

# Both Law and Philosophy adopt opt out lecture capture

Opt-out lecture capturing adopted by the Law and Philosophy departments



By Amy Gibbons, Deputy Editor (2015/16)

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Image: stock.tookapic.com

Following a number of months of lobbying, student representatives have persuaded both the Law and Philosophy departments to adopt an opt-out framework on Lecture Capture.

At the forefront was Thomas Ron, Academic Officer for YUSU. Sharing news of the success on his Facebook page, Ron enthused “This is a major step forward and as BoS meetings come around we hope to be seeing more departments take this trend forward.”

Departments are being encouraged to adapt to the opt-out framework so students can listen back to their lectures. Lecture Capture technology benefits those who may have missed lectures due to illness or would like a reminder of the content covered.

The online resource is a quick and easy point of reference, especially for those looking to specialise in specific research material.

The opt-out ruling replaces the standard opt-in framework, by which it is assumed lectures will not be recorded. For most departments lecturers may be recorded if they so wish.

The change means all lectures conducted by the cooperating departments will be recorded unless the lecturer specifically chooses not to be.

Capitalising on his success, Ron has set his sights on implementing the framework University-wide. Since announcing that both Law and Philosophy have adopted the framework, Ron has indicated his enthusiasm to have others follow suit, which he insisted “won’t happen without student buy in”. He continues to encourage students to play an active role in their departments, whether that be by attending Staff Student Forums or engaging with student reps.

Ron told Nouse “We are very supportive about the decisions [...] I think that Dom Smithies and Lydia Bonnefoy-Jenkinson (Department Reps for Philosophy and Law respectively) deserve a huge amount of credit for their hard work in making this happen.

“These are not the only discussions that will be happening. All science and social science departments that do not have this system are going to be actively discussing it as are many Arts and Humanities departments, so I have very high hopes that a majority of the University will move to the opt-out system by the end of the year.”

It is due to students taking action that this change has been implemented.

Concluding a recent plea for student lobbying, Ron insisted “with your voice, your Department WILL change for the better”.



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## 6 comments

Nick Jones

10 Nov '15 at 7:04 pm

Philosophy tutor here, writing in a personal capacity. A casual reader of Amy Gibbons' article might form the impression that the Philosophy Department had adopted opt-out lecture capture only 'following a number of months of lobbying' – that is, reluctantly, and as a result of pressure. In fact (to the best of my knowledge) we endorsed this practice as soon as it was proposed to us, at the last Board of Studies meeting. However, I would want to endorse Thomas Ron's comments and the main theme of Amy's article: we strongly encourage our students to talk to us about their ideas to improve teaching, and our student reps in particular do an invaluable job in helping us to make good decisions.

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Amy Gibbons

11 Nov '15 at 9:50 pm

Hi Nick, thanks for your comment. I can understand how a casual reader of my article might assume that the Philosophy Department had made the change only reluctantly and as a result of pressure. My sources suggested that a number of months of lobbying had taken place as Thomas Ron and Dom Smithies were in conversation with the Philosophy Department about moving to the opt-out framework over the summer. At the Board of Studies meeting, when the proposition should not have been made for the first time, the Department voted in favour of the change. That is not to say they did so reluctantly. I hope that clarifies my choice of phrasing.

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Nick Jones

12 Nov '15 at 12:45 pm

Hi Amy – in turn, thanks for your response! I think it's best to reply here, so that anyone reading the comments (unlikely perhaps) can follow the conversation. I have now checked with our Chair of Board of Studies who tells me that he had the first conversation about this with Thomas Ron on 10th September, and offered to raise the issue in a Board of Studies meeting; Nouse reported this at the end of September, I think. He prepared a report and put it to the BoS on November 4th, and we agreed the proposal. So I guess that \*might\* count as 'a number of months' (just under two) but with two BoS meetings a term and a lot of business, this is pretty well the quickest that we could have made a decision – and this is the sort of decision that is properly made by a Board of Studies, not by an individual. And there wasn't, as far as I can tell, a great deal of lobbying.

It's worth pointing out that we already automatically record all lectures for our central second year 'Pathway' lectures, and that a number of us (including me) have participated in much earlier trials of lecture recording.

You might well wonder why I am bothering to pursue a relatively minor point. The main reason is just to set the record straight; it is very easy for students to get the impression that departments have to be forced into change, and this can generate a sense of resentment and general dissatisfaction which is not in anyone's interests. The way that events are reported in the student press can encourage this kind of response, so I am keen that we get this right. The fact is that we try really hard to elicit the views of our

students and – even if we cannot agree with what is proposed – we take these seriously and try to ensure that they get a reply. Our excellent Department and BoS student reps help us in this.

All the best  
Nick

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Thomas Ron

14 Nov '15 at 2:53 pm

To add onto Nick's point I think that the Philosophy department has been a model of excellence in how they endorsed the point. Keith Allen, the chair of the Board of Studies agreed almost immediately to put it on the Board of Studies agenda and they did so. Philosophy was very receptive to the idea and the vote I understand was overwhelmingly in favour. Dom Smithies and his excellent team of Course Reps deserve a dearth of praise for bringing this forward, as does the Philosophy Department for being so receptive and agreeing to this excellent idea so quickly

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Amy Gibbons

14 Nov '15 at 9:31 pm

Hi Nick, sorry my response is a little delayed! You make some very good points. I did not mean to imply that the Department had made the change reluctantly, but it certainly seems that a casual reader could assume such was the case. I suppose the article's intended message (if a report can have an intended message), was that with student participation, change can occur. So Thomas Ron would encourage students to get involved in discussions about their learning in order to optimise their experience at university.

But I concur that 'a number of months of lobbying' may be understood to imply a considerable amount of pressure was put on departments by dissatisfied students, which of course was not the case in this instance.

Thanks again for your comments- we always appreciate feedback at Nouse and it's important potential misunderstandings on the part of the reporter or reader are resolved should they arise.

I also wholly agree with Tom Ron's comment.

All the best,  
Amy

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Nick Jones

16 Nov '15 at 3:10 pm

Thanks Amy!

Nick

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