PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Apologies for Absence

Berys Gaut, Patrick Greenough, Gary Paton (Student Rep, MLitt), Simon Prosser.

2. Minutes of the Philosophy Staff/Student Liaison Committee meeting held on 16 November 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2011 were approved and adopted.

3. Matters arising from the above minutes

3.1 Sub-Honours Tutor Award Scheme (item 7 refers)

The Director of Teaching reported that this scheme was implemented for semester 1 as a result of the discussion at the last meeting. The two tutors who won these inaugural awards were Noah Friedman-Biglin and Martin Sticker.

STAFF BUSINESS

4. National Student Survey (NSS) 2012

The Director of Teaching asked Honours student reps to encourage all final year students to participate in the National Student Survey. The deadline for the completion of the survey is 30 April and eligible students will have received an email with the survey which takes a few minutes to complete on-line. Each subject area requires a participation rate of 50% in order to feature in the results and at the moment Philosophy has a participation rate of only 21%. The survey provides important information for the department and student participation in the survey is appreciated.

STUDENT BUSINESS: GENERAL MATTERS

5. Exam Formats including Feedback on PY3701 Exams

It was reported that the change in format for the PY3701 examination in January was very positively received by students on the module. The format changed from requiring 3 standard essay answers under examination conditions to a format that required 10 short answers.
Students felt that the opportunity to perform successfully on the examination was less dependent on chance as a result as more topics from the module were covered and the examination encouraged students to have a fuller knowledge of the whole module content.

The students went on to propose that in future a successful examination format might include half the number of short answer questions plus 2 essay answers. The Module Co-ordinator agreed to consider this format for use in future years.

6. **Wide Student Interest in Philosophy of Law**

The School President reported that there is a very strong interest in the Philosophy of Law amongst honours level students and sought clarification on whether the department would consider running an honours module in this area in the future.

The Director of Teaching reported that the department has been unable to offer modules in this area because of a lack of staff who work in this area of Philosophy. However, the department has recently appointed a new professor in Moral Philosophy, Professor Marcia Baron, who is a specialist in the philosophy of criminal law. Professor Baron will join the department in semester 2 2012/13 and is developing an honours module in this area for delivering in semester 2 next session.

7. **Assignments for Tutorials**

It was reported that many students at sub-honours felt that it would be advantageous to have assignments set for tutorial discussions. Some students believe that it would assist in motivating students to prepare in advance for tutorials and that it would encourage participation. The model of pre-set questions, used to frame a discussion and available in advance of the tutorial would be useful.

The Director of Teaching noted these comments and reported that she would encourage the use of such methods for tutorials among sub-honours Module Co-ordinators and tutors.

**STUDENT BUSINESS: MODULE SPECIFIC**

8. **PY1006 Reasoning & Knowledge**

The Student Rep reported that some students felt that there was not enough extra logic classes put on before the class test and that the seminar room used in Arche was not large enough to accommodate student numbers. It was also felt that the 6pm time for these classes limited attendance especially for students in Halls who would miss dinner. The Student Rep noted that the classes were extremely useful and much appreciated by students.

The Module Co-ordinator noted these points and reported that the time has to be outside the main teaching hours to maximise the opportunity for students to attend, although he will consider offering the classes on different days of the week next year so that if a student has a clash on one weekday they will have an opportunity to attend another session.

9. **PY2101 Aesthetics**

The Student Rep reported that he had received positive feedback on this module and students had felt that the work load on this 10 credit module was more appropriate to the credit value than for the semester 1 10 credit modules.
10. **PY2004 Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant**

The Student Rep reported that students on this module felt that the requirement for weekly readings of primary material was burdensome and the volume of reading required too great to allow for reflection and for wider reading of secondary sources.

The Director of Teaching noted that these comments would be passed to the Module Co-ordinator, but also reminded students that they are provided with the details of the reading requirements at the start of the module and are free to study and plan ahead in order to manage their own workloads. She went on to note that full-time study is considered to be equivalent to working on a full-time basis and that students should expect to undertake significant independent study outside scheduled class hours for all modules.

11. **PY2103 Rationality & Action**

The Student Rep reported that the first few weeks of the module lacked reading lists for tutorials and essay titles but noted that this matter was quickly resolved and the module is now running well.

The Module Co-ordinator reported that there was a short term problem at the start of the semester with his access to IT facilities which caused this delay in preparing and providing materials at the start of the module.

12. **PY3702 Value & Normativity**

The Student Rep reported that some students had reported that there were only a few copies of some of the suggested reading items available in the library and that these items were therefore difficult to access. In general, the module has received very positive feedback from students.

The Module Co-ordinator requested that the Student Rep email him with details of the relevant items and he will look into the matter with the library.

13. **PY4612 Advanced Logic**

The Student Rep reported that many students felt that the tutorials covered a lot of material and so there was limited time available for more detailed questions about the material being covered. Students had suggested that the provision of model answers for future revision and reference would be helpful.

The Module Co-Ordinator responded that it was not common practice to provide model answers but he would consider providing some models for certain examples in the future.

14. **PY4635 Contemporary Moral Theory**

The Student Rep reported that the student feedback for this module was very positive and, in particular, the students enjoyed participating in the weekly blogs which they felt encouraged greater participation in tutorials.
STUDENT BUSINESS: MLITT MATTERS

15. General Items

The School President reported on behalf of the Director of the MLitt Programme who was not able to attend the meeting. The Director met last week with the MLitt Student Rep and the following issues were raised:

- Prompt feedback on coursework;
- The Stirling day;
- PY5103 Research Methods;
- Enabling proper group discussion.

These issues have been addressed with a number of immediate actions.

MATTERS FOR NOTING

16. AOCB

There were no items of any other business.

17. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

Katie M Allan
Senior Administrator
29 March 2012