

Institution: St Mary's University College

Unit of Assessment: 32: Philosophy

a. Overview

The Philosophy unit at St. Mary's University College is a new and growing group of philosophers, with strength in *interdisciplinary* work and in *public philosophy*. Its members are engaged in *interdisciplinary* work with technology, medicine, law, and education. By *public philosophy* is meant not just the translation of philosophical ideas to a larger audience. Public philosophy is also a collaborative activity, where philosophers actively engage in dialogue with professionals, activists and many others involved in issues of public concern.

The six philosophers (4.8 FTE) included in this submission come from the School of Arts & Humanities and the School of Management & Social Studies. With the exception of Altorf, all have been appointed since 2008. Four members are Early Career Researchers. **Stammers** took up his substantive appointment in 2010, **Erden** in 2011, **Giddens** in 2012, and **Rainey** in 2013. **Hunt** was appointed in 2008. Hunt was included in the 2008 RAE Health Services Research submission at the University of Surrey. **Altorf** was appointed in 2005 and was included in the 2008 RAE Theology submission at St. Mary's University College.

The Unit centres around the BA Programme in Philosophy (started in 2004) and the Centre for Bioethics and Emerging Technologies (CBET, founded in 2008), with one member (Giddens) contributing to the newly established law course. The interdisciplinary approach taken by philosophy at St. Mary's University College allows naturally for philosophical research to emerge from different departments.

CBET is an interdisciplinary centre, which focuses on the ethical and social implications of biomedicine, nanotechnology, and other new technologies. It is a 'think tank' for researchers from a range of disciplines, including philosophy, applied ethics, physics, theology, clinical practice and medical law. It has received funding through Seventh Framework Programme projects (FP7), and a European Cooperation on Science & Technology project (COST). Its members are also active in public policy making, and they act as advisors to national professional and policy bodies.

The work of the members of this Unit of Assessment encompasses the following subjects: applied ethics (Erden, Hunt, Rainey, Stammers), feminist philosophy (Altorf), and philosophy of law (Giddens). Their work together is best characterised by a shared thematic interest, i.e. the emphasis on interdisciplinarity and public philosophy expresses itself in a shared interest in *dialogue*. Members are engaged in actual dialogues with other disciplines, such as (nano)-technology (Hunt), artificial intelligence (Erden), health care (Stammers), or law (Giddens), as well as with public institutions (Erden, Hunt, Rainey). They also create dialogue between separate fields, such as the dialogue between law and graphic novels (Giddens), or philosophy and literature (Altorf). Lastly, they engage in fundamental research into the nature of dialogue (Altorf).

Individual members have been research active since the beginning of their appointments, and have at times collaborated on research projects. In the preparation period for the current REF submission these collaborations have become more structured. The preparation has thus positively contributed to the development of the Unit. Projects are now being developed and monitored in the context of the Unit of Assessment, as well as at School level.

b. Research strategy

The University College supports staff in the development of their research by providing specific training, research prizes, grants for conference attendance and reduction of individual teaching loads. It is recognised that much philosophical research is individual, so each member discusses his or her Personal Research Plans in annual appraisal schemes. Research plans are also discussed in quarterly meetings of the larger Philosophy Cluster, which includes the six members of this Unit of Assessment, as well as theologians submitted under UoA 33. Staff participate and present their work in the fortnightly research seminars of their respective Schools.

The research of individual members often starts in practice. Thus, some of the research comes out of teaching (Altorf, Erden, Stammers), or from direct requests from scientists, who recognise the value of philosophy in relation to their work. The latter is for instance true for the 2011 conference 'Human Dignity in Bioethics: Universal or Useless?', which was a response to issues raised by Ruth Macklin's dismissal of the concept of dignity (Stammers; see <http://extranet.smuc.ac.uk/events-conferences/CBET-events/human-dignity-in-bioethics/Pages/default.aspx>). Other examples are the various projects on risk within a European context (Hunt).

