

SSLC Meeting – May 14

Minutes of Last Meeting

- No additions/changes
- On issues raised on members of staff
 - o Use a noun like they or s/he
- Empires Class
 - o The students most likely to come to her are the students who are in the same class
 - o s/he is the best idea
 - o keeps genders neutral
 - o protects the staff

Matters Arising from last meeting

- the move
 - o happened
 - o the study room is being moved on the 20th of may
 - o they are using the same study room in the east building
 - o the Columbia room → lost some chairs/computers
 - Have access to the new room when?
 - Milada will email the group
 - o Same with E509 – getting moved also on the 20th
 - o Student hub in the Sardinia House
 - o Masters study – Milada can book a big lecture room for people → just ask her
 - Can book for a whole day
 - o Can use LFY to book rooms for students
 - o Also a room in the Sardinia House – 3 of them?
 - o Make use of what is available
- IR
 - o There is no progress re:IR
 - o They have raised the issue again, getting little response
 - o History students want more access to the IR program events
 - o Mark Hoffman came along to a meeting – he explained that they need to give priority to their students – but events are different then classes
 - o We do keep them in our events, not sure why they don't do the same for us
 - o They'll keep working on that
- Exam Schedule
 - o Late
 - o It needs to be earlier
 - o Worth it for the department to file a complaint
 - o Tanya will write an email to the exam board to explain the situation
- Columbia
 - o The fire
 - o Out of the schools hands
 - o There was some talk about other universities extending on deadlines because of the fire – there wasn't access to libraries and stuff

- Talking happened but nothing really occurred
- That can be given an extension

Program Specific

- Erik
 - 100% exam
 - Struggle
 - Not sure how to do things
 - More guidance throughout the year re: how to answer the exam style
 - The IR thing
 - General question → dissertation question – supposed to be joint re: IR / History
 - You can use IR
 - **You can use theory as an analytical framework**
 - Can't make up your own theory
 - Not an IR dissertation, it's only a component
 - Put it in your literature review
 - Include theories
 - Perhaps that the guidelines are not clear
 - Can analyze your material through a specific lens
 - Discuss with your supervisor
 - Need Primary Sources – which is not the case in IR
 - Can't have an IR supervisor
 - Historians are marking the dissertations – so keep that in mind
- Chantal
 - HY423 is still a problem
 - Got first assessed essay back before the lent break
 - People were surprised by their marks
 - They felt that the feedback that they received didn't match the essays they had written
 - Saw the prof – the marks would be investigated
 - People asked if she could appeal the grades for them – she can't
 - Miscommunication between the three classes
 - Students suffered from false information
 - The bibliography → some people put everything on the reading list on the bibliography – they lost marks for this
 - One class got a talk on structuring, a structured outline, others did not – unfair
 - Very confusing situation
 - Second assessed essay due tomorrow
 - People are / were stressed
 - Did you get more guidance for the second one?
 - She did well, but got the good outline so
 - It seemed like the disparity between marks – based on who marked the papers is more than it should be – uneven marking

- The students went to the teacher responsible for the course → s/he was helpful – that their papers would be looked at again
- They don't remark essays → Schultz
- The second essays will be marked by the same person → Schultz
 - This will ensure equity across the board
- The first essays are provisionally marked – have to go through an external marker → so there might be adjustments – not a finished process yet
 - She'll tell the students this
 - The students would benefit next year if the classes laid out the structure for the essay better
- Need something on moodle to make sure its equal
- Or have a big group session at the beginning to lay out the rules/guidelines etc.
- Joyce
 - 100% exam – already covered
 - Feedback on guidelines – re: HY400
 - Some people told to not include historiography or a conclusion
 - There is slight disagreement in the historiography → in the department
 - One specific seminar leader dismisses the authors compared with the other teachers
 - Guidance during the year?
 - S/he is generous with time
 - Feedback and marking is harsher
 - Willing to explain the evaluation
 - But the advice still differs from the other teachers
 - Have one session where guidelines are given across the board at the beginning of the year
 - Extra information is better than less
 - Ask the TRC for HY400 to write a guideline for exams
 - When the marking takes place you have 3 markers – so some of those prejudices get eliminated
 - Individual teachers have their own ideas on writing styles
 - Reach out to the TRC for guidelines
 - Go to the TRC if you have comments/concerns re: equity
 - PKU – careers event → thanks to Joyce for putting together a great PKU careers meeting
 - It went really well!
 - Good job!
- Columbia
 - Grading
 - Confusion re: how many people read our exams/essays – this should be eliminated
 - Thought that there would always be two markers for the dissertation and for papers
 - And it turns out that only some of them have been looked at by another person
 - People aren't really aware of what the provisional mark means
 - At Columbia – its just the teacher that decides – no one else
 - Here – its blind moderation → if there is any worry then a bigger sample is looked out
 - It's a random selection

