

# **SOCIOLOGY: STAFF-STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE**

21 November 2007

## **PRESENT**

Dante Mazzari (Soc1a); Anne Miller (JunHons); Ksenia Panjinskaia (JunHons); Michael Rosie (SSLC convener); Tegan Vevers (JunHons); Kirsty Yau (JunHons);

## **APOLOGIES**

Maddie Breeze (SenHons)

## **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The last minutes were taken as accurate.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

**Student engagement** – although the informal ‘Welcome to Honours’ reception attracted a relatively poor attendance the Junior Honours representatives felt it had been a worthwhile experience. Committee discussed at some length how to stimulate and maintain informal student support networks, in particular links between Junior and Senior Honours. The Convener stressed the necessity for students to take the lead on this, but will liaise with the Honours Convener on what else can be done more formally. In general the opportunity to attend informal social events bringing students together, and involving staff, was viewed very positively.

**Action** – *convener has raised issue with Honours convener.*

**Exam Feedback policy** – the Convener reported that the School of Social & Political Studies (SPS) was continuing towards providing feedback for student exam scripts and that this was likely to be piloted by SPS in Ordinary level courses in the near future.

## **REPRESENTATIVE ISSUES**

**First Year** – the representative reported general satisfaction with the course and reported no major worries. The venue shift between McEwan Hall and the revamped George Square Theatre had proceeded smoothly, and changes in arrangements had been clearly communicated by e-mail. Some lectures had been delivered at too rapid a pace although the issue had been raised and satisfactorily addressed within the course.

**Second Year** - No representative present.

**Junior Honours** – all representatives were present. Some issues regarding electronic access of key reading materials was discussed. In one Honours course webCT readings were confusingly organised with some apparently not actually on webCT as advertised. Some students had attempted to access electronic journal articles and were faced with a request for payment. Convener reassured students that they were not expected to pay

for articles. Where students encountered such issues they should contact the course convener immediately.

**Action –**

*Convener to raise issues direct with conveners of courses discussed in the meeting.*

*Students encouraged to report any problems in accessing key readings directly to the relevant course convener.*

Some discussion of research groups in Methods A. Some felt that this had been a very positive and rewarding experience, whilst others felt more guidance could be provided about (i) the centrality of epistemology and how this was to be addressed within the assessments; (ii) how to conduct, manage, and write-up group project work. Some representatives felt that the lecture and research group components of the course needed to be more carefully integrated.

**Action –** *convenor has raised issues with MoSR'A' convenor.*

**Feedback from MoSR'A' Convenor:** "Next year the Methods A course will be replaced with a new course so this feedback is very useful and will benefit students taking the course in future. All three issues will be addressed, partly through a revised workshop/group work system to replace the current lecture/group work structure, a revised assessment procedure, and encouragement for students to use WebCT resources that address some of these issues."

**Senior Honours** - No representative present.

## **General Discussion**

Committee spent some time discussing general issues. Two specific issues were raised:

**Sociology Seminars** – some representatives were unclear about whether they were expected, or indeed allowed, to attend the Sociology seminar series (or seminar series elsewhere in the University. Convenor explained that such seminars were open to all, and that all students would be very welcome to attend should they so wish. Committee agreed that these could usefully be advertised to students by e-mail.

**Action** – *Seminar Convenor to regularly circulate Seminar details to Junior & Senior Honours by e-mail*

**Office Hours** – it was suggested that all members of teaching staff should advertise their office hours on their web-pages

**Action** – *Convenor to pass this on to colleagues.*

**AOB** - There was no other business

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

End of second semester 2007-08