

---

# OH THE HUMANITIES!

---



## The bi-yearly newsletter for Humanities students 2010

To get the most from your time at Kent, you need the University to deliver a high quality education. To do this, a strong channel of communication between the University and students is crucial. Course Reps play a key role in nurturing this channel of communication.

Course Reps take your issues to the School and to Kent Union. They listen to you, raise your concerns, and report back to you on the results. If you have any academic issues you would like to raise, whatever they relate to, your Course Reps are here to help.



Entering its sixth year, the National Student Survey (NSS) is a census of students, mostly those in their final year, leading to undergraduate credits or qualifications across the UK. The survey is commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council and fully supported by the National Union of Students. It is a chance for students to have their say about what they liked and didn't like about their student learning experience. Once you have completed the survey, email your acknowledgement page to [nss-reward@kent.ac.uk](mailto:nss-reward@kent.ac.uk)<sup>[1]</sup> and claim your £5 voucher.

The survey is part of the system of quality assurance for higher education, and asks all final-year undergraduate students to provide feedback on:

- Quality of teaching
- Assessment and feedback
- Academic support
- Organisation and management
- Learning resources
- Personal development
- Overall satisfaction.

### Feedback

Please email your school coordinator or the Humanities Faculty rep if you have any queries, issues, opinions and suggestions for improvement for this newsletter or (especially) on the following matters or anything else you are interested in:

- The Library / Resources
- Pastoral Advice and Support Services (PASS)
- The National Student Survey (NSS)
- Feedback on assessment



## Hello Humanities students!

Welcome to the third issue of the Humanities Newsletter. It should give you the opportunity to see what your elected representatives are doing and allow you to ask them questions or hold them to account. You elected me in October to fulfill a number of projects that I had in mind whilst writing my manifesto. Some of these were: maintaining my predecessor’s hard work to continue this newsletter, reviewing the current Education Committee to ensure that communication between reps is effective and representation is relevant, to support the VP education on campaigns (specifically South East Weighting) and to adequately represent you to relevant university and union boards. We currently do not have an Architecture rep although Kent Union is still looking. If you are still interested please get in touch! To see what I

have been up to this year already see Humanities news on page 5.

### Daniel Curran, Vice-President (Education)

Hi all!

I’m Daniel Curran, your vice-president (Education) but what does that mean to you? Well it means that I am here as your representation, to promote, extend and defend your rights here at the university, with my main focus being the educational experience. I’m also the officer responsible for the course representative system so that means issues that are brought up through this system will be tackled at the appropriate point. A part of my representative role is

also to campaign on the issues that affect you whether they are big issues that many people mention, down to the course specific issues that I can help the course reps to resolve. This year keep your eyes open for more to do with improving assessment and feedback, gaining and maintaining free Wednesday afternoons for all and Canterbury town takeover which is a national effort to get tuition fees part of the general elections so we know what future for higher education we are voting for.



[union-education@kent.ac.uk](mailto:union-education@kent.ac.uk)



Hello I am Mel –I am responsible for the Union’s work with course representatives, supporting students at outreach sites across the county of Kent and on the Continent, providing staff support to the Union’s part-time officers, supporting campaigns and coordinating the Union’s democratic processes. I am also responsible for supporting Postgraduate and International Students and for the International and Postgraduate Strategies at Kent Union.

**Melanie Sharman, Representation and Democracy Manager**

[m.sharman@kent.ac.uk](mailto:m.sharman@kent.ac.uk)

1

## Dr Karl Leydecker – Dean of Humanities

I am delighted to see the Newsletter for Humanities Students now into its second year. In the first of the two issues last year, I reported that a particular priority was to address the issue of inconsistency of feedback, through the development of a single template for feedback. Last year the School and Faculty reps worked closely with myself, and the Directors of Learning and Teaching at Faculty and School level to devise the new template, which was introduced from September 2009. In response to feedback from students and input from the Reps it was designed in such a way that it encourages markers to identify in every case the strengths of the piece of work, and to provide constructive guidance on areas for improvement, as well as an overall summary. I would like to hear how the new template is working, and the Faculty Rep, Lauren Crowley, will be seeking views of students to see whether we have got this right.

The Faculty continues to work closely with the Faculty and School reps. Lauren is invited to meetings at which the agenda for the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee and Faculty Board are drawn up. She and I also meet with all the School reps before Learning and Teaching Committee to talk through the items for the meeting.