The Unit has, where relevant, followed through the strategy as laid out in the RAE2008 Theology submission. In particular, it has strengthened its research centre (CBET), attracted considerable external funding (especially European funding), and appointed young researchers (Erden in 2011, and Rainey in 2013).

Its overall strategy for the coming REF period (2014-2019) is to strengthen research in Philosophy and to strengthen the Unit. Specifically, its aims are:

- To bid for more external funding. This is particularly important, given the fact that the prime source of income, and thus the prime focus at St. Mary's University College comes from teaching undergraduates. The funding is sought in the two areas of expertise: interdisciplinarity and public philosophy. The Unit aims to develop into a centre of excellence on public philosophy;
- To continue its quarterly meetings of the Philosophy Cluster, which aims to both develop and monitor future research projects;
- To continue to contribute to national and international research by organising conferences and workshops;
- To attract new research students, and (Early Career) researchers. The School and University College will jointly be funding one PhD-student from October 2013 onwards. The Unit will actively seek to fund more;
- To encourage current staff to apply for promotion to the level of Professor, Reader or Senior Lecturer.

Given these aims, the Unit has made a strategic appointment in Rainey in the summer of 2013. Rainey's expertise in bidding successfully for European funding will allow the move to a next phase, where all members will be encouraged to develop larger research projects, combining the various strengths of the unit, and to bid for funding. Since Rainey's appointment, bids have been made to the HEA's workshop and seminar series (£750) and to the AHRC for a project entitled 'Efficient Validation and Metrics for Big Data Quality' (Middlesex University, Oxford University and St. Mary's University College, with St. Mary's share estimated at £29,000). The proposed HEA workshop will present and discuss ideas for dialogical teaching and assessment techniques,

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including those using innovative media, in order to offer perspectives on multi-participant, mutual learning and dialogical assessment methods. Participants will learn about various technologies and methods, as well as the thinking behind those methods, permitting interpretation and personalisation of the material. The proposed AHRC project will see St. Mary's University College (Rainey) contributing to the construction of an approach to big data quality that takes into account the most state of the art results from the philosophy of information.

Within CBET, researchers will continue to contribute to research and the public debate on issues such as organ donation (Stammers), nano-technology (Hunt), artificial intelligence (Erden) and hospices (Hunt). Altorf is further developing her project on Philosophical Dialogue and Rhetoric, while Giddens will further develop the Graphic Justice Research Alliance. In addition, two of the Early Career Researchers intend to publish their PhD theses (Erden and Giddens).

It is envisaged that the majority of these projects will result in funding bids during the next REF assessment period (2014-2019). In addition to those, the team will develop one project that unites their respective research interest, on 'Dialogue and the Identity of the European Citizen'. This project builds on the expertise of Erden, Hunt, and Rainey in dialogues in the European polity, as well as Altorf's dialogue practice. It is also supported by the more theoretical investigation into government (Rainey, especially Habermas) and theory of dialogue (Altorf, especially Nelson and Arendt). The project will investigate and develop an understanding of citizens as engaged in dialogue at local, national and international level. It will include workshops and at least two conferences.

All projects are monitored by both the Philosophy Cluster, and the Research Committees of both the School and the University College.

c. People, including:**i. Staffing strategy and staff development**

Some of the six staff in this Unit of Assessment have been appointed primarily because of a need in teaching. This is to be expected in a smaller university, which started out as a teacher training college. New lecturers are also expected to be research active and to have a PhD. Appointments made confirm and complement the strength of existing research, and have allowed for this first Philosophy submission to include six people.

