

Agenda Philosophy SSLC

Meeting to be held on Wednesday 19th November 2014
B21 7GS

Present: M. Sprevak (Chair), M. Ridge, T. Vierkant, A. McGlynn, P. Vouta, J. Nygaardsmoen, O. Simpson, J. Teng, T. Schmidt, E. Hall, J. Sutherland, A. Dobre

In Attendance: S. Nicol and M. Davidson, Student Support (Minutes)

1. Apologies

No apologies.

2. Minutes of Meeting (February 2013)

Minutes approved by meeting. The convenor stated that all the action points were followed up from the previous SSLC.

3. Matters Arising (from previous minutes)

None arising

4. Convenor's Report (Mark Sprevak)

- M. Sprevak welcomed students and staff to the first Philosophy SSLC meeting of the year.
- Study Skills Workshops are a new set of courses that helps students with things such as essay skills and exam preparation and personal development. If students have any questions relating to the Study Skills Workshop they should refer to Dr. Elinor Mason.
- Philosophy has implemented electronic submission for pre-honours.
- Exemplar essays have also been introduced this year for all honours students, these can be accessed on Learn. This does not apply to exam only courses.
- Announced that there will be 3 Student Support Officers from March 2015.

5. Year 1 Items

- J. Nygaardsmoen and P. Vouta reported first years need study groups for Logic that are student led and different from tutorials. T. Schmidt

reported that they set up student groups for Logic, like Autonomous Learning Groups (ALGs) and it was very helpful. M. Sprevak replied that we should implement ALGs for all prehonours courses next year.

[Action: MS & SSOs]

- T. Schmidt reported benefitting from explaining Logic to other students as it gives a deeper understanding of the course. M. Sprevak suggested that such peer support events (stronger students tutoring struggling ones) could be hosted under the existing PhilSoc peer support system of evening classes and essay surgeries. **[Action: J. Sutherland]**
- P. Vouta said a general issue with Logic is that there are expectations that people know something about the course before coming to University. Agreed that information for prospective applicants and new students would be revised to include preliminary reading list on logic. **[Action: MS]**
- P. Vouta reported students would like more assessment events for all prehonours courses. M. Sprevak stated that in comparison to other Universities in the UK 2 units of assessment per course is the norm. Each unit has significant resource implications. Agreed to explore at staff meeting adding extra formative assessment compatible with resource constraints **[Action: MS]**
- P. Vouta reported that most students enjoy the lectures and overall students would recommend the course to others.

6. Year 2 Items

- J. Teng and O. Simpson reported many second years are happy with the way the courses are running and the order of the modules.
- Students are also happy with online only submission.
- Over 40 students expressed a desire for lecture audio recordings to be posted. Dr. David Ward has trialed this to great success in MML this year. Agreed to take to staff meeting to roll this out more widely **[Action: MS]**

- S. Nicol reminded all that it is a mainstream adjustment to record lectures with your own devices (*Mainstream Adjustment; 6. Students shall be permitted to audio record lectures, tutorials and supervision sessions using their own equipment for their own personal learning*).
- Reps reported some modules have better PowerPoint presentations than others. M. Sprevak suggested that if they thought some were particularly good or could be better, they should report this in their Course Evaluation forms.
- Students suggested adding more structure to prepare students in advance of tutorials, such as weekly online quizzes or q&a sheets to complete and bring to the tutorial. Agreed to take this to staff meeting **[Action: MS]**
- O. Simpson suggested to have an earlier SSLC meeting in the semester to see some of the outcomes being implemented. M. Sprevak pointed out that there is no reason that issues that arise need to wait until the meeting; they can be brought to the course organiser or UG director. Agreed to have an early informal meeting next year between UG Director, SSOs and student reps in addition to SSLC meeting proper. **[Action: SSOs to arrange]**.

7. Year 3 Items

- E. Hall and T. Schmidt reported students wanted more guidance for how to write exam essays.
- Students wanted more formative assessment events. One page critical reviews as done in Fun & Games were held up as example of good practice. Agreed to bring request to staff meeting **[Action: MS]**
- ALGs were praised, but students wanted guidance in ALGs either in the form of discussion hand-outs and/or a small task to do, perhaps every 2 weeks or so. Sometimes in the logic-based ALGs the students cannot answer the questions and there is nothing that can be done, so set out tasks and answers would be useful. Agreed to bring request to staff meeting **[Action: MS]**

- T. Schmidt asked about seeing a previous year exam so that there was an idea about the format of the exams for Formal Methods. M. Sprevak suggested the request be put to Dr Schoubye directly. The Students should make an outline of what they would like Dr Schoubye to present.
- A. Dobre suggested that the ALGs are organised earlier in the semester. S. Nicol replied from next year Student Support Officers will try to start the process in the summer and this means that it can start in week 1. [**Action: SSOs: email students about ALG's during summer break (August). Liaise with Teaching Office about logistics with course enrolments and teaching plan. Semester 2 2014/15 organise ALG's before week 1]**]
- Students would like honours years tutorials. Many honours seminars become 2hr lectures without the chance for as much discussion. T. Vierkant reported that this was already under discussion with staff, but that it carried significant resource burdens.
- Students want to take part in Erasmus scheme. T. Vierkant reported that the School is currently speaking to Berlin, and institutions in Italy and Spain for placements.

8. Year 4 Items

- A. Dobre reported that Go Abroad students find it difficult to receive support for writing a dissertation proposal from the School whilst studying away. M. Sprevak commented that this should now be improved as Dr Fletcher is having Skype meetings with all year abroad students to ensure that there is enough information provided to all students. S. Nicol explained that the Student Support office is now making contact with Go Abroad students so they know that there is still support in Edinburgh.
- J. Sutherland reported that the students found the dissertation briefing useful. But the students would like concrete examples of dissertation proposals. M. Sprevak commented that Dr Fletcher is uploading such examples to Learn.

- J. Sutherland praised the Philosophy Reading Party and Afternoon Teas, and reported students would like more meeting staff-student social events. M. Sprevak replied any suggestions are welcome and that students and class reps should let the staff know and the School would do its best to facilitate staff-student social events. M. Ridge said that it would be reiterated to staff to come to PhilSoc events.

9. Selection Process for Reps in 2015-16

- Postponed to next SSLC. Reps to circulate written proposal for discussion in advance of meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 25th February 2015, 1-2pm, Room TBC.