

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
STAFF-STUDENT COMMITTEE

Minutes

for the meeting 04 February 2020, 1.05 p.m. in the Philosophy Faculty Board Room

Present: Professor Rae Langton, Dr John Filling (Undergraduate Coordinator), Dr Nakul Krishna, Dr Angela Breitenbach, Dr Arif Ahmed, Heather Sanderson (Faculty Administrator), Charlie Evans (Graduate Secretary), Mette Jamasb (Administrator, Centre for Research in the Arts), Marc Niklas Ernst (Graduate Student Rep), Ronja Griep (Graduate), Arun Prabhakar (Undergraduate Student Rep), Francesca Davis (Undergraduate), Frank Cudek (Undergraduate), Anna Simpson (Administrative Assistant).

- 1 Arun Prabhakar chaired the meeting.
- 2 Starring of items was invited.
- 3 Apologies for absence were received from Clare Dickinson and Jo Harcus.
- 4 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2019 were approved. These minutes were previously circulated to all students via e-mail for information.
- 5 Election of Student Representatives
Following nominations received by 13th November 2018, the following two students were appointed as undergraduate Faculty Board Representatives:
James Ashkettle, Part IA — Fitzwilliam College
Arun Prabhakar, Part IB — Trinity College
It was noted that there were not enough nominations to warrant an election for the Graduate representative and the following graduate student representative was therefore appointed by default with effect from 14 November 2019.
Niklas Ernst, Graduate (MPhil) — St Edmund's College
Please note that the reps can be reached on phil-studentreps@lists.cam.ac.uk

Council representatives – Election of November 2019

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: Finn Cormican

Graduate rep: Filomena Russo

- *6 Proposed syllabus changes for Tripos 2020-2021
(*circs*).

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 revisions to Part IB Paper 5 Early Modern Philosophy

C) Proposal to revise Part II Paper 11 Aesthetics

D) Proposal to revise Part II Paper 4 History of European Philosophy (*for change from 2021-22*)

Changes described in 5A (also mentioned in 5B and 5C) were approved *in principle* by the Faculty Board on 27th January 2020. Unless the Student-Staff Committee had strong objections, they would be implemented with effect from October 2020.

In particular, the Faculty Board agreed to accept the proposal for changes to Part IB Paper 5 Early Modern Philosophy and take to the next stage.

The Faculty Board also agreed to accept the proposal for moving the Aesthetics paper option to Part IB for 2020-21. The subject would also need to be offered as a Part II paper for 2020-21, so that current Part IB students have the opportunity to choose this subject. The feedback was positive and students present at the meeting were supportive of the changes. One particular student, who was generally in favour of the changes, commented that many of her friends liked taking the aesthetics paper at Part II and having it count towards their Part II grade.

It was agreed *not* to add in “Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*” to Part II Paper 9 after all, but that this should be included in the reading list. This will be passed back to Faculty Board. (All the other proposed changes from Faculty Board were supported.)

It was agreed to propose to Faculty Board that Part II Paper 9 be renamed to “Wittgenstein and his successors”, which reflects the new content of the paper.

Discussion on proposal papers for changing the Part II Paper 4 (*from 2021-22*) was also invited. Initial comments were favourable.

Feedback from students would need to be discussed at the next Faculty Board meeting on 18 May 2020.

7 Staff news:

It was reported that **Tushar Menon** started his British Academy Fellowship project entitled "Establishing the philosophy of supersymmetry" on 16 December 2019 with Jeremy Butterfield as his mentor for the project.

It was reported that **Gill Burrows** has joined the Faculty as Temporary Accountant, on loan from the University's Staff Finance Bureau, and with effect from 6 January 2020. It was noted that Gill would cover the post whilst Amy Blackburn had a period of graduated return to work, working part-time just in the English Faculty.

8 Discussion Groups for Part IB students

It was noted that the following six discussion groups would run from weeks 2-7 of Lent Term 2020:

Knowledge, Language & the World – Roxane Noel – Mondays 3-4pm, Graduate Common Room.

History of Analytic Philosophy – Oscar Westerblad – Mondays 9-10 am, Faculty Board Room.

Ethics – Emma Curran - Tuesdays, 9-10am – Graduate Common Room.

Greek and Roman – Caterina Pello – Wednesdays 5-6pm, Room 331.

Epistemology & Metaphysics – Sahanika Ratnayake – Mondays 1-2pm, Seminar Room 207 (2nd floor RFB)
Political Philosophy – John Filling – Wednesdays 12-1pm, Graduate Common Room.

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

9 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 13 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 13 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 1 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 May 1, the final deadline would have passed for amending exam entries.

10 Philosophy Examinations/Marking Criteria in 2020

Students were reminded that the Philosophy Faculty uses a numerical marking scheme. Details of the current marking guidelines and criteria can be found on the following webpage at:

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

It was noted that all students should have received an email outlining the various exam resources available on the Faculty website.

11 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. They can be found on the following web page:

<http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/sample-answers>

12 Philosophy Student Surveys 2019-2020

An undergraduate Student Survey was run in LT/ET 2019 and it was reported that the Faculty plans to run a repeat survey of undergraduate students.

13 National Student Survey for 3rd year undergrads/Student Barometer for all Students 2018-19

It was reported that The NSS is an independent survey asking students to rate the quality of their Higher Education experience, and 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. It was explained that the results would not be published unless at least 50% of Philosophy students participate. It was noted that this is the third year that Cambridge has not met the threshold participation rate of 50% for publication of the University level results on the Unistats website (www.unistats.com). The overall Cambridge response rate was 21.23%, which was a little higher than last year (17%) and highly likely to be again

due to the NUS boycott of the survey. It was reported that no results were available for Philosophy (along with several other subjects) as there were fewer than 10 respondents.

14 Summary Evaluation Sheets for Lectures etc

It was noted that Summary Evaluation sheets for Lectures, Discussion Groups and Logic Classes held in Michaelmas Term 2019 would be available for consultation at the Library Issue Desk later this term. General comments about the Philosophy course would be circulated at the next meeting.

15 Lecture Questionnaires

Students were reminded that questionnaires would be distributed again at the end of all lecture series' in Lent Term 2020, as well as used to assess Logic Classes and Discussion Groups. Students were reminded that if they would like to give feedback, but missed the session when questionnaires were handed out, questionnaires could also be downloaded from the Faculty website at: <http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/questionnaires/ugrad-questionnaires> and handed into the Faculty Office.

Students were also reminded of the box on the questionnaire for comments on other aspects of the Philosophy Course, and students are encouraged to use this box for any comments on lectures they attend that are borrowed from other Faculties.

16 Use of the Graduate Centre

It was noted that computers in the Graduate Centre are reserved for Graduate students and visiting graduate students. Computers in the Philosophy Faculty Library are available for use by all students and visiting scholars.

17 Cambridge Open Days

It was noted that the Cambridge Open Days for prospective undergraduate students would be on Thursday 2 July and Friday 3 July 2020.

18 Any other business

19 Date of next meeting

18 May 2020 (following cancellation of meeting on 5 May 2020 due to Industrial Action)