Thus, Altorf and Giddens were both appointed as lecturers, and have been research active throughout their appointments. Hunt was appointed as professorial research fellow to strengthen the research in CBET. Erden was originally appointed as junior researcher in CBET. Her appointment as full-time lecturer in the BA Philosophy was followed by the appointment of Rainey as Research Fellow. Stammers was appointed as lecturer, and has been encouraged and supported to increase his research so as to be included in the present REF exercise. His second submission ('Nanovaccines and Global Equity') is a good example of the support and collaboration engendered by the preparation for the present REF.

ii. Research students

The Unit is developing a diverse body of graduate students. The supervision of research students emphasises the interdisciplinary nature of the Unit's research. It has had two students complete

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(Cullen, Beck) between 2008 and 2013. Both had Altorf as their Director of Studies, with other supervisors coming from Theology. Because of the nature of their research, both are officially returned as Theology students.

The Unit has five current students (Berle, Butau, Hyer, McCarthy, Phensrisai), with one other (Westin) starting in October 2013. Again, these students have Directors of Studies in Philosophy, while their second supervisors can come from other subjects. Because of the nature of their research, Butau and McCarthy are listed as Theology students. During the REF assessment period two further students embarked on PhDs, but had to stop for health reasons.

Of the students listed, Westin is recipient of the University College's International Scholarship. She also receives funding as part of a larger project on autonomy, funded by Porticus UK. Cullen, Beck, Berle and Westin have published in prestigious journals (for instance, Berle and Westin both in the *Journal of Medical Ethics* (2008 and 2013 respectively)). On receiving their PhD, graduates to date have continued in Higher Education. Following her viva, Cullen took up the position of Director of Pastoral Studies at the Beaufort Institute, University of Cambridge. Beck lectures part-time at St. Mary's University College.

Directors of Studies are responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is made available to their research students, in line with a skills audit based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. They also encourage students to attend conferences, present papers and publish work. Students are offered the opportunity to first present in the relatively safe environment of an annual postgraduate conference (Berle, Westin) and the School's research seminars (Berle, Cullen, Hyer). The Research Students Sub-Committee reviews the support and training provided by Schools for each of their research students through the Annual Report process.

A central PGR skills training programme is provided at SMUC in addition to the sessions available at School level and via the University of Surrey's SPLASH programme.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

During the REF assessment period, the unit secured a significant amount of external funding, given its size and newness. It secured a total of £225,000 in external grants from major funding bodies, most significantly in the form of FP7 projects, but also from charitable trusts such as Porticus UK, and funding bodies such as the Socio-Legal Studies Association, and the HEA.

This represents earnings of £46,890 per research active FTE over the assessment period. Taking this as the benchmark, this present submission from the new unit of philosophy at St. Mary's University College compares well to established universities in London in the RAE2008, such as UCL (£29,710), Birkbeck (£19,598), or Heythrop College (£3,429) and to comparable institutes in the south of England such as the University of Hertfordshire (£13,704), and Kent (£9,565).

External funding has been obtained from, amongst others, the following sources:

- EU-funded FP7, Nano-Polynet (2008-2011), total funding 4M euros, SMUC share was £47,745 (**Hunt**).
- EU-funded FP7, NanoImpactNet (2008-12). SMUC share was £60,349 (**Hunt**).
- Porticus 2011 ('Human Dignity in Bioethics') £26,195 (**CBET**)
- Subject Centre Philosophical and Religious Studies (HEA), two projects totalling £4,932 (**Altorf**)
- Socio-Legal Studies Association, £2,095 (**Giddens**).

During the REF assessment period, the University College has been increasing its support for research, alongside teaching and administrative duties. Staff are encouraged to apply for funding to attend conferences and for support in getting published. The library has acquired new databases, though of course members of the Unit also profit from the excellent library facilities available in the London area.

SMUC as an institution has made significant steps forward in supporting research since the RAE2008. The institution participated in the 2013 CROS survey and is preparing an application to the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award. In doing so, it supports fully the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and is working towards full implementation through its institutional policies and procedures. The institution is also in the process of aligning fully with the Concordat for Research Integrity. An action plan will ensure its full implementation by the end of the 2013-14 academic cycle.

