

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS  
SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHICAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL & FILM STUDIES

PHILOSOPHY STAFF/STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

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MINUTES OF 18 NOVEMBER 2009

**Present:**

Katie Allan (Secretary), Ian Church (Student Rep, PhD), Berys Gaut, Niall Hartnett (Student Rep, Honours), Ben Hofmann (Student Rep, Honours), Antonia Ketabchi (Student Rep, Evening Degree), Seth Kitson (Student Rep, 2000 level), Sarah Lohmann (Convenor, Student Rep, Honours), Tim Mulgan, Emily Salt (Student Rep, 1000 level), John Skorupski, Craig Smith, Deborah Van Herstraeten (Student Rep, 1000 level) and Thomas Wilson (Student Rep, 1000 level).

**PRELIMINARY MATTERS**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Sarah Broadie, Jessica Brown, Yuri Cath, Kelly Diepenbrock (Student Rep, 1000 level), Katherine Hawley, Lisa Jones, Caitlin Leach (Student Rep, 2000 level), Colin MacIver (Student Rep, MLitt), Simon Prosser.

**2. Minutes of the Philosophy Staff/Student Liaison Committee meeting held on 21 October 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2009 were approved and adopted.

**3. Matters arising from the above minutes**

**3.1. *University Timetable Clash (item 6.4 refers)***

Katie Allan confirmed that a conflict in the timetable between PY4612 and an honours level Maths module was affecting two students in semester 2. The Department is exploring various options in an attempt to resolve this matter.

**3.2. *Matriculation at Stirling (item 7.2 refers)***

Katie Allan confirmed that MLitt students should now all be successfully matriculated at Stirling. The delay was caused by problems within the Registry at the University of Stirling which will be addressed to prevent this occurring next year.

**STUDENT BUSINESS**

**4. Sub Honours Matters**

**4.1 *PY1105 Ethical Controversies***

It was reported that some students felt that the section on Kant covered the material too quickly, particularly chapter 2, and that more than one tutorial on Kant would be desirable. One student had noted that Utilitarianism could be covered more quickly as it is an easy topic to understand. In general students felt that the module delivered a good balance between theory and issues and the WebCT provision is very useful.

#### **4.2. *PY1005 Mind & Reality***

The student rep reported that he had no specific feedback on this module which is well received by students. One issue that had arisen was about the order of topics covered, with the suggestion that the 'Mind & Body' component be covered first before the 'Person & Identity' component as the material in 'Mind & Body' is more accessible. The rep reported that a number of students had dropped out of the module during the first few weeks due to the perceived complexity of the 'Person & Identity' component.

#### **4.3. *Second Level Modules***

The student rep reported a general concern about the volume of work required at second level, especially for 10 credit modules. The module PY2001 Formal & Philosophical Logic was mentioned in this regard. A request was also made for model answers to the weekly assessed logic problems to be provided.

### **5. Honours Matters**

#### **5.1. *Standard System of Reference***

It was noted that the department does not recommend the use of one particular referencing system and that practice varies depending on the module. Some students suggested that it would be helpful to have one system proscribed by the Department. The Head of Department clarified that the Department does not apply any penalty to written work relating to the referencing system and that the most important point is that whichever system employed is used consistently.

#### **5.2. *Information on Postgraduate Study***

Some students had suggested that more guidance from the Department about postgraduate study would be welcomed by Honours students. The Director of Postgraduates confirmed that a briefing session has been arranged for honours students on this matter and will be taking place on 2 December. Full details will be circulated by email shortly.

#### **5.3 *PY4604 Political Philosophy***

The student rep reported that two students on this module had suggested that 2 essays of shorter length may be more desirable than the current essay. The module co-ordinator indicated that he expected students to prefer the scope offered by a longer piece of work but he would consider this proposal for the future.

One student had suggested that the module required too much reading, but other students felt that the required reading compared favourably with that on honours modules in other departments. The module co-ordinator clarified that not all of the reading is required to be completed for the weekly tutorial: only tutorial preparation reading is required for each tutorial and the wider reading suggested can be undertaken in a student's own time.

Finally, one student had reported concern about the political bias in the teaching of political philosophy both at first and third year level with little time given to Marx or socialism. The module co-ordinator clarified that at first year the module includes one week on Marx and that Marx is also covered later on in the module at third year.

**6. Evening Degree Matters**

The student rep reported that she had asked students to complete a questionnaire. The feedback received from students was very positive and students were enjoying the course. She went on to note the on occasion the group discussions can become heated and dominated by certain individuals. This has been noted by the module co-ordinator who is addressing the matter.

**7. MLitt Matters**

There were no MLitt matters raised in the absence of the student rep.

**8. Research Postgraduate Matters**

There were no research postgraduate matters raised.

**MATTERS FOR NOTING**

**9. AOCB**

There were no items of any other competent business.

**10. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is *Wednesday 24 March 2010 at 2pm.*

*Katie M Allan  
Senior Administrator  
26 November 2009*