

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Part III History and Philosophy of Science

SENIOR EXAMINERS' REPORT 2010-11

The Part III course was taken by 14 students, of whom 6 achieved First Class (mark 70 and above) and 8 achieved 2i (marks between 60 – 69).

Prizes

The *Lipton Prize* was awarded to Merlin Sheldrake, for best overall performance in the course.

External examiner

Dr Serafina Cuomo (Birkbeck History), the External Examiner, saw a total of 17 pieces of work (including 3 dissertations) out of 84 (14%). Dr Cuomo saw: the best and worst essays, borderline marks, those essays or dissertations for which there was a wide variation between the examiners' marks and those for which the internal examiners failed to reach an agreement. The Examiners wish to thank Dr Cuomo for her careful reading of the work and her constructive contributions to the discussion.

Recommendations

- 1.** It was noted that students writing on historical topics may need to use extensive citations in the text and it was recommended that the Department introduce a policy whereby a student could apply for an extension to the word limit on the basis of the need to use extensive citations, the process would be the same as when applying for an appendix. This recommendation should be considered by the Degree Committee; there may also be implications for dissertation work at Part II.
- 2.** The Part III Manager's guidelines should advise that when students consider working with people outside of the Department, particular attention must be paid to ensure that the end result is still within the scope of HPS. When approving topics, the Degree Committee must pay particular attention to the description of the work to ensure this.
- 3.** The examiners agreed that the rules for deadlines and word limits for the Part III are clear and all students are expected to stay within the word limit and submit on time, or risk penalties. It was recognized that despite the clear guidance, the examiners still found it difficult to impose penalties where students had exceeded the word limit by very little or were just an hour or two

late and eventually it was agreed that the examiners should be allowed to use their judgment in these cases.

Professor Jim Secord

5 October 2011

Part III HPS Senior Examiner, 2010-11