

Institution: University of Essex

Unit of Assessment: 32 - Philosophy

a. Overview

Essex is a centre of excellence for **Modern European Thought**, an area in which we have an unusual concentration of staff compared to most other departments in the English speaking world (8.5 out of 11.5 members of staff). Since 2001 we have been building up our profile in **Moral and Political Philosophy** and in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, **75% of our research** was deemed 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent'. Since then we have further developed our existing expertise in the above areas and have established ourselves in the burgeoning field of **Medical Humanities**.

The team consists of eleven and a half staff, two AHRC research assistants, one British Academy Fellow and four non-stipendiary Junior Research Fellows. Up to 2012 Essex has provided the editorial team for *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, one of the top ranking journals in the profession (General Editor 2003-2012: **Wayne Martin**). During the relevant period the School has raised over £1 million in research funding, both from public and private sources. The research developed within the context of the Essex Autonomy Project (EAP) has had significant influence on policy debates and practice. In 2011 the EAP Summer School was successfully launched in order to apply our research results to the training of (inter alia) health care professionals, social workers and members of the Police Force.

Our collective aspiration is to produce research that is innovative and authoritative across a wide range of topics. This ethos informs both our graduate teaching and supervision and has led to the publication of high quality papers in such outlets as the *European Journal of Philosophy, Inquiry*, the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Kantian Review, International Journal of Philosophical Studies, Philosophical Quarterly*, the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, and *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences.* The number of our former PhD students with academic posts (currently around 27 in the past ten years) indicates the strength and success of our research training, which are also corroborated by the fact that one of our Graduates was a winner on the prestigious AHRC/BBC Next Generation Thinkers competition in 2012.

b. Research strategy

In our 2008 RAE submission we stated three main strategic objectives:

- (1) To continue fostering cross-fertilisation by developing a form of modern European thought which, instead of being predicated on an opposition between analytic and continental traditions, combines the intellectual virtues of the first (such as rigour, coherence of thought and argumentative clarity) with the breadth of the second, enriching philosophical arguments and debates by embedding them within a historical and social context;
- (2) To further our strength in moral and political philosophy;
- (3) To take advantage of our dual field of expertise to develop new avenues for research.

Objective (1) was carried out through the securing of over £1 million in research funding (see section e)), the hiring of a senior member of staff in the relevant area (**Mc Mullin**) as well as a junior cross-over figure between modern European and political philosophy (**Gormley**), and the production of innovative research in the main following areas:

(a) 19th century Modern European Philosophy: **Han-Pile** (2009a) charts the relation between transcendental philosophy, ontological commitments and naturalism in Nietzsche's thought, engaging critically with the predominant naturalistic readings of Nietzsche. She analyses the notion of 'amor fati' and brings out its medio-passive dimension and its relation to the eternal return (2009b). **Watts** (2011a) provides an account of the unity of the dialectical and lyrical dimensions of Kierkegaard's treatment of the concept of faith and also demonstrates the wider significance of Kierkegaard's work by bringing him in dialogue with current debates surrounding



- deliberation, judgment and self-knowledge (2011b). He presents an analysis of Kierkegaard's early views on Socrates as an exemplary thinker (2010).
- (b) Phenomenology: Burch (2011) analyses the nature and function of formal indication in Heidegger's early work in order to establish its methodological importance for the later work. Han-Pile (2013) explores the early Heidegger's views on agency and freedom as a paradoxical, medio-passive 'choice to choose'; Martin (2013) analyses the semantics of Dasein and the modality of Being and Time. In his 2010 piece he explores the forms of selfconsciousness and narrative orientation at work in Cranach's Eden. Mc Mullin's major study of 'Being with' in Being and Time (2013) places Heidegger in dialogue not just with other phenomenologists, such as Sartre, but also with current debates on inter-subjectivity and in cognitive science.

