

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY  
STUDENT-STAFF COMMITTEE

**Minutes**

for the meeting on Monday 19th February 2024, 12.05pm in the Faculty Boardroom.

Present: Angela Breitenbach (Chair of Faculty), Heather Sanderson (Faculty Manager), Ellen Hammersley (Senior Administrator), Jo Marcus (Librarian), Jo Farmer (invited), Joanne Wells (Administrative Assistant), Eli Bertuccioli (Student Rep), George Wang (Student Rep), Gabrielle Brittain (Student), Min Seo Shin (Student)

- \*1 Starring of items for discussion was invited and declarations of any conflicts of interest were sought. It was requested that item 7 be starred, and an additional matter added to item 17.

EDI review of decisions reminder

The Student-Staff Committee considered agenda items and confirmed that equality, diversity, and inclusion were considered.

- 2 Apologies for absence. No apologies were received.

- 3 (*circ*) Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2023 were approved. These minutes were previously circulated to all students via e-mail for information.

- 4 Academic Administrative responsibilities:

The following academics are now overseeing the following areas:

Chair of Faculty Board: Angela Breitenbach  
Undergraduate Co-ordinator: Sophie Dandelet  
Chair of Examiners (Tripos): Neil Dewar  
MPhil Course Director: Sarah Fine  
Subject Convenor (Undergraduate Admissions): Spencer Johnston  
Director of Postgraduate Admissions: Julia Borcharding  
Director of Postgraduate Studies: Alex Oliver (until 26<sup>th</sup> March)

- 5 Staff news:

Jessie Munton has been awarded a prestigious Philip Leverhulme prize.  
Replacement cover will be provided.  
Recruitment for an Assistant Professor to replace Prof. Arif Ahmed is ongoing.  
Heather Sanderson, Faculty Manager, will be retiring as of 28<sup>th</sup> March. Recruitment is underway.

- 6 Philosophy Tripos Examinations/Marking Criteria in 2024

- (*circ*) An updated version of the full Examiner Guidelines will be circulated by the end of this term. In the meantime, marking criteria were circulated as promised in the Revision and Exam Techniques sessions on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2024.

This is a reminder that any amendments regarding exam entries must be reported to your specific Tutorial Office by the end of the term. Exam Timetables will be issued via CAMSIS and your colleges around the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2024.

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- \*7 Deadline for handing in Tripos Extended Essays/Dissertations  
Students are reminded that the deadline for submitting extended essays via Moodle for Part IB and Part II is from **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March at 12 noon**.
- Students are further reminded that the deadline for submitting dissertations via Moodle for Part II is from **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May at 12 noon**.
- Comment** A query was raised concerning the system link for extensions. It was noted that the Chair of Examiners is currently writing an explanation to go out to all students and DoS. The request for extension can be completed either by the student or the DoS and the application takes the form of a simple Google form. A reminder with upload instructions for extended essays and dissertations will be forthcoming.
- 9 Deadlines for handing in MPhil 2<sup>nd</sup> Essay & Dissertations  
Students are reminded:
- The deadline for submitting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Essay is **Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 9am**.
  - MPhil Dissertation titles submission is on **Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 from 12pm-2pm**.
  - MPhil Submission of Dissertations is on **Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 9am**.
- 10 Updates from the Library
- Results of consultation on the proposal to move to a single loan period of 28 days for all user groups with unlimited auto-renewals  
Thank you to everyone who contributed to the consultation at last term's meeting. As there were no objections, from Summer 2024, books borrowed from the Philosophy Library, the University Library, most Faculty and Department libraries and participating college libraries will automatically renew after 28 days for all members of the university. If a book you have on loan is requested by someone else, you will still need to return it within 3 days of receiving the email notification. Laura and Jo will continue to regularly monitor requests for books already on loan and, where possible, point the requestor to print and/or electronic copies available elsewhere. They will also continue to proactively contact users who have had books on loan for more than 12 months to encourage them to return any they no longer need. If you have any difficulties at all accessing the readings you need, please [contact the Library team](#) who will be very happy to help.
  - Philosotea  
This term Philosotea will be served on Thursdays between 2:30pm and 3:30pm in the Faculty Common Room (The Old Library). All Philosophy students, staff and visitors are warmly invited to take a break with us and get to know each other over free cups of tea, biscuits, and healthy treats on the Library team.
  - Tell us what you think  
The Library team are here to help and welcome your feedback and suggestions for ways to further improve the usability, accessibility and inclusivity of your library spaces, services and collections. You can [contact us](#) at any time, or let us know your thoughts via our feedback walls in the library or [online](#), or via your student reps. We look forward to hearing from you!
- \*11 Proposed syllabus changes for Tripos 2024-2025  
(*circ*). The teaching staff have subject Caucus meetings in Michaelmas Term each year to review the syllabus for the following year. Any proposals are then submitted to Faculty Board first, before they are circulated to students, for feedback.

