

Wednesday, 1st February, 2012 Undergraduate International History SSLC minutes

Present:

Eduardo Baudet (Co-Chair, BSc IR and History year 3, minute taker)
Francesca Washtell (Co-Chair, BA History year 3)
Laurence Atchison (BSc IR and History year 3)
Raphael Bousquet (BSc IR and History year 2)
Justin Lau (BA History year 2)
Nico Nalbantian (BA History year 2)
Maria Coelho (BSc IR and History year 1)
Georgia Derrett (BA History year 1)
Emma Forth (BA History year 1)
Ali Hughes (BA History year 1)
Jonathan Jeutner (BSc IR and History year 1)
Maryan Osman (BSc IR and History year 1)
Caitlin Taub (General Course)
Hoang Vu (BSc IR and History year 1)
Mathew Betts (UG administrator)
Dr Piers Ludlow (UG programme director)
Paul Horsler (Library representative)

Apologies:

Brianne Evans (General Course)

Topics of Discussion

Examiner reports from 2010/11

- The reports were agreed to be positive.

HY117: Transfer to Second Year

- Concern of overlap of current course HY233 Empire and Nation: Britain and India since 1750 and proposed course From Empire to Commonwealth: war, race and imperialism in British History, 1780 to 1979.
 - o Dr. Ludlow explained that the new course has a broader range of topics than HY233.
- Raphael Bousquet and Alistair Hughes were concerned about the few options that new First Years will have once they remove HY117.
 - o Dr. Ludlow noted that certain administrative factors were largely behind the decision to move this course
- It was agreed by the SSLC that the coursework (4 presentations and 3 essays in the year) was an unusually large amount of work.

Student Feedback

First Years

Seminars and readings

- Georgia Derrett commented on how seminars often suffer from lack of discussion. In some cases students simply refrain from participating, while only a few do most of the speaking.
 - o Dr. Ludlow said that the TLCs were going to meet and discuss First year seminars.
- First years noted that readings lists were too long. HY117 for instance has around 10-15 core readings. In turn, this contributed to the problem of seminars lacking focus and some students not speaking, as they had done different readings than the other students.
- Alistair Hughes suggested that teachers (GTAs) tell their students which readings to focus on for seminars.
 - o Dr. Ludlow commented that this was risky, as the GTAs do not write the questions of the exam and would not know which readings were the most appropriate ones to assign.
- Alastair also suggested that reading summaries could be requested by GTAs.

Exams

- Emma Forth expressed that exam preparations, such as techniques on essay writing, would be appreciated.
 - o It was suggested that First years ask their academic advisers for essay techniques.
- First Year students welcomed having mock exams, though they would prefer having them prior to the beginning of Summer Term.

Socials

- Maria Beatriz Coelho commented that the Roundtable held by the History Department received favourable response.
- A note was made on greater advertising for the History Society parties, pub quizzes, etc to integrate IH students.

Course Options

- Maryan Osman lamented the lack of African History courses on Second year. It was suggested that International History students might perhaps be able to take EH315: Africa and the World Economy as an alternative.

Second Years

Dissertation

- Nico Nalbantian noted that the timing of the HY Dissertation session was not welcomed.

LSE100

- Nico also commented that students still express their dissatisfaction at LSE100.

Courses

- Students were happy with the essay dates for HY235: Modernity and the State in East Asia. Being due in weeks 2 and 9, this prevents clashing with weeks 5 and 10 when most of the essays for other courses are due.

Recordings

- Raphael Bousquet mentioned that students wish to have lectures recorded.
 - o Dr. Ludlow said that this was up to the Lecturer responsible for the course.
 - o Francesca said that if students lobbied their Lecturer(s), then they might be willing to record the lectures.

- Should Lecturers be concerned at people not showing up because of the recordings, it can be agreed that these be released after the end of Lent Term.

General Course

Course expectations

- Caitlin Taub commented on course expectations being unclear for General Course students. As General Course students are graded based on a different set of criteria- class participation, formative essays, etc- they wanted to know exactly what the teachers expect from them.
- Dr. Ludlow suggested talking to the teacher as the best way to understand the different expectations.

Third Years

Inability to cover topics in single seminars

- Laurence Atchison commented on History seminars being unable to cover topics that were very broad. Devoting a mere two-hour seminar to cover the French Revolution, for instance, was deemed too short.
- Francesca highlighted that this issue often occurs in HY315: The European Enlightenment.
- She suggested that a one-hour lecture be held in addition to the two-hour seminar.
 - However, Dr. Ludlow explained that teachers have fixed teaching hours per year and this precludes them devoting 3 hours per week.

IR

Exam Feedback

- Raphael noted that students wanted to get feedback from IR exams. Eduardo explained that it is available, but one has to contact the IR department to receive it.

IR202 FPA

- Student still express that reading lists are too long, preventing them from knowing which readings are the important ones.
- Despite this, some books are still missing from the library. Students have expressed their wish that important chapters of books be available online.

IR203 International Organisations

- Laurence commented the lecturer- Dr. Meierhenrich- is often 5-10 minutes late.
- Further, while students receive lecture handouts, the presentation of the lectures lacks structure. Dr. Meierhenrich usually runs out of time to cover the points in the outline.
- Eduardo expressed how students are still concerned that there has been no response or action by Dr. Meierhenrich regarding the i) results and ii) changes in exam structure of the IR203 summer 2011 paper.

Other comments

- Second and Third year students felt that filling out evaluation forms for Lecturers at the end of Lent Term was not useful. If the Lecturer is to improve, then an earlier evaluation seems logical.

- Mathew encouraged the students to use the International History – Virtual Office on Moodle.
- The SSLC commended Justin Lau by participating in the Undergraduate Forum.
- It was agreed that the third SSLC meeting would be held on Wednesday, 14th March. (Week 10 of Lent Term)