Objective (2) was achieved by the hiring of two members of staff (**Juetten** and **Schaub**) who consolidated our strength in moral and political philosophy, and by the publication of high quality work in the following areas:

- (a) Critical Theory: in his CUP study **Freyenhagen** (2013) reconstructs and defends Adorno's 'negativist ethics', arguing that it can be made sense of without any reference to a substantive understanding of the good, and is best understood as an Aristotelian conception of normativity. In his papers on Adorno (2010), Habermas (2011a) and on freedom (2011b), **Juetten** defends the specific approach of critical theory to philosophy and social analysis and makes the case that it offers a distinctive explanation of current social and political problems.
- (b) Ethics: **Dews** (2010) explores the relevance of the McDowell/Pippin debate to Fichte's views on the status of the moral demand and our hopes for its realisability. **Freyenhagen** (2011) shows that Hegel's objections to Kantian formalism still stand and his 2010 paper presents a critique of Kant's conception of transcendental agency as timeless. **Martin** (2009) critically examines the meaning and limits Kant's notorious 'Ought Implies Can' principle. **Mc Mullin** (2010) presents an illuminating analysis of the virtue of modesty.
- (c) Political philosophy: **Dews** (2010) brings out the conflict between therapeutic and pragmatic conceptions of critique in Rorty's thought. **Freyenhagen** (2011) presents a critique of Rawls arguing that the moral justification of power cannot remain neutral about contested normative and philosophical decisions. **Gormley** (2012) explores the ethical and political implications of the work of Derrida and attempts to develop a way beyond the impasses of deliberative and post-structuralist approaches to democratic theory. **Juetten** (2010) works on the moral limits of markets and critically examines Honneth's theory of reification. Finally, **Schaub** (2009) makes the case that Rawls' political realism is best understood as a continuation cum transformation of the project of reconciliation developed by Hegel in his *Philosophy of Right*. He also explores in various papers (2010, 2012, 2013) several shortcomings of post-Rawlsian approaches to political philosophy, in particular as an ideal or non-ideal theory of justice.

Objective (3) was mostly achieved by the work done in the context of the **Essex Autonomy Project**. The project, which has been funded by several research grants (see details in section e)), aims at clarifying the nature and value of autonomous judgment so as to develop a conception which is philosophically defensible and can be used in practice. Several case studies were undertaken, drawing on philosophical resources to develop solutions to the challenges involved in realising and respecting autonomy in the practical contexts of law, social welfare, medicine and psychiatry. Now in its final year, the project has made very significant contributions in the emerging field of **medical humanities** in the form of the 'green papers' published on its website and of several research articles. Thus **Freyenhagen** (2013) critically examines the possibility of value neutrality as well as the dangers of understanding best interests in a hyper individualistic manner. **Martin** (2011a) brings to the fore the antinomies of autonomy, drawing parallels between German idealism and English mental health law. Another paper (2011) focuses on mental capacity and applied phenomenology of judgment.

Our main strategic objective for the next five years is to maintain and to develop our strength in all three areas above (a distinctive, cross-fertilised form of modern European thought,



moral and political philosophy and medical humanities). We are pioneers in the latter field and our strength there is demonstrated by the success of the EAP project. In the same spirit, we are developing a research bid in the field of bio-ethics on 'Self-Representation and Recognition in Anorexic refusal' (Martin/Freyenhagen, in collaboration with researchers from the Maudsley Institute and the Avalon Ward). We are also building on our on previous work on medio-passive agency by preparing a project on 'The Ethics of Powerlessness: The Theological Virtues Today' (Han-Pile/Watts). Further research grants bids are also in the pipeline.

Appropriate means include:

- (1) Keeping up the production of original and authoritative research published by top ranking journals and presses:
- (2) Adopting a judicious staffing strategy which ensures that key people are replaced in ways which strengthen and develop our research community, and that sufficient research leave is awarded to all staff;
- (3) Attempting to secure further research grants in all the above areas;
- (4) Fostering interdisciplinary research, especially in Medical Humanities and around our 'Images and Ideas' and 'Spirituality and Secularism' research paths.
- (5) Cultivating an appropriate research environment in order to maximise student integration and contributions to the research community and to enhance Graduate employability.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

Our **staffing strategy** rests on two main practices:

