

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

NST Part III History and Philosophy of Science**Senior Examiner's Report 2012-13****Overall results**

The Part III course was taken by 12 students, of whom 11 completed the course. Of those, 5 achieved overall First Class marks (70 or above), 4 High II.i (67–69), 1 (lower) II.i (60–66), and 1 II.ii (50–59).

In line with the departmental agreement to monitor gender-based trends in student performance, we should note the following breakdown of results. There are no particular concerns arising from this year's results, but we should continue monitoring. It is worth noting that even though we had a small number of female students in this cohort, all of them achieved First or High II.i.

Class	Female	Male	Total
First (70 or higher)	3	2	5
High II.i (67–69)	1	3	4
(lower) II.i (60–66)		1	
II.ii (50–59)		1	
Total	4	7	11

There are also no significant trends that the Senior Examiner has detected on the basis of other demographic or disability categories.

Prizes

The Lipton Prize, for the best overall performance on the Part III course, was awarded to Anthony Woodman.

External examiner

Dr Serafina Cuomo (Birkbeck College, University of London) completed her term as external examiner for the MPhil programme with her work this year. She expressed her appreciation of the high quality of the work produced by the candidates, and also her approval of the improvements seen over the years in the examiners' work and the procedures followed by them.

The examiners wish to thank Dr Cuomo for her valuable contributions over the last three years. Dr Emma Tobin (University College London) has agreed to serve as the next external examiner.

Recommendations

1. When students are building on previous work, this should be clearly indicated by citing the previous work in the same way as any other secondary source. (This would occur most commonly in the use of one of the three essays in the dissertation.) This year's examiners recommend in such a case the use of one of

the same examiners for both works, as an exception to the general rule that we should try to avoid using the same examiner repeatedly for a given student.

2. Supervisors of essays and dissertations should remind students to submit a change-of-topic form in case of a change significant enough to affect the choice of examiners.

3. It has worked very well this year to have a small group of people including the Senior Examiner (Hasok Chang) and the Ordinary Examiner (Helen Curry) propose examiners for essays and dissertations to the Degree Committee, rather than try to have the whole committee come up with suggestions on the spot at the meeting. In working out suggested examiners, supervisors should be consulted as necessary. This new procedure should be continued in coming years, unless there are new reasons arising against it. It would also help shorten the Degree Committee meetings.

4. It was noted that one of this year's set essay questions was identical to an essay question. It is recommended that an exact duplication should be avoided, as it gives an unfair advantage to students who happen to have done an essay on the repeated question.