

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY  
STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE

**Minutes**

for the online meeting on 9 February 2021, 1.05 p.m. by Zoom  
Professor Rae Langton chaired the meeting

Present: Professor Rae Langton (Chair of Faculty), Dr Jessie Munton (Undergraduate Coordinator), Dr Arif Ahmed (Chair of Examiners), Heather Sanderson (Faculty Administrator), Clare Dickinson (Secretary), Marie-France Moss (IT Officer), Jo Marcus (Librarian), Charlie Evans (Graduate Secretary), Nadia Ben Hassine (Graduate Student Rep), Karolina Filova (Undergraduate Student Rep), Patrick Pan (Undergraduate Student Rep), Clara Schindler (Undergraduate), Django Melly (Undergraduate), Sam ?, Anna Simpson (Administrative Assistant).

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- 1 Starring of items was invited.
- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Paulina Sliwa.
- 3 The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2020 were approved. These minutes were previously circulated to all students via e-mail for information.
- 4 Matters arising from the minutes not raised elsewhere on the agenda  
Item 18: Harassment prevention and complaints

It was reported that Jessie Munton (Equality Working Group Lead MT20) met Robin Wisse after the last SSC (3 November 2020) meeting to discuss best practice. The Faculty thanked Robin Wisse, Alex Fisher and the MAP Committee, who subsequently provided suggested welfare webpage updates for the Faculty to consider.

- 5 Election of Student Representatives  
Following nominations and a by-election, the following students were appointed as Faculty Board Representatives:  
Patrick Pan, Part IA — Wolfson College  
Karolina Filova, Part IB — Fitzwilliam College  
Nadia Ben Hassine, MPhil – Newnham College  
Students were reminded that the reps can be reached on [phil-studentreps@lists.cam.ac.uk](mailto:phil-studentreps@lists.cam.ac.uk)

*Council representatives – Election of November 2020*

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 reported that the new representatives for the Council of the School of the Arts and Humanities were:

Undergraduate rep: Ziqi Yan, Trinity College – [zy308@cam.ac.uk](mailto:zy308@cam.ac.uk)  
Graduate rep: *Vacancy*

- 6 Academic Administrative responsibilities  
It was reported that the following academics would be overseeing the following areas:

Undergraduate Co-ordinator: Jessie Munton  
Chair of Examiners (Tripos): Arif Ahmed  
MPhil Course Director: Paulina Sliwa  
Subject Convenor (Undergraduate Admissions): Julia Borcharding  
Director of Postgraduate Admissions: Angela Breitenbach

7 Teaching and Support Arrangements 2020-21

Students were reminded that the current protocols for students could be found on the website:

<https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/main-guidance-document-for-students-ug-teaching.pdf/view>

Jessie Munton reported that the protocols were under review and the route for obtaining a copy of a recording was in the process of being simplified, so that students will be able to ask teachers direct. We are aware that students may be experiencing internet issues (especially college internet issues), and may be in different timezones, which can make attending live online sessions difficult.

Jessie reminded all lecturers to promote and all students to complete feedback questionnaires.

8 Examination Update

a) An update was provided by Dr Arif Ahmed, Chair of Examiners, as below:

The position as of now remains as set out in my letter of 27 January to all students.

We are currently expecting details from the General Board setting out the options regarding mitigation and the format of exams. We are also awaiting a decision on whether students will be able to return to Cambridge in the Easter Term. In the meantime we are keen to hear about our student's concerns and preferences and will bear these in mind once we are in a position to make more decisions. We are also quite aware, and will of course keep in mind whilst examining, that candidates for this year's exams are preparing for them in conditions of unprecedented uncertainty.

