

MANCHESTER  
1824

# R 'n' Tease

May Issue

## FROM YOUR HEAD OF SUBJECT

Dear R'n'Tease Reader,

This is a busy time of year for all of us. The exam period is upon us and you will be working hard preparing for semester 2 exams. It can be a stressful period but the secret of doing well in exams is good preparation. So work out a revision plan – a realistic one - and do your best to keep to it. But remember to take breaks, get some fresh air, stretch your legs, and take the occasional evening off to restore those flagging brain cells. Don't forget that my colleagues and I are here to help, so please contact them, your Academic Adviser, the Student Support Services, or me, if you need advice or just a friendly person to chat to.

Those of you who will be graduating on Wednesday July 18th (at 12.15pm), please come with your families and friends to our Graduation reception at 1.15pm in the Graduate Marquee next to University Place. This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to celebrate your academic achievement and to wish you every success as you embark upon the next stage of your careers.

With best wishes

David Law

Head of Religions and Theology

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## FROM YOUR SENIOR TUTOR

There are many things that go to making a successful academic year. This year we have been especially helped by some magnificent work from students in leadership roles in the RAT Pack, PASS, and Peer Mentoring schemes. So, on behalf of the Department, I would like to put on record my thanks to Alex Faulkner, Justin Kennedy, Isabella Fairclough, Polly Ridgewell and Alexa Mapplebeck—and in thanking them to thank those other students who contributed to these activities.

Peter Scott

### Students as Partners Awards 2012

On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May the Students as Partners programme hosted its annual Awards night at the Palace Hotel. The gathering was to celebrate and reward the achievements of students and various schemes that have contributed to enhancing the student experience at the University of Manchester. This year the venue change to the Palace demonstrated the tremendous growth in student schemes and the atmosphere was electric. It was great to join in celebrating the achievements of many students across the University as we saw awards for the completion of the PWC leadership academy, best society, hall schemes, mentoring schemes, PASS schemes and outstanding leadership awards.

As many as 800 students attended to collect these various rewards and it was a pleasure to see how much enthusiasm goes into these various schemes from students. Congratulations go out to everyone but there were some special surprises and congratulations due on the night.

Firstly one couldn't help but notice the amount of R&T students in attendance on the night; what a rambunctious lot we are! To further enhance our reputation, Isabella Fairclough and Justin Kennedy took to the floor to speak about their experience of Peer Support and present the Outstanding Awards. This is a double act just ready to break into Hollywood and take the world by storm. Both pointed out that the R&T mentoring scheme was vital in helping them settle in the 1<sup>st</sup> year and that further to this the opportunity to work for the PASS scheme and develop it had got them further hooked on the drug of Peer Support. After thanking all the students in attendance the pair was greeted by a rapturous applause topped off by a standing ovation from the R&T brigade!



As surprising as the ovation was it didn't match what came next. YES R&T won the scheme of the year award for its PASS scheme. This was truly a memorable moment, after just a 2<sup>nd</sup> year of running the scheme it swept the board in the opinion of the top academics and support staff. Here's the award which should be displayed somewhere prominently soon along with a selection of some of the celebrating leaders from both the R&T mentoring and PASS schemes!

So all in all a successful night but one must say if there was an award for the most hilarious ceilidh dance it should go to Paul Worrall but the most professional dance should go to Polly Ridgewell. Her nimble footedness and ruthless application of moves ought to be hailed as another R&T triumph!

Congrats team R&T; you rocked and made your presence felt as always!

**Course Unit Selection – a note from the programme director, John Zavos**

I hope everyone found the course unit selection speed dating fair on 2<sup>nd</sup> May informative and enjoyable. As you know, this was the first time we tried this system. I *think* it went ok, but if you have any feedback on the experience please do let me know. Just mail me at [john.zavos@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:john.zavos@manchester.ac.uk).

Also, I wanted to draw your attention to a Religions and Theology policy related to course unit selection, which we will be applying once the pre-registration period has been completed and we are firming up your unit choices. This relates to capping enrolments on our units at levels 2 and 3. As you may know, the School has a policy of open enrolment on level 1 units, but in R&T at levels 2 and 3 we generally employ a capping system in order to ensure that you get a good learning experience on our various units. Below I have reproduced our policy on capping, which hopefully explains the rationale and the exceptions which may be applied if a unit reaches capacity and beyond. If you have any questions about the policy, again, email me, or pop in to see me during my office hours, Wednesdays 12 – 1 or Thursdays 10 – 11.

