PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Apologies for Absence
   Yann Allard-Tremblay.

2. Minutes of the Philosophy Staff/Student Liaison Committee meeting held on 21 October 2012
   The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2012 were approved and adopted.

3. Matters arising from the above minutes
   There were no matters arising.

STAFF BUSINESS

4. Thanks for Student Participation in Internal Review
   The School President, on behalf of the Director of Teaching, extended thanks to those students who participated in the 5-year Internal Review of Teaching in Philosophy which took place in December. The review process is now complete and was very successful for the department. The review team were impressed by the contributions made by students and the department is grateful for the support received.

STUDENT BUSINESS: GENERAL TOPICS

5. Student Feedback on 1st Semester Exams and New Calendar
   The Committee discussed the student feedback summarised at paper 1 (on file) and staff were invited to submit any direct responses to points raised by individual students to the School President who will pass them on to the individual’s concerned.

   The feedback on the new calendar for semester 1 was mixed with students reporting that they found the semester stressful at first but this feeling diminished as the semester progressed.
Students were satisfied with the final module marks at the end of the semester and did not feel that their academic performance had, in general, been adversely affected by the calendar change.

Students did express concern about the lack of opportunity to get away from St Andrews during semester 1 as a result of the abolition of Reading Week but also noted that the calendar change was popular with overseas students. Students would like to see the reinstatement of a Reading Week in semester 1 and proposed that the semester should begin one week earlier to permit its inclusion in the future.

6. Interest in Continental Philosophy

The School President reported that some students are concerned about the lack of opportunities to study Continental Philosophy on the undergraduate programme. Those students who wish to study Continental Philosophy at postgraduate level are concerned about this lack of cover on the undergraduate programme.

The Honours Advisor noted that this point has been raised regularly recently by visiting students and is something that the department is aware of. She went on to note that Continental Philosophy might be built into and enhanced within existing module content.

7. Update on Philosophy Careers Event

The School President updated the Council on plans for a Philosophy Careers event later in the current semester. The event is planned to take place in early April with the support of the Philosophy Society and MLitt students. Speakers are likely to include former Philosophy students working in Scotland in careers such as accounting, business and teaching. It is also hoped that some Philosophy staff will be willing to talk about career opportunities in academic Philosophy. Further information will be circulated to all staff and students in due course.

STUDENT BUSINESS: UNDERGRADUATE MODULE-SPECIFIC MATTERS

8. PY1006 Reasoning and Knowledge

The Student Rep reported that this module has received excellent feedback from students who comment positively on the enthusiastic and engaging teaching on this module. Students have also enjoyed what is often their first exposure to formal logic and have liked the varied assessment, the weekly tutorial sheets have been especially popular. The slides provided for lectures have been very good but the Student Rep requested that they be made available via MMS rather than circulated via email.

The Student Rep reported that the students on the module do not like the 5pm teaching slot which means that students miss the start of the Halls dinner service. The Director of Teaching reported that the department is aware of this, and indeed have been raising this for 2 years with the University; presently, we are actively fighting to bring about a resolution. It was discussed at a Faculty of Arts meeting last month, and has been passed up to the Proctor, and Registry. Students should be aware that Philosophy does not choose the timing of the sub-Honours lectures, and we are as frustrated as students about this problem – even more so, when it results in lack of attendance.
9. **PY1106 Society, Authority and Freedom**

   The Student Rep reported that she had received very positive feedback about this module and students were particularly enthusiastic about the lectures and supporting reading materials. Many students also note positively that the module content links well to that of the first year modules in International Relations which are taken by many students taking Philosophy.

10. **PY2103 Rationality and Action**

   The Student Rep reported a high level of satisfaction amongst students on this module. Students noted the excellent use of analogies from aesthetics and were pleased that all second year modules worked well together.

11. **PY2101 Aesthetics**

   The Student Rep reported that this module was very well received by students who noted in particular how helpful it was to have the first 4 weeks of material for the module available in Moodle in week 1 so that students could engage early on with the materials and get ahead with the reading. Some students had suggested that perhaps the slides were too detailed which made it hard for them to engage with the material in lectures.

12. **PY3702 Value and Normativity**

   The Student Rep reported that student feedback on this module was very positive and students reported a high level of satisfaction. Some students reported that there was a lot of new terminology introduced on the module and that some, particularly those with less prior experience of Ethics, felt that the terminology was being introduced too quickly. The Student Rep suggested that this could be addressed in future with the introduction of a glossary.

13. **PY4617 The Philosophy of Saul Kripke**

   The Student Rep reported that this was a popular and well-organised module.

14. **PY4626 Life and Death**

   The Student Rep reported that this is a popular module but students have raised some concerns with regards to a lack of handout material, a perceived lack of structure, the awarding of marks for blog participation and the amount of reading required.

   The Module Co-ordinator was happy to respond to the points raised and reported that the amount of reading on the module was not too burdensome or out of line with other Honours modules in Philosophy. He noted that the tutorials are scheduled to take place 2 days after the lecture and therefore students should plan their work and time carefully and be prepared to read ahead independently.

   The Module Co-ordinator reported that student concern about the blog participation was based on a misunderstanding of the requirements. The blog participation element is based on tutorial work and is not connected to the lectures. He went on to note that with regards to a lack of handout and the lecture structure, he employs a variety of approaches in lectures depending on the complexity of the material being covered. The Student Rep confirmed that the feedback on this last point was based on the comments of only one student.
15. **PY4643 Philosophy of Law**

The Student Rep reported that this module had received positive feedback from students who are enjoying the lectures and the reading material in particular. There had been some concern about the size of tutorial groups but this was quickly addressed at the start of the semester with an additional tutorial group added.

The Student Rep went on to note that some students had reported concerns about a lack of handout material and about the running of tutorial groups which often felt less discursive and more like lectures. A few students had also reported that the Module Co-ordinator spoke quickly and could sometimes be hard to follow.

The Module Co-ordinator was happy to respond to the points raised and reported that she will try to slow down her delivery in classes and will use other techniques in tutorial groups to encourage student participation. It was agreed that some handout will be used later in the module in support of lectures covering more complex material. The Module Co-ordinator will also discuss expectations of the tutorials with the students next week.

16. **CL4452 Knowledge and the World and Hellenistic Philosophy**

The Student Rep reported that students were finding this to be an enjoyable module with a very approachable and supportive lecturer. The module has received positive feedback.

**STUDENT BUSINESS: MLITT MATTERS**

17. **MLitt Report**

The Student Rep reported that he had received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students about the MLitt programme. He reported that there was excellent cohesion and support amongst the students in the cohort as demonstrated, for example, by the large number of informal reading groups running this year. Some students had expressed concern about class sizes, in particular on the Current Issues core modules.

The Director of the MLitt programmes reported that he was delighted with the positive feedback as the SASP programme has worked hard to address a number of concerns that arose during 2011/12 in order to improve the student experience in 2012/13 and it is rewarding to see the positive results of this. He noted that SASP is considering running more streams on the Current Issues module in future years.

**MATTERS FOR NOTING**

18. **AOCB**

There were no matters for noting.

19. **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

*Katie M Allan*  
Senior Administrator  
9 April 2013