

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

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

28 respondents: 10 answered '2'; 17 answered '3', 1 answered '3'.

Average: 2.7.

Lecturer's Comments: Sounds about right.

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

28 respondents: 12 answered '1'; 11 answered '2'; 4 answered '3'; 1 answered '4'.

Average: 1.8.

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

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

28 respondents: 15 answered '1'; 9 answered '2'; 2 answered '3', 2 answered '4'.

Average: 1.7.

Lecturer's Comments: Acceptable score.

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

28 respondents: 15 answered '1'; 9 answered '2'; 2 answered '3'; 2 answered '4'.

Average: 1.7.

Lecturer's Comments: Acceptable score.

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

28 respondents: 18 answered '1'; 8 answered '2'; 2 answered '4'.

Average: 1.5.

Lecturer's comments: An acceptable level of enthusiasm, for all but two people (clearly the one person from last time has spread their failure to be convinced of my enthusiasm. Not really sure how to deal with that).

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

28 respondents: 6 answered '1'; 12 answered '2'; 8 answered '3'; 2 answered '4'.

Average: 2.2.

Lecturer's Comments: Acceptable score.

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

28 respondents: 9 answered '1'; 14 answered '2'; 3 answered '3'; 2 answered '4'.

Average: 1.9.

Lecturer's Comments: Acceptable score.

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

28 respondents: 2 answered '1'; 12 answered '2'; 12 answered '3'; 2 answered '4'.

Average: 2.5.

Lecturer's Comments: The same as last time. Which takes it from being barely acceptable to unacceptable, as it really should've improved. I will have to investigate how to ensure

more students are preparing for the course, especially in light of the spread of the module marks. See below for more.

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

28 respondents: 4 answered '1'; 7 answered '2'; 10 answered '3'; 5 answered '4'; 2 answered '5'.

Average: 2.7

Lecturer's Comments: See below.

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

Handouts and effect slides; Counterexample of conventional views; Class discussion; Organisation and web stuff; As a strong basis for our own learning; Time for discussion; Clear, concise and good use of examples; The lecture notes were quite coherent; Handouts were v. clear and helpful; Engaging classes; Clear explanations; structure of hand outs and lectures; Handout and lecture slides on website and mock exam questions; discussion of topics; Visuals, examples; The lectures and the classes; The handouts and excellence of Effingham; Going through lecture notes in seminar groups; Seminar tutor (Norman) really clear and helpful; the resources available online; discussion; Chance for discussion; Handouts for clarification; Powerpoints/handout; Powerpoints and handouts; Handouts/powerpoints.

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

Seminars, since I lost Norman [Stinchcombe]; N/A; Lectures can go a bit fast; The amount of reading we had to cover in comparison to [to what? No mention is made of the comparison]; Office [I've no idea what this means. My office hours? Couldn't find my office? My office is a pigsty?]; the questions set for the classes were a little bit off the point; the fact that they were behind the seminars; No real guidance on how to approach essays, how to write/style etc. (beyond what's in the booklet) [Not my place, I'm afraid, as writing skills are covered in another module, although I did give an extra lecture organised by the undergraduate PhilSoc for all students, which was unfortunately not well attended, and of course there is the guidance on the web resource and the 20 hours of office hours I have throughout the semester to use and abuse at your pleasure]; I didn't enjoy the topics so they were difficult to concentrate on; weird reading; hard subject material; N/A.

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

24 respondents:

1-2 hours: 9

3-4 hours: 13

5-6 hours: 2

Average: 3 hours.

Lecturer's Comments: Acceptable (I was wrong on the last CEQ, the time allocated to prepping for seminars is 3 hours per week).

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

Not really; Nope; N/A; Most of those on the course list; Max Black paper – couldn't access it from home, no eLibrary permission, had it access it from uni only; Leibniz → the problem of free will; Some of the books on the reading list – only one copy in library; Leibniz – Meditations of first...; Short loan texts in the library for essays – need more copies, some books in long loan I could not use; no, much better everything seems to be in short term library – although did spend a small fortune in photocopying – can we have a printing allowance? [alack not, such expenses are an expected part of undergraduate study. Although not having to purchase core texts past the £1 coursepack should go some way to freeing up some cash I hope ☺]; Books for essays impossible to get hold of; Rescher's *Leibniz: An introduction to his philosophy*; Rescher, Saville, Mates, Jolley ;

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

Nothing; N.A.; Make it more entertaining [Nikk: I may consider the use of the dance of seven veils in order to meet this suggestion]; More opportunities for discussion → i.e. more seminars such as weekly one hour a fortnight is not enough to cover the reading we have to cover; Deeper discussion in personal identity; None ☺; Fewer tutorial questions and instead maybe a general outline/topic for discussion [see below]; More discussion based seminars; N/A;

*Question 16: Please add any other comments.*

I like crack references; Nope; Thank you!;

*Overall*

There are some general concerns. The first is with attendance, which has been atrocious. Even looking at the number of respondents, a mere 24 from the whole class, signals something drastically wrong. This awful attendance is mirrored in the tutorials, where I'm led to believe there is less than 50% attendance. This is bad. Not so much for me, of course, but the students.

Second, a student suggested introducing general topics for discussion and fewer tutorial questions. I believe the former, and the not the latter, might work well. The questions are there to spark philosophical thinking, as well as aiding in getting to grips with the basic ideas. Having witnessed the way that the course has gone, I've seen that the questions became the focus of the tutorials i.e. the tutorials proceeded by going through the questions one by one. This was not intended. So, I'll keep the questions, and make more clear the instructions to students and tutors that they are a guide to seminar content, rather

than the purpose of the seminar. I recommend that this be duplicated in Knowledge and Reality.

With regards to the library, there's little else I can do. I will try and see if there can be four hour loans for the texts, which is long enough for a student to read the appropriate portion and/or photocopy it. But that will require me contacting the library and somehow persuading them to change how they run things – but I will see what I can do. More texts probably won't help – there's already 3-5 copies of each item that was singled out for specific attention as being difficult to get hold of. No comments were made on the 'book club' suggestion I raised in the first lecture and the last batch of CEQs, so I can't tell whether that was implemented or not.

Finally, it is highly unlikely that this course will run next year, although the general comments will apply to any course that takes its place. Given the comments of the student rep (delivered in staff-student committee meetings), that the first year body stated they would prefer to have a non-modern philosophy history module (that, preferably, did not concentrate on metaphysics and epistemology), I am inclined to drop this module in favour of something like Medieval Philosophy. Indeed, that'd have been my preference at the start of the year, but for various reasons it was unavoidable that the second module would be another modern philosophy module (not that this has resulted in a sub-standard course by any rate, but certainly my preference is for a different module to take its place).