**Religions and Theology policy on maximum enrolments to UG Level 2 & 3 units.**

This policy aims to ensure consistency of experience for students taking units at L2 & 3 in the Department of Religions and Theology.

1. The Religions and Theology Department has a general policy of capping enrolment of L2 and 3 units at a maximum of 35 students.

- The rationale for this policy is a recognition that small group teaching is important at levels 2 & 3, as it ensures that the learning environment is conducive to full engagement, with opportunities for discussion & group exercises in which all students can take an active part.

2. Whilst generally enforcing this policy, the Department acknowledges that special circumstances sometimes apply. We also recognise the legitimacy of general student demand for popular units. In particular circumstances, therefore, it is prepared to raise the cap above 35. These circumstances are:

- a) Where a student has a legitimate need to take the unit in support of their dissertation topic.
- b) Where a student is joining the unit as a Study Abroad/Erasmus student (and so does not have the opportunity to pre-register).
- c) Where a student from outside the school is joining the unit (and so does not have the opportunity to pre-register) – up to a maximum of 5 students if the unit has otherwise reached its capacity.
- d) If pre-registration on the unit reaches a threshold of 45 students.

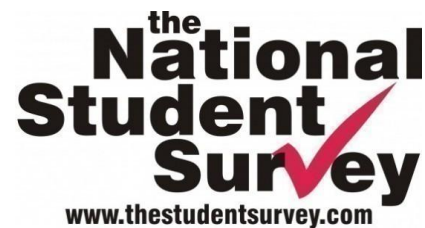
- In such cases, the Department will arrange for additional support to the CUD, including the deployment of Graduate Teaching Assistants where possible, in order to ensure the quality of the student experience on the unit.
- The +45 trigger will only be applied as a result of pre-registered enrolments. Later enrolments cannot be accepted. This is to ensure that the Department has sufficient time to ensure appropriate support is in place for affected units.
- In such cases a cap of 55 will apply. No registrations can be accepted above 55 except in exceptional circumstances (see a – c above).

3. It should be noted that in all cases where units are oversubscribed, the Department will give priority in terms of enrolment to those students who are required to take the unit as a compulsory element of their degree programme. If the number of students in this position exceeds a unit's maximum enrolment capacity (see 1 & 2 above), this capacity will be raised accordingly in order to accommodate them, and appropriate additional support arrangements put in place.

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### National Student Survey

Many thanks to all third years who completed the survey. We'd hit just over 72% completion rate on the last set of figures released, exactly in the 70-75% band we'd been asked to achieve. You're magic! The results themselves won't be published till the summer but if you're burning to know what the scores were perhaps you could ask a second year to forward you an RnTease from next year to keep in touch!



Jackie Suthren Hirst

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### Buddhist Thought and Practice post interviews

Very very many thanks to those of you who kindly came and participated in the teaching sessions in the selection process. We do appreciate your time and commitment, as well as acute observations, especially at this time of the year.

Jackie Suthren Hirst

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### **\*\*NOTICE\*\***: Teach First

The search for Teach First Manchester Brand Managers is now on. Do you know someone creative, outgoing, well-networked and organised who is on campus next year? If so please pass on the link to our website: <http://graduates.teachfirst.org.uk/recruitment/brand-managers.html> or if this is you, apply now and earn next year whilst making a real difference with Teach First.

Rebecca Sefton



# THE R.A.T. PACK

MANCHESTER UNI RELIGIONS & THEOLOGY SOCIETY

Hey everyone,

We hope all of you are managing your revision load and are equally taking time to break! Just to give you our final update before the end the academic year...

The new committee has set off full steam and already have planned a variety of exciting socials for next year including:

- 'Where's Wally?' Fresher's Week Pub Crawl
- Curry Night
- Christmas Dinner
- Laser Quest
- Open monthly debates
- Day trip to Alton Towers/Blackpool Pleasure Beach
- May Ball 2013

Any suggestions for socials are greatly appreciated, this society is run by students for students, so make sure that your interests and opinions are heard! All of our meetings are open and will be frequently advertised, so please come along or email committee members with your ideas.