- (a) Judicious self-renewal: during the period we made four new appointments. The most senior of these (McMullin) consolidated our profile in Modern European Thought by reinforcing our strength in phenomenology and adding some expertise on Hannah Arendt and Simone de Beauvoir. Two further appointments were made in Critical Theory (Juetten and Schaub), thus establishing Essex as one of the main centres for studying the Frankfurt School in the UK. Finally, appointing Gormley allowed us to strengthen our presence in contemporary French philosophy while adding a new strand to our expertise in contemporary political theory (deconstruction). During the same period we also secured funding to hire a British Academy Fellow who works on critical hermeneutics and the law of capacity. The two Junior Research Fellows we hire each year (on a competitive and non-stipendiary basis) also contribute to invigorating research.
- (b) **Intellectual exchange**: we strongly believe in testing ideas on each other (and on research students) and in benefiting from critical exposure to as many intellectual traditions as possible. Many of us work in close association (e.g. Martin/Freyenhagen, Freyenhagen /Schaub, Han-Pile/Watts) and there are several informal workshops and reading groups (currently on Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Descartes, and Freud and Critical Theory).

Staff development is supported in the following ways:

- We have a commitment to the prudent use of staff time so that administrative and teaching loads are contained inasmuch as possible. Our new staff policy protects the research time of junior staff: their administrative load is reduced during the three year probationary period and they have a lower teaching allocation for the first year.
- Permanency and promotion criteria are made clear to all appointees and reinforced through a yearly Performance and Development Review during which each member of staff receives feedback on their performance and advice about career development from the Head of School. Yearly reports from probationers are reviewed by the Senior Staff Committee, who in turn reports to the University Staffing Committee.
- We have a **strong mentoring system** which provides new appointees with individual guidance on the expectations of the University on teaching, supervision, research and administration.



Mentors monitor teaching and meet regularly with their mentees.

- Senior members of staff support the work of more junior colleagues by helping them revise their papers for submission to peer-reviewed journals. All staff have multiple opportunities for discussing their ideas with colleagues, in particular in informal reading groups.
- Whenever possible, we maximise the fit between research and teaching as both benefit from this integration. GTAs are also employed to teach classes on large modules so that the load of the relevant lecturers is reduced.
- Strong support in framing and drafting proposals for external research funding is also available. All such proposals are scrutinised by our Research Committee, which meets regularly and also formulates strategies and explores funding opportunities for the whole of the unit. The University-wide Research and Enterprise Office provides very significant help with the more practical aspects of the research proposals.
- Staff have the possibility to apply to the Research Development Fund for teaching relief or editorial support to finish a particular project. They can also draw from the Research Endowment Fund to present papers at Conferences.
- The two post-doctoral researchers hired in the context of the Essex Autonomy Project have brought significant contributions to the research environment, in particular in the form of the 'green papers' published on the EAP website.

Two other principles guide staffing strategy and development at University level:

- Support for Equality and Diversity: The University of Essex has a very clear policy supporting equality and diversity in relation to both staff and students. Specific objectives are set each year and an annual report is produced indicating achievements against objectives. The University facilitates flexible working, has a set of harassment advisers, and trains all staff involved in making appointments in equality and diversity issues. It has carried out a project on 'Caring for Carers' that has developed recommendations to support staff caring for others. It recently secured an Athena Swan Bronze award for its work in eliminating gender bias and creating a culture that values all staff across the whole University. It also has accreditation for the use of the 'Two Ticks' disability symbol. Mentors and those carrying out appraisals within the Philosophy UoA help to ensure that those whose research is interrupted for maternity leave or any other reason are fully supported in their return to research activity.
- Maintaining research integrity: Ethical approval has to be secured for all research involving human subjects, whether the researcher is an employee or a research student (or indeed an undergraduate). The approval forms are detailed and the University also provides outline pro formas for informed consent.