As a small and specialist institution, St Mary's has invested in and benefitted from being a member of the GuildHE Consortium for Research Excellence, Support and Training (CREST), a collaboration of 27 HEIs working together develop research potential. Students and staff have had opportunities to attend a number of research symposia, workshops and conferences across a range of disciplines at CREST partner institutions.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

The team at St. Mary's contributes to the discipline of philosophy by means of frequent symposia and conferences, and editorial work, as well regular refereeing of journal articles. The expertise of individual members is recognised by repeated invitations to give key lectures, and to contribute to seminars, and workshops. Its contribution is not limited to the discipline, since members are involved in various collaborative projects.

It is in this section that the interest and expertise of the members of the Unit of Assessment in interdisciplinarity and public philosophy comes clearly to the fore. The team has organised workshops and symposia, which allow researchers as well as practitioners and policymakers to come together. A good example here is the work of Erden, who is one of the Unit's Early Career Researchers. Since her appointment she has organised two workshops on consciousness. These workshops were attended by philosophers, as well as scientists, engineers, computers scientists, cognitive scientists and anthropologists. Erden has also co-organised symposia on computing and philosophy which has resulted in a special journal issue of *Cognitive Computation*, which Erden co-edited. ('Computational Creativity, Intelligence, and Autonomy', September 2012)

It is this section too that provides the confidence that the now established Unit of Assessment can work towards becoming a centre of excellence in public philosophy.

Collaboration

Given their strength in interdisciplinary work, it is not surprising that philosophers at St. Mary's University College are involved in various collaborative projects with researchers from other disciplines. Most prominent are the two FP7 projects (NaPolyNet and NanoImpactNet) and a COST project (FA0904). There are also strong links with the Society for the Study of Artificial Intelligence and the Simulation of Behaviour (AISB), with Erden and Rainey as committee member and member respectively.

CBET has collaborative links to institutions in the UK (including the Scottish Council for Human Bioethics) and internationally (including Leuven and Tokyo). In addition, Hunt is involved in collaboration with the Chemistry Department at the University of Surrey, on projects on polymer micelles for LDL reduction (British Heart Foundation); and with the International Centre for Nursing Ethics at the University of Surrey. Erden is vice-leader of the Inter Group Activity (young scientists), ('Making the future of science in PNFP', funded by COST-FA 0904 2011-2013). Rainey is working with researchers at Goldsmiths College on a book concerning sensorimotor theory (Springer, Forthcoming), and a consortium including Middlesex and Oxford Universities on an AHRC project bid (submitted in autumn 2013). Altorf has led Socratic Dialogues with facilitators from Amsterdam University College, and the University of Durham.

Editorships

CBET has in recent years acquired the peer-reviewed journal *The New Bioethics*, with Stammers as editor. It also publishes the CBET bulletin three times per year. Giddens has co-edited a collection on comics studies, *Formal Expression and Cultural Expression in the Graphic Novel* (Oxford: ID Press 2013).

Conference Organising

Conferences, public lectures and workshops provide the Unit of Assessment with opportunities to bring together researchers in different disciplines, as well as to involve an even wider audience in philosophical debates on issues of technology or policy making. This is particularly true for those involved in CBET, but it is not limited to them.

Since its launch in 2008, CBET has organised a series of conferences and lectures open to the public, and attended by researchers from around the world. Further details, and recordings of lectures and discussions, can be found on <http://extranet.smuc.ac.uk/events-conferences/CBET-events/Pages/default.aspx>. These include:

- 'The 21st Century Body Symposium' (8 November 2013)
- The 3rd AISB Workshop: 'The Emergence Of Consciousness' (9 May 2013)
- 'The Corporate Responsibility of Universities', lecture by Prof. Dr. Jeremy J. Ramsden, President, Collegium Basilea (Institute of Advanced Study), Basel, Switzerland (18 October 2012)
- Symposium on Consciousness: 'Can Science Explain It?' (20 October 2011)
- 'Human Dignity in Bioethics: Universal or Useless?' (9-11 September 2011)
- 'The Ethics of Minority Medical Conditions: Sickle Cell Anaemia', lecture by Dr. Lola Oni OBE (10 May 2011)
- 'Polymer Nanomaterials for Food Packaging' (FP7-NaPolyNet & COST-FA0904) (1-2 September 2010).
- Launch of CBET (11 December 2008)

