

**Report on History of Philosophy A CEQ's for year 2008-09**  
**Lecturer: Nikk Effingham**

*Question 1: Did you find the module... (1 = too difficult; 5= too easy)*

44 respondents: 16 answered '2'; 24 answered '3', 4 answered '3'.

Average: 2.6.

Lecturer's Comments: Sounds about right.

*Question 2: Did you find the module... (1= well organised; 5= badly organised)*

44 respondents: 15 answered '1'; 22 answered '2'; 3 answered '3'; 4 answered '4'.

Average: 1.9.

Lecturer's Comments: No action to be taken in light of the score.

*Question 3: Did you find the lecturer... (1=helpful; 5=unhelpful)*

43 respondents: 21 answered '1'; 15 answered '2'; 6 answered '3', 1 answered '5'.

Average: 1.7.

Lecturer's Comments: Acceptable score.

*Question 4 Did you find the lecturer... (1=clear; 5=unclear)*

44 respondents: 19 answered '1'; 18 answered '2'; 6 answered '3'; 1 answered '5'.

Average: 1.8.

Lecturer's Comments: Acceptable score.

*Question 5: Did you find the lecturer... (1=enthusiastic; 5=unenthusiastic)*

43 respondents: 28 answered '1'; 12 answered '2'; 2 answered '3'; 1 answered '5'.

Average: 1.5.

Lecturer's comments: An acceptable level of enthusiasm, apparently for all but one person.

*Question 6: Was the opportunity for discussion... (1=sufficient; 5=insufficient)*

41 respondents: 11 answered '1'; 20 answered '2'; 7 answered '3'; 2 answered '4'; 1 answered '5'.

Average: 2

Lecturer's Comments: Given this, I will stick to the model I have been using of offering no discussion during lectures.

*Question 7: Did the series of lectures make sense as a whole? (1= well; 5=badly)*

42 respondents: 14 answered '1'; 24 answered '2'; 3 answered '3'; 1 answered '4'.

Average: 1.8.

Lecturer's Comments: Acceptable score.

*Question 8: Did you prepare adequately? (1=always; 5=never)*

42 respondents: 2 answered '1'; 20 answered '2'; 17 answered '3'; 1 answered '4' 2 answered '5'.

Average: 2.5.

Lecturer's Comments: (Barely) acceptable score.

*Question 9: Was the library provision (1=adequate; 5=inadequate)*

41 respondents: 4 answered '1'; 13 answered '2'; 13 answered '3'; 8 answered '4' 3 answered '5'.

Average: 2.8.

Lecturer's Comments: Not a good score, and not a good spread either. There is no excuse for library resources not being available. Will look into this immediately, especially as the course is still ongoing.

*Question 10 What was the most helpful aspect of the lectures/classes?*

The explanation of aspects which were difficult; the group discussion in classes; Lecture notes, they are concise notes that are clear and summarise what we have learnt; The lecture notes were very useful as they were clearly set out and easy to get a grasp of; it was clear and well prepared; handouts and questions are [illegible] idea; coursepack; the organised, linear sense of the course; the handouts; Powerpoints and handouts that are clearly explained during the lecture; handouts, help with resources; powerpoints; lectures very good and clear, interesting; the question for seminar prep in confirming knowledge; powerpoints available online for revision; detailed handouts; handouts; analysis/discussion of reading; being able to discuss difficult parts in the seminars; questions to focus the discussion; group discussion and seminar questions; the classes always follow up on the lectures allowing for a deeper knowledge on each topic; the enthusiasm of the lecturer and the clarity of the slides used; clear, well organised lectures; Handouts; James Holden is a great tutor; handouts; powerpoint presentations; powerpoint presentations; examples given, powerpoint presentations are structured well; suggested texts – Frankcs = clear; structure regarding handout and opportunity to access powerpoints from the learning resources; questions were developed around lecture; opportunity for discussion; and further explanation of the concept; the clarity of the handout and opportunity for extra reading; seminars being there for discussion of problems/debating issues and handouts are great and powerpoints online are good; ran well with the extra reading, easy to follow; clear/precise approach to Descartes' philosophy; Handouts; the discussions in the seminars were very helpful, as they were very interesting and challenged me to think philosophically, which in the process helped to clarify a few points.