The draft updated Guide to Courses was previously circulated, showing proposed changes to the syllabus for 2024-25 shown as tracked changes.

Changes shown on the Guide to Courses have been approved *in principle* by the Faculty Board on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Unless the Student-Staff Committee has strong objections, the plan would be for the syllabus changes to be implemented with effect from October 2024.

Feedback from students would need to be discussed at the next Faculty Board meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

Note that updated information about borrowed papers is still to be confirmed.

**Comment:** Concerns were raised by the student reps about the changes made to the Kant paper. It was noted some students may object to the apparent removal of continental philosophy from the syllabus, although no complaints had been received so far. The student reps suggested that post-Kantian philosophy could be added to other papers and/or be covered by reading/discussion groups. The Chair noted that students will still be able to write dissertations on topics in post-Kantian philosophy.

Jurisprudence is currently undergoing due process in the Faculty of Law.

Student reps are welcome to be involved in the Curriculum Development Project.

A student question was raised concerning the absence of a distinct logic paper in Part IB. The Chair reported on motivations for the restructuring of Part IA and IB a few years ago.

**Action points:**

The Chair acknowledged that papers such as Ethics or Political Philosophy could potentially cover topics in post-Kantian philosophy and will raise this with colleagues for discussion.

The Chair will pass on to the Undergraduate Coordinator a student request to investigate a potential European philosophy paper offered in MMLL.

Student reps will request feedback from students to judge the demand for a IB logic paper.

\*12 Lecture/Group Questionnaires

Students have been encouraged to complete the [online questionnaires](#). Lecturers have been asked to remind students, where possible, in their last lecture to fill in a feedback questionnaire for the lecture course. A QR code is also available to scan. A link to the form and QR code has been emailed to students. Help from student reps to promote the questionnaires would be greatly appreciated.

13 National Student Survey for 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergrads

The 2024 NSS survey opened on 8th January 2024. The deadline is 30 April 2024. The link is here: <https://www.thestudentsurvey.com/>

Part II Philosophy students will also be contacted direct by Ipsos MORI. Feedback is appreciated.

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14 Postgraduate Offer Holders' Event

The offer holders' event will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Some current postgraduate student helpers will be needed, and information will be sent nearer the time.

15 Cambridge Open Days for Prospective Undergraduates

The format of the 2024 Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduate students will be hybrid with both virtual and in-person elements. The live Open Days will be held on Thursday 4th July and Friday 5th July 2024. Some current undergraduate and postgraduate student helpers will be needed, and information will be sent nearer the time.

16 Green Impact

The Faculty is taking part in the University's environmental accreditation scheme Green Impact, having achieved a Silver Award in the last academic year.

\*17 Any other business

**Comment:** Student reps had received a request to have exam reports available online. Ellen confirmed that reports of IA and IB were available on the website. Due to the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB), no individual reports are available for Part II but Ellen will be adding statistics in the next week. Reports for borrowed papers lie with the home department.

Exemplar essays are identified by Exam Boards and permission is sought to publish. Due to the MAB this has not been possible in this academic year. The Faculty will continue to do this in future years.

**Comment:** Having had some concerns from students, the student reps requested that the Student Staff Committee discuss Dr. Cofnas's recent blog post.

It was confirmed that recent comments made by Dr Cofnas in his blog post are being taken very seriously by the Faculty. It was stressed that all students are here on merit.

It was pointed out that the research proposal with which Dr. Cofnas applied for a Leverhulme Fellowship was on the biological basis of moral norms and not connected to the content of the blog.

The student reps questioned whether Dr Cofnas continued to supervise and assess students. The Chair confirmed that he did not currently supervise for the Faculty.

The student reps suggested that some form of communication from the Faculty regarding the circumstances of Dr Cofnas's appointment, and the fact that matters were being investigated, would be an appropriate way to allay student concerns.

18 Date of next meeting

The next Student Staff Committee will take place on Monday 6th May 2024.

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**Student Key Submission Deadlines**

**From Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

12.00 – UG Extended Essay Submission Deadline

**From 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024**

12.00 – Part II Dissertation Deadline

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 9am**

9.00 – MPhil 2<sup>nd</sup> Essay

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

12.00-14.00 - MPhil Dissertation titles

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

9.00 - MPhil Submission of Dissertations

Student evaluation form QR code:

