

Welcome to the first edition of the *Philosophy Staff-Student Gazette*!

The idea of the Gazette is to let everyone know the highlights of things which were discussed and agreed at the Staff Student Consultative Committee. That's the body which allows staff and student representatives to get together and work things out.

(There's more detail in the SSCC minutes; and you can always talk to your year-group representatives if you want to know more!)

New marking grid (BA/MA/MPhil)

We have updated our [marking criteria](#)! The criteria themselves haven't changed, but they'll be much clearer to use.

In particular, we've produced a [table](#) of typical characteristics associated with each grade. The table is broken down using the same main headings as you'll get on your feedback: *Use of Reading; Argumentation; Quality of Writing; Engagement with the Question*. This should make it easier for students to understand their grade, and how to improve their essays in future.

EDI events (BA/MA/MPhil/PhD)

The SSCC also functions as our EDI Committee. Many of the points we discussed in the meeting have EDI implications, but here are some particularly EDI-related events:

- UCL's *Minorities And Philosophy* (MAP) chapter is up and running again! Look out for emails from the organizers: Christabel, Diana, Eshka & Jelena.
- Colin Chamberlain gave a PhilSoc talk about *early modern women philosophers*. And note that PhilSoc is not just an undergraduate event; anyone can go!
- A feminist theory reading group is up and running! Look out for emails from the organizers: Mhairi & Nia.

Personal tutoring (BA/MA)

The Philosophy Office schedules some personal tutor meetings for students by default. Students are reminded:

- that they really should attend the scheduled meetings(!); but also
- that they can always contact their personal tutor (they don't have to wait for a scheduled meeting).

Lecture recording (BA/MA/MPhil)

We have a new departmental policy on recording lecture materials! Here are the highlights:

- Where possible, lectures will be recorded via LectureCast (or similar).
- However, teaching which involves substantial student-discussion should not (by default) be recorded. (To explain why: in a small classroom, surrounded by supportive fellow-students, a student might feel happy discussing their sexuality or gender identity, or criticizing their home country's government; but they might not feel comfortable with such discussions being made available online.)
- When teaching materials have been recorded, the recordings will automatically be made available to students with relevant SoRAs.
- Since students are (in general) expected to attend lectures, seminars, tutorials, etc. in person, recordings will not be automatically made available to students without relevant

SoRAs. However, where recordings have been made, lecturers may choose (at their discretion) to make these recordings available to other students.

Further teaching updates (BA/MA/MPhil)

We discussed a few other general points about teaching:

- Teaching staff should put seminar readings online at least a week ahead of the relevant seminar. Indeed, it can be really helpful for students to have access to readings much further in advance (so that they can manage their reading schedule). For Term 1 seminars, this means making readings available in induction week.
- Everyone thinks it's a good idea to take a 5-minute break at around the half-way point of 2-hour seminars!
- Next year, there will be a workshop for final-year undergraduates who are considering applying for postgraduate study.

Postgrad research student community (MPhil/PhD)

- We will be buying new lockers for the graduate cave
- The graduate conference is taking place on 4–5 January (MA students are also welcome!)
- PhD students are reminded that they're very welcome at the Senior Seminar!
- Several departmental symposia sessions took place in Term 1; more are planned for Term 2
- If anyone want to organize a community-building event, get in touch with Rob Simpson (who co-ordinates Philosophy Events)
- Following the success of the advanced writing workshops (led by Tim Button & Fiona Leigh) and speaking workshops (led by Lucy O'Brien & Tom Stern), both of these will be running again! Details will follow for relevant PhD students.

Suggested readings for incoming students

This year's first years suggested that it would be really helpful for incoming first-year students to receive some suggested preliminary reading. We agreed!

So, when new students receive their welcome from the HoD and timetable for induction week, they will be sent some helpful reading suggestions (and perhaps other resources, e.g. podcasts). We'd like these resources to be suitable for students to tackle on their own; and, where possible, to be free of charge (so that we aren't asking students to spend large sums on books before coming to university).

Module-leaders (especially for 1st year modules) will also consider mentioning some preliminary readings on their Moodles, as that can be particularly helpful for students coming to a topic for the very first time.

Best wishes,

The co-chairs of the SSCC

Tim Button (Head of Department) & David Chandler (MPhil representative)