

## History and Philosophy of Science Part III: Senior Examiner's Report 2024-25.

### Overall results

The Part III course was taken by 17 students this year. 8 achieved First Class marks (70+) overall, and 9 received a Second Class mark, Division 1 (60-69).

First (70+)	Second, division I (60-69)	Total
8	9	17

### Prizes

The **Lipton prize** for the best overall performance on Part III was awarded to Louis Bosnell. The **Bronowski Prize** for the best overall performance in the first half of the Part III was awarded to Matthew Taylor.

### External examiner

Professor Charlotte Sleigh was the external examiner for the Part III (as well as MPhil) for the third consecutive year. Professor Sleigh remarked upon the overall high quality of student work within the program, and the diversity of topics. In addition, Professor Sleigh praised the overall quality of marking and assessing within the program, noting that suggestions for improvement from last year's report had been successfully taken on board, and that grades are in line with national standards. We are very grateful to Professor Sleigh for her detailed and positive report, and for her work and commitment to this role throughout the year and throughout her three-year stint.

### Recommendations

There were no recommendations specifically aimed at just Part III, but there were concerns raised regarding the relationship between HPS Part III and the HPSM MPhil program, such as discrepancies over grade boundaries and marking rubrics. We are grateful for the continued dialogue on this issue, and have reassured Professor Sleigh that such discrepancies are due to the differing status of the two programs, the Part III course following protocols for undergraduate degrees within the university, and the MPhil following protocols for postgraduate degrees. Although Professor Sleigh found the management and examination of the course to be of high standard, she recommends that we continue to monitor average marks, and discrepancies between marks between history and philosophy of science, to ensure that standards remain high.

One specific issue raised by Professor Sleigh concerns the ongoing management of student use of AI tools. This primarily concerns a case within the HPSM MPhil course this year, but applies equally to the continued management of the HPS Part III program. Professor Sleigh emphasises the need to have a detailed and up-to-date policy regarding the use of AI to allow examiners to properly adjudicate cases of academic misconduct, and to ensure that the quality of student work is not negatively affected through the use of AI tools. We welcome this feedback, and have undertaken the production of a new departmental policy on AI that will ensure that students are informed as to what is and is not acceptable, and how improper use of AI is to be investigated and sanctioned.

Matt Farr  
October 2025