

History and Philosophy of Science Part III:
Senior Examiner's Report 2022-23.

Overall results

The Part III course was taken by 16 students this year. 5 achieved First Class marks (70+) overall, and 11 received a Second Class mark, Division 1 (60-69).

The gender distribution of performances is as follows:

Class	Female	Male	Total
First (70+)	3	2	5
Second, division I (60-69)	7	4	11
Second, division II (50-59)	0	0	0
Unclassified	0	0	0
Total	10	6	16

It is difficult to draw strong conclusions, given that the numbers are small.

Prizes

The Lipton prize for the best overall performance on Part III and the Bronowski Prize for the best overall performance in the first half of the Part III were both awarded to Eleanor Brittain.

External examiner

Professor Charlotte Sleight began the first of three years as the external examiner for the Part III (as well as MPhil). Professor Sleight described the student work as 'truly impressive' and offered detailed comments on all cases sent to her, sometimes working with very short turnaround times. She had a number of recommendations, which are detailed in her external examiner's report. We are very grateful to her for taking on this role with aplomb in a very unusual year.

Recommendations

1. Title changes should be clearly telegraphed as far in advance as possible and the suitability of assigned assessors carefully checked against new titles. Course managers should make clear to students wishing to change their submitted essay title that any changes may involve the need to find new assessors, so this is not to be undertaken lightly.
2. Assessors are routinely encouraged to make full use of the range of marks, but it is not clear that assessors are all calibrated to the same standards at the very highest and lowest ends of the marking scale. There is not an obvious solution to this problem, but at the least it speaks to the need for thorough discussion between co-assessors in agreeing marks.
3. There was significant concern about poor citation practices this year. We have long encouraged students to use what citation method works best for them, but this has resulted in extreme variation, including cases where

students use highly unusual citation methods apparently driven by the desire to conserve word counts. The examiners exhort students, supervisors, and assessors to stick to the guidance that we give as a department, which is to follow a citation method consistently as per the HPS Lib Guide:

<https://libguides.cam.ac.uk/hps/referencing>

4. The Department considers submission of work produced by ChatGPT to constitute academic misconduct to be dealt with under the University's disciplinary procedures. However, the examiners are not aware of any obvious means of definitively demonstrating that AI has been used in completing a given piece of work. The HPS Board may wish to consider and discuss how to guard against the use of AI in submitted Part III coursework.
5. An unusual situation occurred at the end of the examinations process: one student applied for and received an EAMC allowance for late submission, but this was apparently not communicated to the Department until we contacted the student's tutor. It may be helpful to remind Directors of Studies in the Colleges to keep an eye out for such applications.

Mary Augusta Brazelton
3 October 2023