ii. Research students

- We have a thriving graduate community, with students registered for MA courses (MA Continental Philosophy, MA Philosophy and Psychoanalysis, MA Ethics, Politics and Public Policy, MA Philosophy, MA by Dissertation), MPhil, PhD and Integrated PhD). We have approximately 15 MA students and about 35 PhD students in any given year. Over the period, we have had one ORSAS student (the scheme was discontinued in 2008), two Silberrad students and six AHRC-funded students. A University-wide scheme also offers approximately £15K per annum as University of Essex Scholarships which are awarded on a competitive basis at both MA and PhD levels. In 2012 and 2013 we were able to add £50K to this amount out of Philosophy's own research incentive benefits.
- Essex was one of the first in the UK to introduce **international graduate conferences** (1995). These annual conferences are funded by our School and organised by research students with the help of staff and of the Director of Graduate Studies. Graduate students are also entitled to up to £200 to help them attend conferences and/or present papers.
- Research students have their own computer room, a study room with meeting/seminar facilities, a research room and the use of a common room in the department. Postgraduate training within the department includes an intensive MA Writing Workshop in which all students are given weekly written assignments, receive individual feedback the following week, do class presentations and work on a research project. We also run a second year Doctoral Research Seminar more specifically dedicated to PhD research techniques. Students are invited to



present their work in progress at our **Graduate Research Colloquium** which runs three times a year. We also offer a yearly **philosophical German course**.

- Research students also benefit from the centrally delivered *Proficio* programme, which includes: (1) a *Doctoral Welcome Conference* and start-of-year conferences for second and third year doctoral students; (2) *Vitae*-approved programmes: a *GRADschool* for second-year students addressing key communication skills such as negotiating, giving and receiving feedback, along with career management skills and *Leadership in Action*; (3) *freestanding half-and one-day courses* run throughout the year.
- Completion rates for our PhD students are indicative of our good monitoring practices and progression structure (average withdrawal rate over the period: 4.6%; students in further completion: 8.4%). In addition to regular contact with their supervisors throughout the year, all research students have a minimum of two one hour long Supervisory Boards a year, at which work previously submitted to the Board is discussed and progress is assessed by staff. At the end of their first year, students are required to write a successful Project Outline and Literature Review before being allowed into their second year.
- In order to facilitate their career development, students are employed as Graduate Teaching Assistants (about 11 in employment each year). Up to 2012 the editorial assistants for Inquiry were drawn from the pool of current graduate students, giving the latter a valuable opportunity to acquire publishing experience and develop their professional skills. We also run a Placement Workshop to help students to write their CVs, letters of motivation and to prepare application packs; students short-listed for positions elsewhere are offered the opportunity to have a mock interview within the School. Finally, we invite graduates to attend and comment on research presentations made by job applicants as part of the interviewing process for advertised positions.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Research Income:

We were awarded two large AHRC grants: £390K+ for a project entitled 'Deciding for Oneself: Autonomous Judgement in History, Theory and Practice' (April 2010-March 2013), and £330K+ for a follow-on commissioned project investigating 'Contested Autonomy in Public Policy and Professional Practice' (Nov 2010-March 2013). Both projects were headed by Martin (PI) and Freyenhagen (co-PI). This led to the establishment, in April 2010, of the Essex Autonomy Project, which to date has hosted three major international conferences, eight two-day workshops for researchers and practitioners, two three-day residential Summer Schools for health and social care practitioners and facilitated two public policy roundtable discussions for policy makers and members of the judiciary in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the project has developed a work-place training programme for health and social care practitioners which has delivered training to several local councils across the UK. We also attracted over £282K in funding from the **British Academy** for a project on 'Critical Hermeneutics and the Law of Capacity' (start: 2012). Finally, Martin was named as a consultant on three successful Wellcome Trust applications, respectively on 'A Phenomenology of Decision-Making' (£24K+, Dec 2009-Dec 2012), 'Time and Decision-Making' (£28K+, Dec 2012-Dec 2017) and 'Fitness to Plead' (£18K+, Oct 2013-Sept 2016). This brings the total of awards won during the period under consideration to over £1 million.

In addition to the current research bids already mentioned under 'b. Research Strategy', we are planning to take advantage of our unusually high concentration of experts in Critical Theory (**Dews, Freyenhagen, Juetten** and **Schaub**) to secure further research income in this area.