The Schools in the Faculty are currently drafting their annual plans, in which they will be setting out their ideas in relation to the University's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy. That Strategy is based around five key themes that support the University Plan and draw together areas for enhancement based on both university and national priorities in learning and teaching:

- (1) Challenge and support students to realise their ambitions through active engagement with their studies and full participation in the academic community
- (2) Enhance students' employment prospects and promote lifelong learning through the provision of flexible and diverse learning opportunities
- (3) Foster and reward excellence in research-led teaching and enhance professional development opportunities for staff
- (4) Strengthen our learning and teaching infrastructure to respond to changes in practice and new technology
- (5) Encourage participation by all who can benefit from the Kent student experience

The School plans will be discussed within Schools, and at the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee in March, so do please get in touch with your School or Faculty Rep if you have any suggestions for how things can be further improved.




---

## Humanities School Coordinators

### Victoria Hiles – American Studies Coordinator – [vh28@kent.ac.uk](mailto:vh28@kent.ac.uk)

Hey everyone, my name is Victoria Hiles and I'm a final year student and the coordinator for American Studies. I've been a course rep since my first year and am currently a mentor and President of the American Society.

As school coordinator, I would like to see more interaction between different stages of study, especially between 1st and 2nd years with the 4th years, when it comes to making choices about their year abroad. We hope to run a social later in the year to get everyone to integrate. I also fully support the mentoring scheme and want to see it become more successful. If anyone has any problems about their course or specific modules, please don't hesitate to contact me.



**Victoria-Anne Bulley – School of Arts Coordinator – vb70@kent.ac.uk**

Hi there! I'm Victoria and I was elected as your School of Arts Representative for 2009-10. I'm currently studying English and American Literature with Drama and Theatre Studies. This is my first time as a representative for anything and I'd like to give it my best shot, so I'm interested in knowing your opinions about your courses, how you feel they could be tweaked in order to make them that little bit better than they already are. If you have any ideas, questions or comments I'm here to listen to them and represent your views at a level where they'll surely be given attention. I'll also try and keep you updated on what changes are being made behind the scenes by way of an email here and there, and also to see how you're finding your courses so far. So drop me a message anytime you fancy it! See you around :)

**Jessica Pols – School of English Coordinator – jeap2@kent.ac.uk**

Hi everyone, I'm the department representative for the School of English, and I am in my third year of studying English and American Literature. As department rep I really want to encourage students within the School of English to feel that they are able to talk to either me, or their stage representative, if there are any issues, problems or feedback they would like to make.

The point of course representatives is that they are able to raise these issues so that staff within the department are aware of them, and are able to act on them. I really want to emphasise the accessibility and importance of course reps in being able to express student opinions to the department so your time at university can be more enjoyable.

**Esha Rao – SECL Coordinator – er73@kent.ac.uk**

Hi, my name is Esha Rao, I am currently in my Final year at UKC studying BA Joint Hons in Business and English Language Studies. I am a course rep for Y1, 2, 3 students on my course and also hold the role of the SECL School Coordinator.

My role as the School Coordinator essentially acts as a point of contact between the union, course reps, and the School. I attend meetings and ensure that there are enough student reps attending the various committees.

There are 4 different boards, including the Languages and Literature board, Religious Studies, Classical and Archaeological Studies and the Philosophy board. As it is such a large school, Henry Strivens assists with the coordination of two of the boards, Languages and Religious Studies. You are able to contact either of us with any problems, queries, question, suggestions or complaints that you may have. We are here to help :)

**Henry Strivens – Languages and RS Rep – hjs24@kent.ac.uk**

Just a quick note from me, my name is Henry Strivens, I am currently a first year French student at UKC. I am the Course Rep for 1<sup>st</sup> year French, as well as being the acting course rep for 1<sup>st</sup> Year German and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Religious Studies. I have been brought on board as the Languages & Religious Studies Course Rep Coordinator to help Esha deal with the workload, as SECL is a very large school! As mentioned above, if you have any problems, please don't hesitate to contact either of us, we are more than happy to help.

**Emily Dennis – School of History Coordinator – ed80@kent.ac.uk**

Hi everyone, my name is Emily and I am the department rep for History, this also covers War Studies too. I am a second year student, and think the course and our department are just fantastic and incredibly supportive. This year I hope to continue the support the department gives and am on hand to give any help or advice that I can, or put you in touch with the person that can. So if you have any problems just let me know.



### Anonymous Marking

After an ongoing campaign run by Kent Union on Anonymous coursework marking, and a push by certain academics, we are finally beginning to see some progress. The campaign, named 'Mark my words, not my name', aimed for a system of assessment where the student's name is unknown to the marker. You are probably already aware of this happening in your exams, or if you study Philosophy. Finally some consultation and trialling is taking place between schools, with Dean Leydecker as an open advocate against the remaining protesting academics. It's really positive to see change against prejudice and discrimination and see students' efforts recognised.

