

IATL Academic Fellowship Interim Report 2016
Censorship and Society
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Censorship and Society is a new interdisciplinary module which aims to provide general knowledge of the breadth and diversity of censorship on both a local and global scale, across a range of disciplines, time periods, and cultures. The module employs the expertise of contributors in different disciplines, and less traditional project and problem based learning and assessment to explore the complexity of censorship.

Principle Module Aims:

- Communicate and illustrate knowledge of the current debates surrounding censorship, from within a variety of different disciplines.
- Evaluate the complexity and prevalence of censorship in society, examining how it is used in different ways in different disciplines and literatures.
- Students will manage their own learning, researching outside their own subjects, devising connections between the different disciplines.
- Sustain a professional and scholarly dialogue between students and academics who might not normally interact with each other.
- Design innovative ways of teaching, learning, and demonstrating that something significant has been learned.
- Devise interdisciplinary connections between all the disciplines.
- Ascertain the effect of censorship in society and the concept and politics of free speech.
- Consolidate definitions of morality and immorality, obscenity and non-obscenity within different cultures and countries.
- Conduct and communicate scholarly research into existing debates surrounding censorship and obscenity.
- Devise independent interpretations of the material we read supported by textual evidence, context, and theory.

Key Lessons Learnt:

- The module benefitted from a range of specialists in different disciplines, departments and universities contributing to the module. Each contributor had a different style of delivery, this created a real variety for the students as no two sessions were ever in the same style. However, it also presented challenges, I often had to be flexible and adapt to these styles whilst also ensuring that the learning objectives were met. With some collaborators we divided the time, so that I took half the session, with others we jointly delivered the session and worked on the resources together, and there were also sessions delivered in the style of an interactive lecture that lasted two hours, and I blogged throughout

posting questions that stemmed from the discussions and lecture that would enable the session to continue beyond the seminar.

- The seminar room was always in use before and after the session which meant that I lost time during the session for setting up and closing down. This might not seem a substantial point, but my style of teaching is interactive, so this extra time either side is vital. Therefore, I am hoping to book a room for a longer period to allow time for this in 2016-17.
- Advertising the guest lecture took considerably more time than expected to ensure a successful turnout, I want to begin publicising this earlier and use the same sources to ensure success, and to try to broaden this where possible.
- The students avoided the alternative form of assessment, they explained this was for the most part due to many feeling that they did not want to risk their marks by doing a style of assessment that they were unfamiliar with, and therefore could not guarantee their results. However, those students who did partake and follow the guidance provided, making use of my office hours and workshops regularly to receive feedback on their blogs achieved first class results.
- I provided a step-by-step guide to all assessments for the module, but I want to create a more formal marking descriptor so that the marking scheme fits the assessments set on the module, and therefore the marking of these assessments is more transparent. I also want to consider how I might encourage students to opt for the less traditional forms of assessment. I will investigate whether it would be helpful to provide some model examples which the students can mark with the descriptors to help facilitate greater confidence in their ability to partake in less traditional forms of assessment.
- Organising and managing the student conference was stressful. Inevitably there were some minor problems that arose, for example, even though I had made provisions for access to the venue for the students, this was not the case on the day. Getting students to actively participate in the organisation was also difficult, and it would be better if I asserted this earlier in the module. Nevertheless, the student video highlights of the day was a great testament to the success of the conference, and other than some minor difficulties with timing, I.T. and access, which I had factored into my planning for the day, it ran smoothly and seemed to be enjoyed by all.
- Meeting with Dr Nick Monk to review and moderate the assessments was particularly helpful, it enabled me to analyse the results and developed my confidence in marking alternative styles of assessment such as the commentary.

Interim Goals:

- Create marking descriptors for the module, which clarify how students can achieve their desired result for the different styles of assessment.
- Secure contributors for 2016-17 and arrange the order of delivery according to schedules.

- Secure the special guest lecture from Professor David Nutt for 2016-17, and investigate whether the lecture might become part of the distinguished lecture series.
- Review the distribution of the marks for assessments. Some students felt that the conference should contribute a higher percentage to the overall mark in light of the work involved in creating their presentations.
- Review the style of assessments, and how I might encourage students to opt for the edited collection of blog posts by making it compulsory to blog throughout the module.
- Investigate how I might create project-based questions as an alternative to the edited collection of blog posts to avoid traditional style essay questions altogether.
- Review the reading materials which some students felt were too extensive, to consider whether more of the materials could be optional secondary reading.
- Examine the structure of the module, and how I might improve some of the materials for sessions that were not received as well as others.
- Organise room bookings for the student conference, lecture theatre and seminar room which allow time for setting up, workshops and office hours.
- Encourage more student involvement earlier in the conference, so that there is more time for feedback and improvements. I also want to work on facilitating their leadership, giving them more tools for chairing a discussion, expecting all students to ask a question and participate in the organisation. I need to consider how the conference style presentation will work with more students, as two sections will hopefully run next year.
- Investigate how better use can be made of the optional workshops, which were underutilised or overly popular at particular times of the year. Dividing my time between the students may be better served with an appointment system. On occasion I could not get through all the students and had to offer additional times, or I had to cut discussions short, when in other weeks, there would be no students who attended. I would like to find out if a booking system could be created to ease the admin and also make it transparent to students when I am available and for how long, as some students wished to book extra time which is not always realistic when you have multiple students to see.

Project Highlights:

- Student conference
- Professor David Nutt's special guest lecture being attended by approximately 200 students.
- Reading the assessments and learning about the different forms of censorship the students experience, I want to utilise personal experience more next year.