

International History department
Wednesday 8th February 2011 Undergraduate SSLC Meeting Minutes

Present:

Catherine Capone (BA History year 3, acting Chair)
Benedict Sarhangian (BSc IR and History year 3)
Eduardo Baudet (BSc IR and History year 2)
Francesca Washtell (BA History year 2)
Raphael Bousquet (BSc IR and History year 1)
Nicholas Nalbantian (BA History year 1)
Justin Lau (BA History year 1)
Sanaz Tailafar (General Course)
Dr Joan Pau Rubiés (UG programme director)
Mathew Betts (UG administrator)

Apologies:

Astrid Barsk (Chair, BA History year 3)

Year/programme reports:

First year BA History

Feedback has been largely positive; students are content with the programme. Departmental social events were requested in addition to the events put on by the History Society.

First year BSc International Relations and History

Students would like to see some continuous summative assessment in first year courses rather than 100% assessment by examination.

Moodle had been unavailable on the weekend on 5th - 6th February with no explanation. Francesca was aware of the reason for this through a well informed acquaintance and told the meeting that it had been due to a temporary licensing issue.

There has been mixed feedback amongst first year students to LSE100, which they started this term. The breadth of the course curriculum, including Economics and Mathematics was seen as too distant from their main degree subject by some students, whereas this variety was welcomed by others. A point on which there was more consensus was that quite a lot of work is required considering that LSE100 does not bear any formal credit.

Second year BA History

In general second year students are also happy.

The introduction of one to one feedback on exam performance and discussion of the first essay of a course has been greatly appreciated by students.

Concerns have been raised by students taking HY208 with regard to the link between the lectures and syllabus.

Second year BSc International Relations and History

The essay feedback meetings were also welcomed by BSc students, who felt that a meeting with the teacher to discuss the second essay would be even more helpful. It was noted that the office hours are available for students to discuss second essays if they wished.

Students taking HY239 had appreciated the inclusion of an assessed essay.

A range of concerns and complaints had been raised by BSc students relating to the elements of their degree which sit in the International Relations department. Students feel that they are under all the obligations of the IR department such as the compulsory courses which focus on Foreign Policy Analysis (the teaching of which is unpopular in itself), but do not see any of the benefits which are available to single honours IR students such as availability of the IR dissertation, eligibility for prizes and channels to give feedback to the IR department namely student reps and Student Staff Liaison Committee.

Dr Rubiés responded that the LSE structure of programme stewardship does not give much opportunity for these concerns to be addressed: whilst all the responsibility for pastoral, academic matters and programme development sits with IH, 50% of the teaching element remains in IR. However he proposed that the best way to take these issues forward is to collate them into a document and present this to the IR department in order to facilitate a reasoned discussion.

Third year BA History

Some students felt that class surveys on permanent staff members would be more beneficial if conducted at the end of Michaelmas term rather than at the end of Lent term. Dr Rubiés responded that the volume of surveys would be too great for LSE to process if permanent staff were surveyed at the end of MT along with GTAs and guest teachers. Permanent staff are better placed to take feedback into account over the medium to long term as they will be teaching every year, as opposed to GTAs who are on temporary contracts.

The new level 3 course proposal 'The Struggle for the Persian Gulf, 1951-2003' had been met with positive responses from SSLC committee members when reviewed prior to this meeting. Dr Rubiés informed the meeting that the course had been approved by Undergraduate Studies Sub Committee earlier that day.

Third year BSc International Relations and History

The third year rep echoed the concerns raised by the second year rep relating to the International Relations department. Otherwise, no concerns had been raised.

Next meeting

Wednesday 23rd March 4:15pm was agreed as the provisional date of the next meeting. This in week eleven of Lent term, but was felt to be preferable to week one of summer term as the latter is the only revision week before the start of the exams period.

It was noted that the meetings have been very well attended this year, and that this has generated a good working atmosphere. It was suggested that in the next meeting some continuity of personnel was agreed towards next year in order to transmit this.