

**International history Department Student Staff Liaison Committee meeting  
minutes**

**Wednesday 12 November 4 – 6pm (Michaelmas term meeting)**

**Present:**

Uday Mehra (BSc IR and History, year 3, Chair)  
Lodewijk Vriens (BSc IR and History, year 3, Deputy)  
Fraser Morris (BA History, year 1)  
Samar Rizvi (BA History, year 1)  
Sophie Miloszewski (BSc IR and History, year 1)  
Forrest Hanson (General Course)  
Tharin Sethi (General Course)  
Orla McNamara (BA History, year 2)  
Edward Tan (BA History, year 2)  
Yeva Agayan (BSc IR and History, year 2)  
Fazeela Jahangir (BSc IR and History, year 2)  
Eleonore Lazat (BSc IR and History, year 3)  
  
Professor Vladislav Zubok (Undergraduate Programme Director)  
Paul Horsler (IH Library liaison)  
Avninder Grewal (Undergraduate Administrator)  
Professor Janet Hartley (solely for NSS item)

**Apologies:**

Kiona Loo (BA History, year 1)  
Hayat Mohamed (BA History, year 1)  
Alexander Hawkins (BA History, year 1)  
Kyle Houston-Floyd (BA History, year 2)  
Soo Ji Kang (BA History, year 2)  
Josh Hitchens (BA History, year 2)  
Catrina Brooker (BA History, year 2)  
Khanh Nguyen (BSc IR and History, year 2)  
Alexander Hradecky (BSc IR and History, year 2)  
Kanan Parida (BSc IR and History, year 2)  
Jack Kelly (BSc IR and History, year 3)  
Sivakami Sivakumar (BA History, year 3)

**Welcome and introduction**

Committee members introduced themselves.

**1. General feedback**

First year feedback:

- The Orientation 'Essay writing seminar' was not well organised, more teachers were needed to support the high number of students who attended.
- Students expressed disappointment with some aspects of teaching (lectures and classes) in survey courses HY116 and HY113 after the first few weeks of teaching.

- Broad based teaching is not always favoured, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students did however impress that it is essential in the first year to achieve broader knowledge before specialising.

**Action:** A.Grewal to communicate feedback to organisers of the 'Essay writing seminar'.

Prof Zubok to discuss comments received on HY113 and HY116 both with Deputy Head and TRCs (Teachers Responsible for the Courses) so that remedial action can be taken as necessary this term.

Second year feedback:

- Lecture recordings are not provided for IR200 lectures
- Some courses require many readings for one week; it was suggested to look through the materials before assuming that they are all lengthy documents
- Students would like more courses around Africa

**Action:** A.Grewal to discuss with IR department to see if IR200 lectures can be recorded.

Prof Zubok to feedback to department the interest for Africa courses.

Third year feedback:

- Worries around inconsistencies between markers; some teachers have expressed that they are 'harsher' markers, which can influence whether a student would take on their course.

**Action:** Prof Zubok to discuss potential inconsistencies in marking at Teaching and Exams meeting.

General Course feedback:

- Positive feedback on Study Skills session.
- Queried whether it is possible to have money allocated to each student for printing, if they decide not to take a language course.

**Action:** A.Grewal to discuss with Department Manager the possibility of students having an allocated department spend for printing if they decide not to take a language course.

## **2. Orientation 2014 feedback**

- New students would have preferred to have been contacted by their Academic Adviser; this happened for some students but not all. Students also wanted to be informed of who their Adviser was sooner.
- Registration was a problem as students were queuing for an hour.
- General Course students had a conflict with registration and department induction: this should have been better arranged, with events across the week rather than heavy loaded into one or two days.
- Can LSE highlight the importance of applying for a visa earlier and provide clearer advice and information on the process (related to countries).

**Action:** A.Grewal to liaise with ISIS and UG Admissions to see what the possibilities are for communicating visa information sooner.

### **3. Academic Adviser role**

- It was queried whether an Academic Adviser can be matched to students based on mutual interests. It was noted that this process would give select Advisers many more advisees and would be too difficult to implement.
- Discussion around changes to the traditional structure of meeting one on one with an adviser, for example, could meet as a group with other students.
- An informal relationship would be preferred.
- More academic support would be useful.
- If office hours are cancelled, there are possibilities of meeting in different ways (Skype calls).
- Students prefer a mentoring scheme inclusive to all first years.

**Action:** A.Grewal to inform mentoring team of students' preferences; all first years to be allocated a mentor.

Prof Zubok to feedback to department on preferred changes for the Academic Adviser role.

### **4. Moving HY235 out of the list for paper 5**

The department have not yet made changes, nor has anything been decided yet. The paper would still be available under selection list A.

### **5. Library matters**

- Double logging in; password systems on Moodle and reading lists are different.
- There are no longer overdue book fines, there is now a block on the account.
- Positive feedback received on additional space provided in library.
- There has been a movement of books within the library.
- Queries desk is now on the ground floor.

**Action:** email P. Horsler ([P.N.Horsler@lse.ac.uk](mailto:P.N.Horsler@lse.ac.uk)) if you wish to offer comments/suggestions on the library fine system, or if you need advice with library related matters.

**Action:** P. Horsler will check map functionality system is correct for where books are located within library.

**Action:** P. Horsler will check if HY221 reading list links are working.

**Action:** A.Grewal to check with IMT why Moodle wasn't working over weekends in week 3 and 4. Is this likely to happen reoccur? Can students be notified?

### **6. External Examiners Reports**

External Examiner feedback reports were read aloud.

**Action:** Prof Zubok and A.Grewal to investigate why LSE marks on individual results rather than marking on a curve – a system where the top x% get a 1st, the next a 2.1.

## **7. IR Feedback**

IR feedback has been received and will be passed to Academic Advisers by the end of Michaelmas term.

## **8. National Student Survey results**

The History department has done very well in the past; but there has been a sharp drop in scores (from 98% to 87%) for 2013/14. International History wishes to take feedback on how to improve scores. Some feedback points:

- Run a mock NSS for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students.
- Improve relationships between students and their Academic Advisers.
- More consideration of GTA and guest teacher knowledge for modules.
- Run a student mentor/buddy scheme.

## **9. Feedback on Academic year structure**

- Majority vote demonstrated students would prefer reading weeks in week 6. There was concern over the loss of two teaching weeks in summer term – therefore it is important to provide revision sessions during reading weeks, sessions could be based on content covered in weeks 1 – 5.
- Mixed opinions on whether essay deadlines should be before the reading week commences or after.

## **10. Better ways to publicise new courses**

No views were offered at this meeting. This will be placed on the Lent term agenda.

## **11. New Course: BA History and Law**

This is a potential new course for the department. Nothing further to report at this stage.

## **12. School Website: what would students want from the redesign?**

Unable to discuss agenda item due to time constraints, students to send any comments onto A.Grewal: [ih.ug.admin@lse.ac.uk](mailto:ih.ug.admin@lse.ac.uk).

## **13. USSC and ASC Elections**

Uday Mehra, Lodewijk Vriens and Eleonore Lazat expressed an interest in these committees.

**Action:** A.Grewal to send committee signup information to these reps

## **14. AOB**

Office move for International History to Sardinia House will take place during Easter vacation 2015. There is no confirmed date as yet. Any queries or concerns, please contact Ms Demetra Frini, IH Departmental Manager: [d.frini@lse.ac.uk](mailto:d.frini@lse.ac.uk).