- Provisional mark is based on the mark by the teacher – until it is confirmed by the exam board
- Different from dissertations – dissertations are marked by two people and then an external
- Depends on what the mark is – if it is close to being the next grade up – so that they can give you the chance to be bumped up to the higher grade
- TRC for sure will mark, a sample will be moderated, and a sample will be sent out to the external
- All fails and all high distinctions will get sent out
- You have to put an appeal into the exam board chairs → then they will re look out
- Freedom of information act → you can get the exam back with the names of the markers – you have to pay for it but you can still do it.
- Exchange professors – point taken – there can be even more guidance given to them – should clarify how the British system works before they arrive
- Thinks that it is a lack of transparency in the marking process rather than guidelines
- Just don't understand how the process works
- Explain how moderation works – make the policy clearer
- Put the specific page from the handbook on moodle so that people can see it
- Dissertations
 - People were confused, had different experiences with feedback
 - How much was read
 - The official rule on how much was read was 5000 words
 - Some people sent the entire thing and good feed back
 - Others sent the 5000 words and got nothing back
 - Not fair
 - Some people used other professors at LSE in our department to get feedback
 - So some people had a lot of help, and others did not
 - This is a really serious issues
 - This a failure of the people who are supervising
 - They should not have read the 10, 000 words
 - Nothing we can really do → we can't make the supervisors read things, but we don't want to forbid them to be involved either
 - No maximum on office hour use
 - 5000 word limit should apply to everyone in the staff
 - Tanya will ask for names – they will contact them directly – she will tell them that this can't happen
 - Supervision isn't always even – but the min/max are there to keep it as equal as possible
 - Also the Columbia teachers don't necessarily respond

HIR - Joanne

- Give lectures for all seminars – at least once a week – especially 400
 - Have a 2 hour seminar and then have an hour lecture
 - Have them for more specific topics – mini lectures at the beginning

- This is helpful to the students to conceptualize the content
- Have a 'mid-term' exam that counts for grades as a sort of practice exam
- how to prepare for exams in international history, especially international students who have NEVER done exams like these before. not only I feel unprepared, even though I study like a beast, I feel the weight of disadvantage for 2 main reasons: no technique and English is not my first language.
- I agree with above. I think if we were able to see examples of essays written during exams (given a first, 65, 60 and below), it would help us who have never taken exams like this before. I've found that it's style, rather than content, that brings my grade down.
- HY400 and HY434 problem lecturers
 - Its so convoluted
 - Problematic
 - Needs to be more structure to his/her classes
 - It's a big issue – many of us are not writing on his exam topics
 - Needs to be more organized

Suggested these suggestions

- Use mocks?
- Its anonymous
- Problem with the structure
- More guidance is good
 - But there needs to be a mock-midterm
 - Maybe in the lent term reading week
- Do contact your professors and they will mark extra timed essays – that at least gives you feed back – never hurts to ask

New Course Proposal

- It has been circulated to the department
- Political thought in Germany
- 100% exam
 - Problematic re: exam board
 - Standardize assessment especially from a visiting professor
- Strong concern about the 100% final
- Make it 50% or something
 - Have some assessed course work
- Available to all of the International History Department

Any other business

- Any more department events
- 18th of June – SSH building
- Group end of year party
- Some program specific events
- Always events!