Scholarly infrastructure:

Research is facilitated by the *Albert Sloman Library*, which has holdings of 1,090,844 volumes and pamphlets, 16,291 journals [online and print], and 92 databases. It is also home to the Michel Haar Archive and the Arnold Miller (Hegel) Papers. The total philosophy holdings are estimated at 23,794 books and pamphlets and 379 journals [online and print]. In addition, up to 2012 Philosophy at Essex was home to *Inquiry* (general editor: *Wayne Martin*), a long-established, international philosophy journal which has made its most distinctive mark in fostering exchanges



across the various internal boundaries and barriers that characterised philosophy over the past century. The journal's approach complements ours as a significant force in breaking down the distinction between so-called 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophy.

Organisational infrastructure:

Our **Departmental Seminar** meets fortnightly during term. We also have a long tradition of **inviting distinguished external speakers to present their research in a mini-course format** in the spring and/or summer terms. Past speakers include: Henry Allison, Robert Pippin, Axel Honneth, Stanley Cavell, John McDowell, and others. We also have close interdisciplinary ties with the **Human Rights Centre, the Centre for Theoretical Studies** and the **Centre for Psychoanalytical Studies**.

Operational infrastructure:

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) chairs the University's Research Committee which has responsibility for the University's overall research strategy and for establishing and promoting models of good practice for the management of research at departmental level. Each Department receives: (1) a fraction of the HEFCE QR income it earns; (2) a share of a cross-University 'Research Promotion Fund' (RPF); and (3) approximately half of the indirect-cost component of research grants won, with a further 10% going directly to the principal investigator. For academics who succeed in winning external research funding for a proportion of their salary, there is a scheme which returns a maximum of 30% of the funded salary to departments as an additional resource allocation to provide for teaching and administrative buy-out. The PVC also monitors the research performance and plans of all research active staff on a biannual basis, in discussion with the Faculty Executive Deans, Departmental Heads and Research Directors. The University operates a generous research leave scheme (one term of leave for 6 terms' service). The University's Research and Enterprise Office (REO) provides unified and comprehensive support for pre- and post-award external research grant activity. This includes: expert advice on sources of funding; support with preparing research proposals; support for faculties in providing opportunities for collaborative research brainstorming; links to external bodies and research funders. The REO, through the Research Governance and Planning Manager, also ensures that research is undertaken in compliance with legislation and funders' requirements

Strategy balancing the three aspects:

Our main priority is to ensure that our scholarly and organisational infrastructures adequately support our main strategic objectives as stated in b).

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

Partnerships and networks:

We have been successful in our bid for the next round of AHRC funding for PhD studentships. The Consortium for Humanities and Arts South East England (CHASE) includes Essex, Kent, Goldsmiths, Open University, The Courtauld Institute of Art, Sussex, and UEA. £17m will be shared by the consortium over five years. We are also part of an Erasmus Intensive Programme co-ordinated by Tilburg University (other members: Jagiellonian University (Poland), Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca (Romania), Antwerp University, Middle East Technical University (Turkey)). It meets once a year, usually at a different participating university and we send one member of staff and between 4-6 Graduate students every year. Finally, we have two Erasmus Exchange Agreements (with the Institut Catholique in Paris and Tübingen Universität) and we send and receive research students on a termly basis.

Fellowships, other external appointments and awards:

Freyenhagen: Senior Research Fellow, Justitia Amplificata, Goethe-Universität of Frankfurt (2010); **Han-Pile**: assessor on the Leiter report (2011); Visiting Professor at Whitman College (USA, 2012); **Martin**: *Times Higher Education* (UK): 'Most innovative Teacher of the Year (Shortlist, 2010), South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust: Honorary Researcher (2010-2013); **Mc Mullin**: Robert C. and Sandra Connor Endowed Faculty Fellowship recipient (2008); **Schaub**: Visiting Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Essex (2010); Visiting Scholar,



Faculty of Philosophy, Cambridge, and at St Edmund's College, Cambridge (2011).

