

Institution: University of Sussex

Unit of Assessment: UoA 32 Philosophy

1. Context

The department consists of 12 faculty working across Kantian and Post-Kantian philosophy; Mind, Language, World; Aesthetics, including the Philosophy of Fiction and Literature; and Ethics and Political Philosophy. The research within our Department is, as one would expect from Philosophy, highly theoretical and often abstract. Our central aim is to make much of the research we do more accessible to non-philosophy specialists in various targeted communities, as described in detail below. Beneficiaries of our research include teachers and students of philosophy in schools, health workers, artists and curators and the general public.

2. Approach to impact

During the REF period, the Department has sought to promote and foster public engagement with philosophy – that is, to make what is a traditionally highly theoretical discipline more accessible to non-specialists. There are three aspects to our approach. One has been to identify certain themes amongst existing faculty research, judged promising in terms of the possibility of impact on certain targeted user-groups (see below for details); and then to organise a range of theme-related events designed to lead to its achievement. Secondly, we have engaged with schools to improve the teaching of Philosophy. Thirdly we have strengthened impact through new appointments.

Impact through research themes

For impact purposes, we have identified two promising research ‘strands’ – *‘Issues in healthcare ethics’* and *‘Issues in social justice’*. This approach has resulted in making philosophical thought in these areas more accessible and beneficial to several distinct communities, as follows.

Issues in healthcare ethics. We have developed relationships with medical communities in South-Eastern England in a number of ways. Relevant activity includes:

- *The organisation of public events.* Stock organised a free one-day public event at the Royal Sussex County Hospital (10/12/2012) on ‘The Ethics of HIV transmission and testing’. This brought together Allais and her work on disease ethics with an expert group of clinicians, policy-makers, lawyers, epidemiologists, health-workers, HIV patients and members of HIV interest groups, to discuss some of the complex and ethically sensitive medical and legal decisions which surround HIV transmission and testing. Finlayson’s very well attended public ‘Author Meets Critics’ event session on Havi Carel’s *Illness* (11/1/2009) brought a wide range of members of the public and health-care workers to advance understanding of philosophical issues around illness.
- *Participation in public talks.* Davies gave a talk on ageing and dying – ‘A Good Death’ – at a workshop event ‘Into that Good Night’ at Fabrica Art Gallery, Brighton (2/6/2011). As a result, he was invited by Liz Whitehead, the Director of Fabrica Art Gallery, to join the committee appointing an artist-in-residence to work on the ‘A Good Death’ project, and is now a co-applicant on an AHRC grant to explore the issue further (see below). Deligiorgi gave a talk on philosophical issues around ‘cosmetic’ medical neuroscience, at a philosophy event organised by ‘Big Ideas’ and ‘Philosophy in the Pub’ (The Wheatsheaf, London, 27/7/2010).

Issues in social justice. We have used similar strategies to engage with relevant public groups (see below) in the UK, South Africa and elsewhere, via events, as well as in a range of media:

- *The organisation of public events.* Finlayson gave a talk on ‘Polyphony and Democracy’, on ‘The Forty Part Motet’ by Janet Cardiff, at the Friends Meeting House, Brighton (25/5/2011), as part of the official programme of the Brighton Festival. He has also organised a series of well-attended events, many of which got around 150 attendees, involving high-profile non-academic speakers at Sussex University, under the auspices of the Centre for Social and Political Thought, which he directs. These included talks by: Michael Albert (author and editor of *Z* magazine and *zmag.org*); Owen Jones (author of *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working*

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Class); Paul Mason (Economics Editor, *BBC Newsnight*); Patrick Chalmers (ex-Reuters journalist, activist); and Seumas Milne (associate editor, *The Guardian*).

Allais has sought to engage with the South African general public on ethical issues explicitly relevant to their own political context, and which reflect her own research interests in the retributive emotions. To this end, she organised a public workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand, 'On being a white South African,' (September 2011). The audience included a former ANC government minister and a member of an Afrikaner right-wing organisation. She also gave a public talk in Iceland on retributive justice and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in May 2012.

- *Generation of media interest.* As a follow up to Allais' workshop in South Africa, she was asked to write an article for the South African *Mail and Guardian* ('White fear, white shame'). Similarly, after her talk in Iceland, Allais was interviewed by Icelandic radio programme *Spegillinn*, a news and current affairs programme simultaneously broadcast on the two public radio stations - Rás 1 and Rás 2 of The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service. She was also interviewed for an article on the same theme - 'Justice in times of transition' by Karl Blöndal - in Icelandic daily newspaper *Morgunblaðid* (13/5/2012). Meanwhile, Deligiorgi has been interviewed for 'Philosophy Now' magazine on 'Hegel's ideas' (24/1/2012) and by 3AM magazine ('Our complex, difficult and fragile enlightenments' (27/4/2012).