.....

### Research Assessment

The Faculty has confirmed its position as one of the leading Humanities faculties in the UK in the Research Assessment Exercise 2008. The School of History was ranked 2nd in the UK and French 7th. There were strong performances from English and Drama and Film Studies. English was ranked 18th and Drama and Film Studies 12th. The submission for Drama and Film Studies demonstrates that Kent has the largest concentration of research in these areas of any UK university.

### Hong Kong Exchange Programme

Different schools across the faculty have announced a new exchange programme with the University of Hong Kong. Students from the University of Kent would spend the third year of their programme in Hong Kong and would return for a final year in Kent. The aim of this programme is to give students a broader view of their disciplines by providing them with the opportunity to study in two very different learning environments, to acquaint themselves with a foreign culture and to learn/improve the command of a language as non-native speakers. Kent students will have their lectures and seminars in English, but will spend roughly half of their study time in Hong Kong learning either Mandarin Chinese or Cantonese. One clear benefit to both sets of students is improvement in career opportunities.

.....

### The Jarman Building

It has been revealed that the new School of Arts building will be named after Derek Jarman. Jarman was an English film director, stage designer, artist and writer. Jarman's fame mostly derived from his outspoken homosexuality, his never-ending public fight for gay rights, and his personal struggle with AIDS.

### Q&A with Karl Leydecker

**This is your chance to put questions to staff at the University! Please email in any questions you may have to [ljg30@kent.ac.uk](mailto:ljg30@kent.ac.uk). In this edition the Dean of Humanities, Karl Leydecker, answers your questions...**

*Why do we have to pay so much for course booklets which contain essential reading materials when some departments get them for free? - Sian Frame, 3<sup>rd</sup> year English and American Literature*

Schools don't charge for basic programme and module information, but do charge for coursepacks. These are good value, and often cheaper than if students had to purchase a particular text in the bookshop.

*Why are there not sufficient course/reading books in the library so we don't have to purchase them? - Tom Ritchie, 2nd year History*

Many students like to buy a copy of core texts they are studying, and it is the normal expectation that most students will want to own a copy say of a novel. That said, the library does provide multiple copies for core texts on a module, roughly 1 copy per 10 students. The creation of the core text collection is helping to improve the accessibility and availability of core reading. Students should contact the relevant Library Liaison Officers listed below if they would like to recommend additional purchases, core texts or other materials. You should also reserve books even if they have been reserved by others, as this triggers a shortening of the loan period for that book.

-Jane Alderson-Rice: SECL & English Language [J.Alderson-Rice@kent.ac.uk](mailto:J.Alderson-Rice@kent.ac.uk)

- Anna Miller: History; English & American Literature; American Studies; Medieval & Early Modern Studies [V.A.Miller@kent.ac.uk](mailto:V.A.Miller@kent.ac.uk)

- Derek Whittaker: Architecture; Drama; Film; History & Philosophy of Art [D.Whittaker@kent.ac.uk](mailto:D.Whittaker@kent.ac.uk)

---

## Love Canterbury, Hate Debt – Canterbury United’s Town Takeover.



*So stay on the lookout for ways to get involved, and contact [d.curran@kent.ac.uk](mailto:d.curran@kent.ac.uk) for any more details.*

23 Feb 2010 sees the beginning of a week of action from Canterbury’s student population. Under the banner of “Canterbury United” students from Canterbury College, Kent University and Canterbury Christ Church University will be challenging the way they are seen with a range of events promoting the positive attributes of the city’s students and actively encouraging anyone over 16 and eligible, student or not, to become a registered voter. Students will also be highlighting the potential extra changes to university tuition fees that are being threatened after the General Election as part of a review of Higher Education.

Currently most university students are charged £3,225 per year to study, but by 2011 there are those who would like to see this increase to possibly £7,000 or more. As part of the NUS’s campaign for MPs to “Come Clean on Fees”, Canterbury United aims to get the issue of university fees high on the political agenda in the lead up to the election, by engaging the community in discussion on the contentious debate surrounding fees, so that students, the families of students and those wishing to study in the future, have a chance to have a say on what they pay.

Canterbury has one of the highest ratios of percentage of students to residents in the UK and future financial barriers and increased debt would dramatically affect the future of a city we all love and hinder the prospects of future generations in this country.

---

### Feedback

Please email your school coordinator or the Humanities Faculty rep if you have any queries, issues, opinions and suggestions for improvement for this newsletter or (especially) on the following matters or anything else you are interested in:

- The Library / Resources
- Pastoral Advice and Support Services (PASS)
- The National Student Survey (NSS)
- Feedback on assessment