answers>
It is reported that it is hoped that further exam scripts will also be made available.
- 12 National Student Survey 2015
Students were reminded that the National Student survey launched in January 2015. It was reported that all part II students should have been emailed a link to this survey, which will run until April. It was noted that the NSS is an independent survey asking students to rate the quality of their Higher Education experience, and it was further noted that 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.
- 13 Graduate Questionnaires
It was noted that the results of the MPhil questionnaire for Michaelmas Term 2014 are available to current graduate students. Students were informed that they should email Jane Clare (jc478@cam.ac.uk) first if they wish to see them. Shyane Siriwardena asked whether there is a corresponding questionnaire for PhD students, and when this takes place. Mrs Sanderson said she would clarify this with Zoe Walker, Graduate Secretary. Shyane said that it might be good to ask PhD students to complete a questionnaire before their first review. She explained that many students see the review as a type of 'test' to get through, so it might be helpful for students to be able to flag up any issues with the course via a questionnaire before they got as far as the review. Dr Angela Breitenbach explained that students could always approach the graduate co-ordinator if they had any concerns.
- 14 Undergraduate Lecture Questionnaires
It was reported that at the last Staff-Student Committee meeting, the idea of electronic lecture questionnaires was suggested. However, it was reported that at the following Faculty Board meeting the idea was voted down, so lecture questionnaires continue to be in paper form for the present.
- Students were reminded that questionnaires will be distributed again at the end of all lecture series in Lent Term 2015, as well as used to assess Logic Classes and Discussion Groups. Students were told 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 were encouraged to use this box for any comments on lectures they attend that are borrowed from other Faculties.
- 15 Lecture Evaluation Sheets
It was reported that summary Evaluation sheets for Lectures, Discussion Groups and Logic Classes held in Michaelmas Term 2014 will shortly be available for consultation at the Library Issue Desk.
- 16 Scheduling of Lectures
It was reported that at the last SSC meeting held on 4th November 2014, it was noted that there had been problems with lectures being scheduled in Mill Lane, and that Mrs Heather Sanderson had encouraged students to raise a petition, containing comments, in order that the Faculty could send it to the Student Registry to back up

a letter that the Faculty intended to send. The letter that the Faculty received back from student registry addressing these concerns was circulated. Students were informed that this term, only one lecture (Part IA, Formal Logic) has been scheduled to take place in Mill Lane.

17 Library Committee meeting

Mrs Jenni Lecky-Thompson reported that the date for the meeting this year will be Friday 20th February at 1.05 pm in the Philosophy Faculty Board Room. She asked students who wish to raise any concerns at this meeting to contact the Faculty Reps.

18 Library Questionnaire

It was noted that the Library questionnaire will run between 26th January and 6th February. It was also noted that there is a link to this questionnaire on the Library website, and that students completing the questionnaire will have the chance to win £30 of Amazon vouchers.

19 Borrowed Paper from English – English Moralists

It was reported that at the previous Staff-Student Meeting on November 4th 2014, some students enquired about whether it would be possible to borrow a paper from the English Faculty on English Moralists. It was noted that Dr Tim Button took this proposal to the Faculty Board meeting on 24th November 2014. However, after discussion, it was felt that the paper was too broad to be relevant to Philosophy students, and there were also concerns that Philosophy students would be disadvantaged by the different style of examining used by the English Faculty. Tessa Standen felt that these were not strong enough reasons, because she believed that other papers offered might be broad, and she also explained that Philosophy students take papers such as Experimental Psychology, which has a different examining style. Prof Richard Holton re-iterated how broad the English Moralists paper is – spanning from Classical Thought through to the 20th century, and explained that it is taught as a comparative paper, where students would be required to have a much wider knowledge than in Philosophy, where students are encouraged to write an exam essay which is precise and focuses in on the topic. However, Prof Holton agreed with Tessa Standen that this style might suit some students' skill sets, and agreed that discussion would continue on the possibility of borrowing this paper.

20 Old library – Coffee Machine/Teabags

The committee were reminded that anyone using the coffee machine is asked not to pour any drinks into the drip trays, but into the sink by the door to the Faculty Office. It was also noted that the coffee machine is **not coin operated** – payment of 50p per drink should be put in the black tin next to the coffee machine. It was reported that as there seems to be a demand, the Faculty will now also provide teabags which will be left in a pot by the coffee machine. It was noted that anyone using teabags, or pots of milk for drinks is asked to put 5p in the black honesty tin by the coffee machine to cover costs.

21 Use of the Graduate Centre

It was noted that the computers in the Graduate Centre are reserved for Graduate students and visiting scholars only. It was further noted that computers in the Philosophy Faculty Library are available for use by all students. Shyane Siriwardena reported that she had sent a questionnaire about use of the Graduate Centre to all graduate students. She will report back on the outcome of this questionnaire.

22 Careers Service

Careers Service – One-to-one guidance

It was reported that Mr David Ainscough from the Careers Service will be holding one-to-one guidance sessions at the Faculty on Thursday February 12th, and Thursday February 19th, from 11am-5pm. It was noted that Mr Ainscough will contact students directly with more information about this event.

23 Cambridge Open Days

It was reported that the Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduate students will be on Thursday 2 and Friday 3 July 2015.

24 The was no other business

The meeting ended at 2pm.

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