

Commission Mixte (CM) Minutes, November 11 2024

Present: Prof. Simon Swift, Dr. Erzsi Kukorelly, Maria Peters, Caique Cardoso, Holly Lavergne, Miranda Althaus, Vanessa Ordolli

Minutes taken by Caique Cardoso

#### 1. Proposed changes to the BA6a module

There is a Commission d'études meeting next week, so the proposed change to the BA6a module needs to be submitted before then.

The BA6 module is divided into two parts, BA6a and BA6b, since only one grade is allowed per module and members of the department wanted to have two grades. BA6b is essentially the only place where students can write a longer research paper to prepare for the Master's degree.

The proposition is to remove the seminar from BA6a. One of the reasons is the amount of work needed for the 3 credits, which is meant to be 75 hours of work; however, the seminar alone is 25 hours, and the work outside of class is much higher than 50 hours. Everyone doing a BA6 seminar would be asked to do a research paper, so students would have only one seminar and there would be no more attestation paper. For the assistants teaching in the module, they would have only two hours of teaching per semester, leaving more time for their PhD research. This change is already coming to the BA4 module. Furthermore, there will be one lecture course that gives an overview of the whole Modern and Contemporary periods.

Certain members of the Commission Mixte expressed their reservations. By getting rid of one seminar, students' experiences would be curtailed. In the French department, for example, their BA4 has year-long lecture courses, and two 2h seminars per semester. However, year-long lecture courses would not work in the English department. Moreover, assistants having only two classes of teaching per year is problematic, since BA5 and BA7 assistants have three per year. It would be unfair for some assistants in the department that have three classes of teaching per year. Keeping three classes of teaching in the BA6 would mean less students per seminar and a more fair share of work inside of the department.

Another argument against the proposal would be that if you reduce the amount of work, it would be sucked up by other disciplines anyway. The Department of English is one of the most popular within the Humanities Faculty, and the workload should reflect this popularity.

However, the proposal is not aimed to give students less work, but to have work that goes into more depth. Some students feel like they did not have enough training in BA6 for the research needed to be done during the Master's. Some students also submit lower quality attestation papers because they do not feel they need to do more work to get a pass. This change would be an incentive for students to dedicate more time to the research graded paper in the BA6 module.

Excess teaching is a great source of stress among assistants, as inside the same department there are great discrepancies between modules – in other professional fields, this would be unacceptable. It would be unfair if BA6 assistants taught less than the assistants of other modules. However, perhaps this proposition will lead to changes to other English modules.

The Commission Mixte members agreed to make the proposed change to the BA6a module and signed the document to be brought to the Commission d'études.

2. The lack of networking and career immersion for English students

Students are interested in having alumni events where they can network with previous students who are in the job market or job fairs so that they could better understand what their options are after their studies in English. This could be in the format of a "Soirée Master" like that run by the FTI faculty, for example, where alumni returned and gave current students an opportunity to make connections and understand more about the possibilities in the job market.

3. The lack of a TP in the BA3 module

Some students feel lost in the BA3 module and are not sure what is expected from them. The classes include a lot of content and since students only have one class per week, they do not have the support they had in BA2, where they could revise the class and then ask questions in the TP, practice with exercises, and gain a more concrete understanding of what is crucial for them to understand and learn. The BA3 module ends up being a lot of content without as much specific guidance as to how students are required to apply it.

4. Lack of Medieval English classes at the Master's level

It would be good to offer at least one class per year in this area, as it feels like it is missing from the Master's curriculum in some years.