

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

MODERN EUROPEAN STUDIES PROGRAMME

ANNUAL REPORT 1979

Introduction

At the risk of transgressing the guidelines for the format of Annual Reports it is necessary to stress at the outset the importance of adequate staffing for the survival of the Modern European Studies Programme. The programme was originally launched as a venture in inter-departmental cooperation by interested members of the Arts Faculty who already had heavy teaching commitments in their respective departments. Over the last two years it has become clear that the objectives of the Modern European Studies Committee as described below can only be realised by additional staffing. The appointment of a stop-gap temporary lecturer for the eleven months February - December 1979 merely highlighted the difficulty of ensuring continuity and cohesion of course offerings at the graduate and undergraduate level. Much hope was therefore centred until recent weeks upon the appointment of a Deputy Director of the Humanities Research Centre who would also act as a Professor of Modern European Studies. Unfortunately the electoral committee which has been considering the applicants for this joint position recommended on 10 December that no appointment should be made and that the Deputy Directorship should be readvertised without reference to any responsibility for teaching or research in the field of Modern European Studies. Unless a genuine effort is made to provide permanent staff it will be my duty to recommend that the programme be suspended or abandoned forthwith at both the undergraduate and the graduate level. This would be a regrettable step to take both because of the justification for such a programme on academic grounds and because of the likely need for a close working relationship between the Modern European Studies programme and at least some of the modern European language departments in the future.

(i) Objectives of the Modern European Studies Programme

The main aim of the Modern European Studies Programme is to encourage the integration of language learning and linguistic skills with disciplinary studies. At the undergraduate level the intention is to supplement rather than supplant the offerings of traditional language and literature departments; and to promote language learning amongst students of disciplines such as history, political science, philosophy and English. In encouraging language students to study disciplines and increasing the linguistic competence of non-language students it is hoped to broaden the range and enhance the effectiveness of courses offered within the Faculty. In concrete terms the ultimate development envisaged in an ideal academic world would be that language students should be able to supplement their language and literature courses with Modern European Studies majors (preferably at honours level if so desired) and that non-language students in certain disciplines should be able to combine their majors or honours courses with those of the Modern European Studies Programme and its

attendant language unit or units.

At the graduate level the aim is currently to provide a course-work plus minor thesis master's programme which will enable linguistically qualified students to study in depth the work of nineteenth and twentieth century social thinkers and literary figures.

(ii) Courses (undergraduate)

History IE (European Literature and Society, 1789-1850) which was devised as the first year unit of the Modern European Studies major has for the past two years attracted upwards of sixty students (see enrolment and examinations statistics below). There was, however, little or no flow-through from History IE to the later year Modern European Studies units offered in 1979. MES 2/3A (The Legacy of Revolution: Twentieth Century Russia) was not taught because of insufficient enrolments; and none of the students taking Philosophy AIO (Eighteenth Century European Thought) appear to have been treating it as part of a European Studies major. It also seems likely that enrolments in courses offered in 1980, namely MES 2/3B (European Drama from Chekhov to Beckett) and MES 2/3C (Evolution and Historicism in 19th century Thought) will remain relatively small. The main reason for this is that the majority of first year students enrolled in History IE in 1979 were committed to majors in History, English and Political Science and failed to enrol in a first year European language unit. As a result only a dozen members of the 1979 History IE class who are taking language majors are eligible to proceed to later year MES units. Although the number of specialist language students taking History IE may increase, the long-term viability of the Modern European Studies major will depend on whether the appropriate non-language departments encourage their students - especially those with honourspotential - to acquire some competence in a European language early in their university career. The situation of the Modern European Studies Programme would be improved (and the literacy of history students enhanced) if the History Department were to agree to the presentation of a 2/3 history unit sequential to History IE which carried a first year language prerequisite. There might then be a stream of linguistically qualified students large enough to populate more specialist later year units such as MES 2/3A (The Legacy of Revolution) or others that might be devised in collaboration with the departments of philosophy and English. It goes without saying, however, that the major responsibility for planning, coordinating and teaching the proposed 2/3 history unit would have to be borne by a staff member specially appointed or seconded to the Modern European Studies Programme. The teaching commitments of the present history staff within both their own department and the Modern European Studies Programme itself are already formidable and should not be increased.

Courses (graduate)

The Modern European Studies Master's Degree by course-work is simpler to administer and easier to teach because of the smaller number of students involved. Yet even this programme is placed in jeopardy when key members of the Modern European Studies Committee take study leave. The belatedness

and limited duration of Dr Megill's appointment as a temporary lecturer to replace Dr Stoljar (from February to December 1979) made it impossible for his skills to be adequately-utilised. Because it was not known whether any appointment would be made at all until November 1978 nor known who the appointee would be until the following February, effective advance publicity about the nature of the master's course was precluded. As a result no full time M.A. Scholarship students enrolled and Dr Megill's seminars on Nietzsche and Freud were attended only by three able but harrassed senior public servants who enrolled at the last minute on a part-time basis. Since none of these students survived into the second semester because of their work commitments, Dr Megill was obliged to employ himself in the second half of the year by offering a successful fourth year option for fourth year history honours students on the young Marx. Such a squandering of academic resources is bound to recur until a more predictable graduate programme is made possible by a permanent staff appointment.

Work of graduate students

Ms. M. Sinclair and Mr P. Howarth have been awarded their M.A. degrees. Ms. H. Yerbury has completed her course work and submitted her sub-thesis which is currently being examined. Ms. J. Loy has completed her course work, but is finishing her sub-thesis on a part-time basis. Mr M. Thawley and Ms. D. Thawley have completed their course work, but the submission of their sub-theses has been delayed by their posting to Moscow with the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Staff

Reference has already been made in an earlier section to the appointment of A. Megill, B.A.(Sask.), M.A.(Tor.), Ph.D.(Columbia) to a temporary lectureship from February - December 1979.

The invaluable services of Ms. Carol Flanagan, who acted as a half-time secretary for the Modern European Studies and Women's Studies Programmes, and of the secretarial staff of the history department should also be recorded.

Publications

Megill, Allan, 'Foucault, Structuralism, and the Ends of History',
Journal of Modern History, vol.51, no. 3,
September, 1979.

Bruce Kent
Coordinator Modern European Studies Programme

MODERN EUROPEAN STUDIES PROGRAMME - ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Subject or Unit	Percentage of Number Enrolled						Percentage of Number Sitting																	
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12	
	Enrolled as at 30.4.79		Sitting ¹		Wastage		Failure ²		Sitting		High Dis- tinction		Dis- tinction		Credit		Pass with Merit		Pass		Fail			
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
History 1E	63	(100)	46	(73.0)	17	(27.0)	8	(12.7)	46	(100)	1	(2.2)	11	(23.9)	13	(28.3)			13	(28.3)	8	(17.4)		
MES 2/3A	Enrolled as at 25.1.79		3		Course cancelled																			

NOTES

Sitting includes all enrolled on Examiners' Return even if subsequently withdrawn or absent.

Failure includes WD/N and absentees after compilation of Examiners' Return.