- b) The undergraduate reps presented results from a questionnaire they had sent to undergraduates which received 83 returns so far. The feedback included location of students, preferences on exam format regarding word counts and exam time windows. About half of the undergrads completing the survey are in Cambridge. There is a preference for 24 hour exam time window, and word counts between 1600-2000 words seem to be most favoured. Students asked for a clear and detailed mark scheme, examples of model answers, given the revised exam arrangements. (It was noted that some examples of answers are already on the Faculty website). Clear communication to students will be needed on all of these things, as well as expected time to be spent on the exam.
- c) Rae and Arif thanked the reps for their comprehensive report, noting that the information provided would be fed into the decision making process. Arif explained there would be limited Faculty discretion in some areas. Requests for replacing exam assessments by additional submitted work (as in 2019-20), for example, would probably not be allowed by the University this year.

Some suggested wording about word count is: "1600 words are expected. Do not exceed 2000 words."

The Faculty will also need to issue some guidance to the effect that we don't expect students to be writing for more than 3 hours.

- d) There was a query from an undergraduate student. “What will be the Faculty’s policy and expectations regarding referencing in the online exams for this year?”

Arif confirmed there were no plans to change the normal referencing policies for either extended essays/coursework (more formal) or exams (more relaxed). In exams it is sufficient to include the author’s name, with no other details.

## 9 Library Resources

Jo Harcus, Librarian provided an update as below:

### **Library services and support this term**

Please continue to get in touch if there is absolutely anything at all you need this term for your learning, teaching or research and we’ll do our very best to help. Information about zero contact services on offer this term, including click and collect, scan and deliver, book recommendations and book returns, is available from the Philosophy Library website at <https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/library>. Please also see the email from Jo Harcus sent on 15 January which includes further information including links to further guidance and sources of support.

### **NEW! Virtual Study Room on Wednesday afternoons during Lent Term**

We know that many of you are motivated and inspired by working alongside others in the same quiet space so, in collaboration with colleagues from across the SAH Libraries, we are offering these Zoom sessions to help compensate for the current lack of available study spaces in our physical libraries.

- Join us from 1pm to 4.30pm on Wednesday afternoons, Zoom link: <http://ac-uk.zoom.us/j/95644271298?pwd=ZEJXN21UWUlyM2pia2lxOUhVY0JjQT09>
- Work informally alongside other students in a virtual space
- Library staff will be present in the room if you have questions about resources or anything else library-related
- Set goals for your afternoon of study
- Come and go as you please – we’ll provide a schedule, but you don’t have to stick to it

Please see the email from Jo Harcus sent on 3 February for further details.

### **Philosotea**

Subject to staff availability, we hope to offer more Philosotea sessions this term to encourage you to take a break, stay connected and tell us how things are going this term. We look forward to catching up with you over a warming cuppa soon!

Jo encouraged students to contact the library with queries, and confirmed that readers can continue to make suggestions for book purchases. Books may still be added to the print collection, and Jo will try to get electronic versions as well.

Students asked whether examples of previous extended essays and dissertations could be accessible electronically. At the moment, the collection is accessible in physical form. Jo reported that we need to look into digitizing this collection in the future, and that this will be a longer-term project. Clare and Jo will liaise about this after the meeting.

10 Proposed syllabus changes for Tripos 2021-2022

A) Proposed changes to the syllabus from Caucus meetings were circulated, shown as tracked changes in the Guide to Courses.

Also circulated were the following detailed syllabus proposal documents:

B) Proposal for borrowing Jurisprudence Paper 37 from the Law Tripos  
A proposal from Arif Ahmed and Matt Kramer was circulated, together with a sample examination paper (from 2019). Faculty Board would be interested in borrowing the paper at Part IB.

The Faculty Board already agreed last year to accept the proposal for moving the **Aesthetics** paper option to Part IB from 2021-22. The subject would also need to be offered as a Part II paper for 2021-22, so that current Part IB students have the opportunity to choose this subject.

The other changes described in 10A and B had been approved *in principle* by the Faculty Board on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021.

Unless the Student-Staff Committee had strong objections, the plan would be for the changes in A) to be implemented with effect from October 2021.