*Question 11 What, if anything, was least helpful about the lecture's/classes?*

Random selection of answering questions; being picked on!; some of the questions – too many. Maybe we should have just one or two more indepth questions; fortnightly seminars were so helpful that perhaps weekly seminars would have been better; slightly rushed; timins [sic] between lectures and classes; assuming everyone understands the text fully in seminars; Not always enough time between lectures and seminars; had to do work without lecture info; can be confusing at times; readings were too obtuse, many were too long, felt irrelevant; the lack of resources in the library, there was a very limited amount of books on the reading list that were actually in the library; the time organisation of our seminar immediately following the lecture with the subject matter being covered soon

beforehand without the necessary time attached for thought processes; seminar discussion became vague and drifted off topic; the fact that we would have the lecture on a subject, a week after the seminar; Lecture delivery was too loud – uncomfortably so; N/A; originally even week seminars were organised before lecture had taken place; further reading was not really explored, I mean it was not stated what further reading would be appropriate; felt that we tried to fit in too much in some seminars, 50 mins every fortnight is not enough. Some discussions were hurried and thus some points were not clarified.

*Question 13: How many hours a week, on average, did you spend preparing for classes/seminars?*

32 respondents:

1-2 hours: 7

3-4 hours: 16

5-6 hours: 5

7-8 hours: 2

9-10 hours: 2

Average: 4 hours.

Lecturer's Comments: An hour under the stated requirement. No action.

*Question 14: Were there any specific texts that it was difficult to get hold of? Please give details.*

I think it is necessary to have *more* copies of key texts for essays; *Sense and Sensibilia* by Austin (not in the library – lost I think); some from the readings lists for essays; Books on reading list (in module guide) library only had one copy of each; all of the ones listed for essays; the texts on reading list – often on loan; not enough texts in library; specifically with regard to the essay, the suggested reading list was not available in the main library; many of the ones suggested/recommend were not available in the library; None; No; No; No; N/A; No; LOGIC! [which is odd, as this isn't a logic course...]

*Question 15: What changes, if any, would you make to this aspect of teaching and learning?*

Timetabling has been an issue. My seminar follows straight after the lecture (and so there is no time for preparation and even though I read the readings they don't make sense until the lecture); maybe a variety of lectures, go more depth and different angles; seminars every week; easier reading; change reading; if possible have your seminar tutor give the lecture to you; a bit more structure, to keep everyone on topic; None; None; perhaps library references to books in extra reading?; Just clearer further reading; I would not change the lectures, but I would ask for more seminars, e.g. instead of fortnightly, but weekly seminars.

*Question 16: Please add any other comments.*

It is a bit odd to start a History of Philosophy in 17<sup>th</sup> century since we lack a lot of important information; seminars would benefit from being more structuring [sic] discussing the questions specifically and making sure everyone has the opportunity to speak (not three people dominating); sometimes discussions in the seminars go off on a tangent, making it much more confusing; Correspond the lectures with the seminars! (this really needs to be done); use WebCT would be more convenient to have all lecture notes and powerpoints in one place; quite good 'History of Philosophy' is a misnomer as it only focuses on Descartes. A bit deceptive;

### *Overall*

The CEQs demonstrate an acceptable level of performance in the course. However, two major issues appear to have arisen.

The first is over the ordering of lectures and seminars. With the seminar starting in week 2, and reading week meaning a lecture is skipped, the current course cannot fit a model whereby lectures always come before seminars. The only possibility is to drop the introductory lecture, and although I am wary of doing so I will give it some serious consideration (as well as trying to figure out what to do in week 10 instead!).

The second is over library material. Allegations that the material is not in the library is simply false (exception: it appears Hookways' *Scepticism* is listed but we have no copies; and Franck's guide, but it was made clear to students this was not in the library, although it was on order, and they were invited to purchase a copy). Of the 27 recommended texts, virtually all books have multiple copies, with at least one on short term loan. Short of piling multiple copies of those 27 books into the library, there is little I can do. Given budget and shelving constraints, it is unlikely that I can get 3 more copies of 27 different books, or what have you.

Therefore I have two suggestions. First, I will remind students to try and photocopy (within CLA guidelines) the relevant portions of the texts that they need, to free up the library books. Second, I will suggest clubbing together in book clubs. As the only recommended text for the course is the *Meditations*, it is not unreasonable for students to purchase another book on top. If four students club together, and each buy a different book, this will allow them more access to resources. I was remiss in not suggesting such book clubs in the beginning. Both of these suggestions will be carried out in the next lecture.