

## Report on Knowledge and Reality B CEQ's for year 2010-11

Lecturer: Nikk Effingham

The comments of the module convenor are found in square brackets( '[' and ']').

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

41 respondents: 11 answered '2'; 27 answered '3'; 3 answered '4'.

Average: 2.8

Lecturer's Comments: Notable shift towards the medium from last year's score. For no reason, as far as I can see!

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

41 respondents: 9 answered '1'; 23 answered '2'; 6 answered '3'; 3 answered '4'.

Average: 2.1.

Lecturer's Comments: Bit of a drop. Not sure why.

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

41 respondents: 13 answered '1'; 18 answered '2'; 6 answered '3'; 2 answered '4'; 2 answered '5'.

Average: 2.1.

Lecturer's Comments: A drop from last year. One person who filled '5' in then went on to praise my clarity and other such features, so I'm wondering if that was erroneously filled in.

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

41 respondents: 18 answered '1'; 13 answered '2'; 8 answered '3'; 1 answered '4'; 1 answered '5'.

Average: 1.88

Lecturer's Comments: The same as last year's KRB, but again lower than last year's KRA. Although the same as above applies to the person who filled in '5'.

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

41 respondents: 27 answered '1'; 12 answered '2'; 1 answered '4'; 1 answered '5'.

Average: 1.46

Lecturer's Comments: More or less the same as last year, although a notable drop of enthusiasm concerning metaphysics compared to epistemology – which is odd, as I'd have thought I'd have been more enthusiastic about the former than the latter. Ah well.

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

39 respondents: 5 answered '1'; 13 answered '2'; 11 answered '3'; 9 answered '4'; 1 answered '5'.

Average: 2.69.

Lecturer's Comments: Two of my students didn't respond. One wrote 'In a lecture?' on it, clearly indicating the weirdness of the question. I concur – discussing things in a lecture of ~100 people would be a bit mad.

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

41 respondents: 17 answered '1'; 17 answered '2'; 6 answered '3'; 1 answered '4'.

Average: 1.78.

Lecturer's Comments: Same course as last year, but a better result. Go figure.

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

41 respondents: 3 answered '1'; 12 answered '2'; 18 answered '3'; 8 answered '4'.

Average: 2.76.

Lecturer's Comments: The same as last year's KRB and, as with last year, a huge drop on last semester's KRA. Worse, there were even less people in this lecture than there were in the corresponding lecture from last year (this year it was only 41 out of 138). What's the point of University's trying to provide good quality education if less than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of students turn up? I could probably give lectures consisting of nothing but Ricky Gervais's comedy routines, or lecturing on how to make a really good chickpea hotpot and it'd make basically sod all difference. (And don't even get me started on seminar attendance.)

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

41 respondents: 4 answered '1'; 19 answered '2'; 14 answered '3'; 2 answered '4'; 2 answered '5'.

Average: 2.49

Lecturer's Comments: First, lots of people said they had no problems using the library and still refused to mark it as adequate, instead giving it a '3'. So a grave misunderstanding of what this part of the questionnaire meant. Second, those who ranked it a '5' said they couldn't find anything. This is madness – the short term shelves were brimming and it's impossible for eLibrary texts to go unfound. I presume they just don't know how the library works, and hereby recommend they go on a course. Alternatively, they might just have exaggerated. Third, the score is basically the same as last year but also basically the same as KRA where there *were* library issues and there *were* books missing because the reading list didn't get rolled over. Having fixed those issues, you'd imagine things would get better. But it didn't! What's actually in the library seems to have nothing to do with the marks given on the CEQ. So either no-one knows how to use the library, or no-one is using it in the first place (or a combination of the two).

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

Powerpoint slides and handouts; the clarity and content of the lectures as an introduction to metaphysics; handouts and coursepacks; discussions in seminars; was well explained, slide shows and handouts were good; opportunity for discussion; listening to different explanations – makes difficult things easy to understand; examples, broken down nature of presentations; handouts; possibility of asking questions; discussions of opinions on personal identity; handouts; lecturer is always very clear and enthusiastic makes the subject interesting and enjoyable; seminars, although I was the only person there on one occasion; seminars (the fact I was the only person there ever!) [and, yes, this comment did appear twice, just to confirm that at least two seminars only had one person attending]; Handout; Classes/seminars helped to clarify lectures; Discussing problems and clearing any difficulties; lecture handouts were very clear, discussion in seminars was helpful; lectures very well delivered and easy to understand; Examples, clear organisation of new material; Slides; The handouts are good; Handouts good; Memorable examples and possible worlds talk; Very clear and enthusiasm; Very thorough notes provided, which I really appreciated even if this did discourage a large quantity of people from bothering to turn up for lectures; Clear and helpful powerpoints; Handouts; Good structure – close relation to handouts and seminars; Handouts follow powerpoint and funny examples helps points stick in mind; Nikk is clear and coherent in his lectures; Powerpoints being broken up into bullet points. Use of visual aids.