Lastly, having heard your feedback asking for a Diversity Officer on the committee, the R.A.T. Pack responded by opening a position for a new committee member. The elections have now been completed, so congratulations to Lucy Holloway, the new Diversity Officer!

Good luck in all of your exams and we hope you all have an amazing summer! See you in September for the beginning of the best R.A.T. Pack year yet!

Best,

The R.A.T. Pack Committee

## Goodbye from this year's PASS Coordinators

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The academic year 2011-12 has been a very successful one for the Religions and Theology's PASS Scheme. A dedicated and hard working team of 20 second and third year leaders have given up hours of their time to contribute to this year's scheme. PASS was attached to the first year core course in Semester 1, and then 'themed' sessions were created to incorporate the wide range of courses in Semester 2. We have had some outstanding leaders involved this year, who have actively planned creative sessions and consistently attended weekly debriefs. All this hard work was celebrated at the Students as Partners Presentation Awards where the scheme was recognised as outstanding and won the 'Peer Support Scheme of the Year' prize 2012. This was a very proud moment for Team RnT, and we are actively trying to find somewhere for the trophy to reside!

In order to make this happen a lot of hard work and commitment is given. We would like to thank George Brooke, Peter Scott and Jamie Wood for their continued support and encouragement of the scheme. We would also like to thank Antonia Canal and Fiona Frazer for their continued administrative help, without them we wouldn't have been able to run any sessions! Thank you to all first years for attending the sessions. Most of all, we would like to thank our amazing team of leaders who have achieved so much this year. We wish all our third year leaders the best of luck in everything they do, and we hope our second year leaders carry on with such enthusiasm. We wish next year's coordinators, Rach Griffiths and Tasha Irwin, the best of luck. We know they will do great as they have already got PASS on the timetable and are full of ideas for the development of the scheme. Once again thank you to everyone involved, and we look forward to hearing all about the successes of the Religions and Theology's PASS Scheme 2012-13.

Isabella Fairclough and Justin Kennedy

## Welcome to next year's PASS Coordinators

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Hey everyone! We are Tasha and Rach, your new PASS coordinators for 2012/13! We're taking over from Isabella and Justin, and would just like to say a huge thank you to them and the rest of the PASS scheme for all their hard work this year. We're really excited about next year, and we're looking forward to making R&T PASS the best it's ever been! :)



## Goodbye from your Peer Mentor Co-ordinators!

So, it's that time of year again when we wave goodbye to one team of mentors and welcome in next year's group. We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of our peer mentors for the hard work, time and energy that you have all put in. We've had a great year of peer mentoring beginning with our exciting (slightly rainy!) scavenger hunt in September through to our team building day. We're really thankful for all of the work that has been put in to make these events possible and we're looking forward to hearing about all of next year's events.

As you may already know, we are handing over peer mentoring to Olivia Brady and Katy Robinson and their fantastic team of mentors. We wish them the best of luck for next year. We hope your bunch of first years are as fab as this year's!

~ Polly Ridgewell and Alexa Mapplebeck



**The May Ball**

After listening to everyone moan for two years about wanting a ball on the course, I thought why not do something about it...and I am so glad I did! After 8 months of planning and hard work, the long awaited night had finally arrived. Language, Computer Science and Religions and Theology students threw on their glad rags and headed for the Palace Hotel. A buck's fizz reception awaited guests as they arrived and our old peer mentor co-ordinator Craig Wright even made an appearance! Guests were called down to the Grand room where a delicious 3 course meal, casino tables, a chocolate fountain, a band and a DJ awaited them. After getting off to a shaky start with two r&t students knocking over an unsuspecting waitress and getting drenched in alcohol I thought the night was destined for failure, but I am pleased to say what followed was a roaring success.



This is the last event I will organise as a Peer Mentor co-ordinator and the last r&t event I will have the pleasure of going to before graduation, I am glad it was such a huge success and I hope it will become an annual event on the Religions and Theology social calendar. The committee consisted of students from all three courses and it was a great way to network and get to know more students, whom otherwise I might not have met. I would just like to see a huge thank you to the R.A.T pack who helped sell tickets and Alex Faulkner who helped organise the ball with me, I could not have done it without them! And I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did!

Alexa Mapplebeck ☺