Following recommendations from the Ethics, Political Philosophy and Aesthetics Caucus, the Faculty Board agreed to support the proposal for offering the **Jurisprudence** Paper to Philosophy **Part IB** (rather than Part II) students, with the proposed start date of Oct 2022, and take it to the next stage.

If the proposal and all the necessary approval stages were to go ahead, Philosophy students would be able to take the Jurisprudence paper **OR** Part IB Political Philosophy Paper 7, but not both, from Oct 2022.

Feedback from students would need to be discussed at the next Faculty Board meeting on 8 March 2021.

Student feedback was in favour of the syllabus changes for Oct 2021, as well as the introduction of the Jurisprudence Paper at Part IB from Oct 2022.

11 Discussion Groups for Part IB students

It was noted that the following seven discussion groups would run in weeks 2-7 of Lent Term 2021:

History of Analytic Philosophy- Dr J. Zerilli Week 2-7, Thursday 2-3pm

Early Modern Philosophy - Dr J. Zerilli Week 2-7, Friday 2-3pm

Knowledge, Language and the World, Group 1 – Mr A. Fisher Week 2-7, Monday 12- 1pm

Knowledge, Language and the World, Group 2 – Mr A.Fisher Week 2-7, Monday 2-3pm

Political Philosophy- Ms P. Keller Week 2-7, Monday 10-11am

Ethics - Mr C. Benzenberg Week 2-7, Monday 4-5pm

Epistemology and Metaphysics of Science - Mr O. Westerblad Week 2-7, Tuesday 9- 10am

Greek and Roman - Dr A. Santoro - Week 2-5 and 7-8, Wednesday 12-1pm

Students were reminded that once they had signed up to a group, they were expected to attend all 6 sessions.

12 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 19 March at 12 noon**. It was explained that if students missed this deadline without prior approval from the Chair of Examiners, they would be required to instead sit the written exam for this paper (although it was noted that students should be aware that Friday 12 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 7 May at 12 noon**. If students missed this deadline without prior approval from the Chair of Examiners, students would then fail that paper, as by 30 April, the final deadline would have passed for amending exam entries.

13 Exam scripts available on the Philosophy website

Students were reminded that several sample exam scripts have been made available on the website, anonymised and with the permission of the authors:  
<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/sample-answers>

14 National Student Survey for final year undergrads

It was reported that Philosophy 3rd year undergrad students should have received individual emails from Ipsos MORI on 14th January 2021 to complete the survey. The survey will close on 30 April 2021. Students could also access it here: <https://www.thestudentsurvey.com/>. Non-respondents would receive reminders via email and/or telephone.

It was further reported that this year's survey includes a new set of additional questions in response to Covid-19. The UK funding and regulatory bodies have chosen to include an additional set of questions in the NSS question to ask students about specific aspects of their experience during the pandemic. Students could choose whether to answer these questions after they have completed the core NSS questionnaire.

15 Lecture Questionnaires

Students were encouraged to complete the online questionnaires in Lent Term. Lecturers would be asked to remind students, where possible, in their last lecture to fill in a feedback questionnaire for the lecture course. Students were also encouraged to complete questionnaires for Discussion Groups and Logic Classes. The online questionnaires could be accessed at the following weblink: <https://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/questionnaires/ugrad-questionnaires>

The deadline for LT21 feedback questionnaires would be midnight on Monday 22nd March 2021.

Students were also reminded of the 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.

16 MPhil essay examiner reports

At Faculty Board meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 there was some discussion following feedback from students about discrepancies in some examiner reports. The report form and related issues were being considered by Richard Holton and Paulina Sliwa.

17 RFB/ Graduate Centre access

It was reported that the RFB including the Philosophy Graduate Centre is still currently closed due to the national lockdown. Staff and students would be updated on re-opening when more information is available. Access arrangements would likely be limited again due to COVID safety measures.

18 Graduate Offer Holders' Event

It was reported that the offer holders' event would be held on Monday 22 March 2021

19 Cambridge Open Days

Dates would follow for the Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduate students.

20 Any other business - None21 Date of next meeting

11 May 2021