In addition to the majority of the CBET conferences listed above, Erden has also co-organised the Computing and Philosophy Symposium at the University of Birmingham (AISB/IACAP (International Association of Computing and Philosophy) World Congress (2-6 July 2012)), and at the University of York (4-7 April 2011). Hunt has been co-organiser of all meetings, communications, and report integration for the COST-FA0904 project, as Management Committee member and Chair of Work Package 4 on ethics dialogue and standardisation (280 members in 33 countries), as well as a European Joint Technological Seminar ('Polymer Nanomaterials for Food Packaging: Characterization, Needs, Safety and Environmental Issues', 1-2 September 2010). At the FP7 NanoImpactNet Conference he organised a special session ('Nanomedicine and

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Vaccines', 14-17 February 2011).

Since 2011 the team has organised a very successful series of Royal Institute of Philosophy lectures, which are attended on average by 50 people from within and outside St. Mary's University College. For more details see:

(<http://extranet.smuc.ac.uk/events-conferences/RIP-Lecture-Series-2013-14/Pages/default.aspx>).

Altorf has organised a number of panels at the International Society for the Study of Religion, Literature and Culture ('Spirituality and Reconciliation', 'Higher Education' Oxford, October 2010, 'Teaching Philosophy/Theology', Aarhus, October 2008). Giddens has organised a one-day symposium entitled 'Graphic Justice' (11 September 2013).

Invited Lectures

Philosophers at St. Mary's are regularly invited to speak about their field, both by their peers throughout Europe, as well as by professional organisations, policy makers and the general public. Listed here those given in academic settings. The impact template component of the Unit's REF submission (REF3a) provides information on non-academic invited lectures and invitations for consultation.

Erden has been an invited speaker at the University of Namur ('The myth of value-neutrality: Ethics, values, and design', January 2012), at the University Sts. Cyril & Methodius Skopje ('Ethics, Communication and Safety in the Use of Polymer Nanoparticles for Food Packaging', November 2011) as well as nationally to the research group at Oxford Brookes University ('The philosopher as gadfly: Stimulating dialogue in science and technology', November 2012), and Goldsmiths College ('Wittgenstein and Consciousness', March 2011; 'Computing, Language, and Philosophy: The Limits of AI Development', March 2008).

Altorf gave an invited lecture and led a workshop on Iris Murdoch: 'Iris Murdoch and Intellectual Biography', University of Barcelona, October 2012'. She is also regularly invited to contribute to seminars at Regent's Park College, Oxford, as well as the University of Glasgow.

Rainey was an invited speaker at Queen's University Belfast ('Disagreeing with the Disagreeable from an Analytic-Pragmatic Point of View', May 2010).

Prizes

Hunt was shortlisted for the Lloyds of London 'Science of Risk' Prize (2011), for his co-authored paper 'Building expert consensus on problems of uncertainty and complexity in nanomaterial safety'.

Erden and Rainey both received prizes from The Framework for Responsible Research & Innovation (June 2013).

Submission Reader

Altorf has reviewed articles for *The Journal of Theology and Literature*, *Philosophical Papers*, and *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, as well as books for Routledge. Hunt is a regular submission reader for *Nursing Ethics*. Rainey is a regular reviewer for *Cognitive Computation*, *The Journal of Information, Communication Ethics and Society*. Erden has reviewed for *Minds & Machines*, *Cognitive Computation*, and *Body & Society*. Stammers reviews for the *Journal of Medical Ethics*, *British Medical Journal*, and the *British Journal of General Practice*.