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

Number of possible sources to investigate; the clarity of lecturer and material; not much advice on essay writing [there were two lectures on it in KRA!]; Lack of seminar attendance; Lecturer doesn't explain much more than is on the sheets; Lectures were interesting but a bit confusing (perhaps content very complex to cram in an hour?); nothing; Have had a couple of seminars on things before we've had the lecture on them; Having a seminar on time before the lecture on it; Seminar on time when hadn't had the lecture yet; Nothing; Seemed to read from powerpoint a lot; Clear and helpful powerpoints make lecture attendance less important; Not much time for questions – but the powerpoint normally gives enough information [Come to my office hours!];

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

1-2 hours: 16

3-4 hours: 14

5-6 hours: 3

One student said they did 24-48 hours per week. I hope they misread the question (either that or they *really* loved metaphysics). Either ways, as they're a statistical outlier, I've left them out of the average.

Average: ~2 hours 40 minutes

Lecturer's Comments: Almost on the recommended three hour a week mark. But there's a dodgy spread of far too many students below the three hour mark.

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

The Human Animal; Beebee's book on causation; All the books on the reading list!!! The library provision were very bad [sic]; No; No; Online article on personal identity where someone's brain is in a vat and his location as his brain and body are separate, is debatable [erm... fairly certain the student misread the question]; e-library texts; In the library there weren't many books for the essay [but which ones! Tell me and I'll order more!]; No; No; Very few books with details of paradox of non self exemplification, a few journal articles not available [which ones?] and very few ebooks; Riddles of Existence; Not particularly; No; Not that I am aware of, but possibly; [unintelligible followed by] The Importance of What We Care About (Frankfurt);

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

None; None; None; Nothing; More seminars/more time for discussion might be helpful; seminars more free discussion, like Norman's seminars. Paul is better than Kirk, but the pre-set structure limits the amount of free discussion we can have, it's not his fault because he has to stick with the structure. It would also be really good if we could have lectures that allowed for instant discussion [you are free to instantly discuss my lectures right at the end. As for structure, there is no pre-set structure. Do you mean sticking to answering the questions? Certainly there was never a demand to slavishly go through them. I shall pass these observations over to the PGTAs and see if we can remedy that]; more seminars; None; Encouraging lazy people to turn up; Nothing [alternatively, it might say 'Working' but 'Nothing' makes me sense. Tricky handwriting.]

*Question 16: Please add any other comments.*

Really enjoyed the teaching style, memorable points and way of explaining particular terms and ideas. Humour is highly applauded. Pleased with module and its presentation; Pretty tough module!; Definitely easier than Knowledge and Reality A!; Nikk's enthusiasm helps me take on the information because he is animated and uses memorable examples; I had my time seminar before I had the lecture – this made it very difficult to answer the questions. But on the plus, I love the seminars ☺ & lectures are funny too Nikk...; The enthusiasm of the lecturer is brilliant;

*Would you like to scrawl any messages to your mate on the back of the CEQ and then leave them on it to be handed in?*

One student took this optional, unwritten question. Here is what they wrote:

All the seminars before today were essentially pointless & you miss the one that counts? [which is disturbing, less that they think the other seminars were pointless, but why the seminar on time was essential. Maybe they were talking about a different course?]

HA you are a loser for sitting over there [I should note that, as a lad, I always made these wrong sitting decisions as well, so don't blame him too much for sitting in the loser area]

*Overall*

Alright – more or less the same as last year with some variation in results in places.

*Library:* Having compared various year's results, along with the comments, I'm starting to conclude that the results to this question (which barely vary – most noticeably barely vary *even when I know there's been an error such that there aren't enough books in the library* as, unfortunately, happened last semester) bears little or no relation to the truth. My continuing suspicion is that people just don't know how to locate the short term loan books, or think that the short term loan doesn't count (it does – this is a course of >100 people, *all* the books are going on short loan to cater for that gargantuan demand) or that the eLibrary doesn't count (it does) or that one's inability to use the eLibrary is a problem (which it kind of is – we need to ensure that all students are attending the library inductions so they all know how to use it. Although I explained how to use it back in first semester!).

*Attendance:* Big problems here. Massive fundamental problems. Lecture attendance is less than a third, and seminar attendance is absurdly low. Annoyingly, the solution to this is largely outside of my control. American-style options, where parts of your credit depend on attendance, are – as far as I know – disallowed by University regulations. The only other option is to chase up individual students for non-attendance. The problem with that is the immense increase in admin this generates, and the *only* sanction available is kicking someone off of the module. Given I'm unlikely to (be able to) kick someone off of a first year module for only turning up to two seminars instead of 4 (or whatever) that's a pretty toothless threat so I'm loathe to make it (I hate toothless threats - as the saying goes 'If not for the bullet, who would fear the gun?'). But this is a serious problem given that seminar attendance, and philosophical discussion, is, by far, the most important part of the course. Worse, Philosophy undergraduates who don't get into the habit of talking shop in the first year are basically screwed in later years (they just end up getting to the third year and realising they can't philosophise their way out of a paper bag, which then causes huge hassles in getting a good grade). Finally, with attendance so low the idea of laying on more seminars for people to not attend is an impossible ask. If you have any proposed solutions I'm willing to hear them out. For my part, I'll try some blue sky thinking and see if that turns anything up. In short: problem acknowledged; solution is hard to find.