Invited keynotes and lectures and other media presence:

NB: the list below does not include invitations to departmental seminars in the UK. If these were included, the total number of talks given by members of staff would be in excess of 170. Dews: 2008: ENS (Paris), South Bank Centre (London); 2009: Mark Sacks Conference (London), Taiwan, Sheffield. Freyenhagen: 2008; University Johann-Wolfgang Goethe (Germany), Frankfurt a.M (Germany): 2010: Joint Kant Society and Hegel Society of Great Britain Conference: Trinity College (Dublin), University College (Dublin), London School of Economics; 2011: University of Bochum; 2012: Moral Sciences Club (Cambridge); 2013: Oxford Post Kantian Philosophy Seminar, Aristotelian Society. Han-Pile: 2008: Society for Existential Phenomenology (Harvard; also at Columbia, 2009 and Berkeley 2013); Warwick; APA East division; 2009: SPEP (Arlington); 2012: SPEP (Philadelphia), APA Pacific (Seattle), Whitman College (5 lectures); 2013; Sussex Post Graduate Conference, Freiburg: three participations to BBC Radio Four *In Our Time* (2009 on Schopenhauer, 2011 on the Analytic/Continental divide, 2012 on Simone Weil). Martin: 2008: Society for Existential Phenomenology (Harvard. Also at Columbia, 2009 and Oxford, 2010), Cambridge, Durham, North American Fichte Society (Chicago), California Phenomenology Circle; 2009: Zurich, Amsterdam, Maudsley Institute of Psychiatry (London), British Society for the History of Philosophy, Aristotelian Society; 2010: British Postgraduate Philosophy Association (Durham); Lisbon, Kalamazoo College (USA) The New School for Social Research, Royal Society of Medicine (London); 2011: The Wellcome Trust, University of California at San Diego, Essex Autonomy Project (London), Central European University (Budapest); 2012: Peking University (Beijing University), China, Jilin University, Changchun, China (ten lectures), Avalon Ward (NHS), Centre for Excellence in Philosophy (Bucharest), UCD/Trinity College Postgraduate Conference; 2013: Amsterdam, British Society for the History of Philosophy (York), University College London, Istituto per il Lessico Intellettuale Europeo e la Storia delle Idee (Rome). Mc Mullin: 2008: Heidegger Circle; 2009: Georgetown; 2010: Seattle, International Society for Phenomenological Studies (Asilomar); 2011: Furman University (South Carolina), University of New Mexico, Dartmouth College (New Hampshire). Schaub: 2008: Universität Potsdam, Czech Academy of Sciences (Prague); 2009 Evangelished Akademie Tutzing; 2010: Czech Academy of Sciences (Prague), TU Darmstadt (Germany), Leibniz Universität (Hannover); 2011: Universität Wien (Austria), Frankfurt, Münschen, Bremen, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin: 2012: Mannheimer Abendakademie, Rurh Universität Bochum, Czech Academy of Sciences, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Princeton (USA). Watts: 2009: Hegel Society of North Britain (Oxford); 2010: Philosophy Society (Dublin); 2012: Philosophy Society (KCL).

Editorial activity:

Dews: advisory panel of the *European Journal of Philosophy*; **Freyenhagen**: *Reviews Editor* and member of the Advisory Board of the *Journal of Moral Philosophy*; **Martin**: series editor for *Modern European Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press) (2008- present) and General Editor: *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* (Volumes 46-55, 2003-2012); **Mc Mullin** co-edited a special edition *Philosophical Topics* featuring the work of Hannah Arendt (2013).

Contributions to Professional Organisations, Internal or external research committees, International Collaboration and Conference Organising (not including standard membership of professional organisations):

Dews: Essex Research Committee, 2009-2011. **Freyenhagen**: founding co-convener of the *Essex Transitional Justice Network*, since 2009: interdisciplinary research and knowledge transfer network based with contacts to and collaboration with other UK Universities (SOAS, Oxford, East London, York), NGOs (like REDRESS) or research organisations, the UK Government (the FCO) and international institutions (International Criminal Court; Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights); **Gormley**: organised 'Philosophy Post-86' conference (Essex). **Han-Pile**: *Executive Committee of the Aristotelian Society* (2009-2012); organised Mark Sacks Conference (London, 2009); **Martin**: *APA* (international division); **Mc Mullin**: organised the annual Hannah Arendt Circle meeting (March 2009); **Schaub**: lecture series on 'The Nature of Normativity' and an accompanying series of workshops (2010-2011).