Improving the teaching of Philosophy in schools

In keeping with our desire to promote understanding of our research in secondary-school philosophy teaching (as described in detail in one of our impact case studies), we have worked to bring about strong relationships with several secondary schools in South-East England, and to raise levels of discussion of the value of philosophy more generally, by the following means:

- Participation in public debates on education and the humanities. Deligiorgi was part of a panel on different approaches to the education of children (23/7/2011) in the context of a public discussion, organised at the LSE, about the role of philosophy in schools. Finlayson participated in a public seminar on current education policy, with Shabana Mahmood (then Shadow Higher Education Minister) at the University of Kingston (24/1/2012). He also participated in a public panel discussion, 'Valuing the Humanities', at the LSE (17/10/2010) alongside Martha Nussbaum, Lord Rees of Ludlow and Richard Smith (former editor, *BMJ*), chaired by Mark Lawson.
- Talks in schools, promoting our research and the value of philosophy more generally: at Islington Green School (14/1/2009); Esher College (20/4/2009); Lady Eleanor Holles School (11/3/2011), Godolphin and Latymer (7/3/2011), Hills Road Cambridge (1/12/2010), Rainham Marks College (9/7/2012), Dorothy Stringer School (23 and 30/11/2011); Jersey College for Girls (16/3/12).

Impact relating to staffing strategy

It is a further sign of the Department's commitment to impact that it has sought evidence of relevant impact-related experience in recent appointments. For instance, Booth, who, as a postgraduate, was Durham University School Liaisons Officer, and who ran critical thinking workshops for schools (and school teachers), in London LEAs (2004–6), was hired in 2012.

3. Strategy and plans

The Department aims to support its strategy of making its philosophical research more accessible to targeted communities in three main ways: prioritising grant-seeking with respect to impactful research projects (in order to best carry out such projects effectively); fostering more partnerships with relevant non-University intuitions (in order to build up stronger and more fruitful relationships); and continuing to support faculty with relevant training surrounding impact generation.

Prioritising grant-seeking with respect to research projects with a strong impact element

The following four grant applications will continue to be managed with the help of the dedicated Research Development Officer for the School and of critical friends chosen for their expertise.

- As part of his developing 'Art and Understanding' project, Morris is organising a public event on the value of art, with a panel of speakers including artists, journalists and Sussex philosophers

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of art, to be held as part of the Brighton Festival 2015. The event is being planned in conjunction with the Director of the new Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts. Following this event, it is intended that a Centre for Art and Understanding would be formed, which would aim to continue to host public events on art, to be the base for further research projects and to encourage outreach into schools on the general theme of what is to be gained from art.

- Davies is a core participant in a research project 'A Good Death', with artist Steven Eastwood, Peter Fenwick (Institute of Psychiatry), Andreas Miersche (Martletts Hospice) and Liz Whitehead (Director, Fabrica Gallery, Brighton), which proposes to work with the terminally ill, and to utilise the action-research methodology of film-making, in order to investigate what constitutes a 'good death'. One output will be a four-screen moving-image installation commissioned by Fabrica Gallery for its forthcoming 'End of Life Exhibition' (2013–2017) (funding application currently under consideration).
- As part of her forthcoming research project 'Pregnancy, Birth, Being with Infants: A Phenomenological Perspective', Staehler will organise a workshop that brings together researchers on pregnancy, and will communicate outcomes to NHS midwives, policy-makers and patient stake-holders, with the aim of improving understanding of the experience of childbirth.
- Deligiorgi currently has an application under consideration by the Wellcome Trust to fund four workshops on conceptions of human agency, including medical ones; confirmed participants include neuroscientists, psychiatrists, cognitive psychologists and lawyers.

Fostering more partnerships with relevant non-University institutions

- We are organising a further Schools conference for 6th-form Philosophy teachers for April 2014.
- We will continue to develop our website www.thephilosophyresource.co.uk, translating Departmental research into accessible interactive material for secondary school Philosophy teachers and students.
- Deligiorgi is in the process of applying, with members of Law and the Medical School, to form a Network for Ethics and Public Policy, with a view to engaging with the practical ethical problems faced by non-academic institutions such as the press, the police, media corporations and health-care trusts.
- Over the next three years, Booth will be funded by the Netherlands Institute for Scientific Research, to explore notions of responsibility and trust in the Dutch banking sector. A series of exploratory, networking workshops with non-academic research-users in finance is planned.

Continuing to support faculty through training about impact generation

We will offer:

- Dedicated training sessions from the School's Research Development Officer;
- Regular departmental talks from relevant experts on impact; and
- Critical readings of each others' grant proposals with an eye to impact generation.

4. Relationship to case studies

The relationship between the Department's approach to impact and the case studies is as follows.

Case study 1: Improving understanding of the ethics of sexual health and disease. This case study concerns work on health-care ethics. As such, it intersects the areas of health-care ethics and social justice, both highlighted as impact priorities for the Department. As the examples given above demonstrate, the Department has been active in supporting and promoting public engagement in both areas, thus promoting the impact of Allais's work directly (e.g. in the organisation of the 'Ethics of HIV') and indirectly, by associating it with a growing body of projects in health-care.

Case study 2: Using philosophical research to improve teaching and learning in schools. This case study focuses upon the impact of conferences for secondary-school Philosophy teachers, presenting Departmental research material in innovative ways to secondary school Philosophy teachers and students. It is an aim of the Schools Conference to emphasise the continuum that exists between University and secondary-school Philosophy teaching, to encourage a dialogue between teachers on each side and to demonstrate the value of Philosophy for the developing student at each stage of his/her education. It reflects an approach within the Department towards theorising about, and promoting, the value of Philosophy and of the Humanities in education.