# Transcript of exit interview with Hannah Smith

DAVID: Hi Hannah, welcome to your philosophy exit interview. My first question is, can you remember your first impression of Warwick and what was it?

HANNAH: So I came to Warwick quite a few times in the open days, and I don't really know what it was, but something about the campus, just like both terrified and amazed me. I think that's probably the first thing that I realized and I felt when I came here. I felt really out of my depth, but the beginning of uni panic slowly subsided and I started to realize that Warwick was just a really amazing place. It was really supportive. That was evident from the start with the department and, yeah, I think that's probably my first real solid impression of uni that I had.

DAVID: And when you arrived here, what was the best philosophy module you studied?

HANNAH: There's been a couple very, very good ones. I studied one in second year, taught by yourself, on Philosophy of Religion, and I just enjoy things like that anyway, so that was one of my most memorable ones. And another one I studied in my final year, taught by Keith Ansell-Pearson, was Philosophy of Emotions, and I just found that so interesting, because he took various philosophers throughout all of time. We started with Seneca and we ended up with 20th century philosophers, and we were talking about how they viewed certain emotions, whether certain emotions were good or bad. And it had different components, so it wasn't just philosophy, and that was a very, very interesting module I think, but I also do have certain seminars that stick in my mind. In my first year again, for one of your modules, Plato and Descartes, we had a seminar about whether or not Plato was a feminist, and we debated that for the entire hour, I think. And that's one of the seminars that stuck in my head because it was just such a good one. We had such a good debate, and I think that's also a seminar where I got to know a lot of my friends as well, because we happened to be in the same one and we were talking with each other and it was quite early on, so that's memorable for multiple reasons.

DAVID: Yeah, there's an essay question on that topic, isn't there, that we get first years to write about? Was Plato a feminist? That's always a popular one for people to write about. Did you write your essay about that?

HANNAH: I did! My side of the room won the debate, so I decided to write my essay on it.

DAVID: Great! So what was the most important thing you learned from going to university?

HANNAH: Nothing overly groundbreaking to be fair, I just learned a variety of things, which I guess constituted small victories for me. So I learned how to organize myself, I suppose, and I learned how to prioritize things, because more often than not, in uni, you'll find that you have at any one time, especially when the term starts going, you have various seminar readings to do for two or three seminars coming up that week. You have reading for the essays you're going to write. You have lectures to watch or rewatch, or perfect your notes on. You have a lot of things to do, and also they all have different deadlines and they're all of various levels of importance. So

I think prioritizing and working to a deadline has really improved for me. I think that's something I've learned. And also again, quite a small victory, but I've learned how to speak a bit more confidently as well, because the nature of philosophy is that you speak a lot. If you're not comfortable speaking in lectures, you'll probably find yourself speaking in seminars or in small groups. And also my work as a philosophy ambassador. I've been one for three years and, as part of that, I've been speaking one-on-one, I've been speaking in a lecture hall, full up with up to 150 prospective students and their guests. I've done a lot of that and it's been nerve racking, but I've learned to speak a bit more confidently and compose myself a bit more. I'm still not 100% there yet, but I think uni, and specifically philosophy because of the nature of the course, has definitely helped me with that, so that's probably the most important thing I've learned in philosophy because that's the transferable thing as well. And so, yeah, that's probably the one thing I'd say.

DAVID: And what would you say that you know now that you wish you knew when you started university?

HANNAH: Again, not particularly surprising or groundbreaking, but you're not going to be good at everything all the time, I think, and that might sound a bit surprising to hear on something like this, but there are some lectures that you're going to struggle with. The content won't be something that you're interested in, or something that you struggle to grasp straightaway. There might be essays that you don't do as well as you thought you'd done in them, and I've had my fair share of them. It's OK to not be perfect at everything, especially at the beginning because uni is a very big thing. Going from college to first year is big, going from first year to second year is big. You will struggle, but I think what I wish I had known was it's OK to ask for help, because the department is brilliant. You have a personal tutor, you have your friends, you have your lecturers, you have your seminar leaders. There are so many people in the department who are here to help you, and I wish I had known that it was OK to ask for help, and they didn't expect you to just be perfect. Getting firsts in everything from the beginning. even at the end to be fair. And so definitely, definitely ask for help. I think that's the number one thing I would say to anyone. Get help on your essays. Get help if you're struggling with anything. Go to people for help.

DAVID: Yeah, I agree with that. That's something I often start a new module with, ask for help when you need it or even before you need it. And that I suppose includes turning to friends as well as to staff and things.

HANNAH: Definitely yeah, because you'll often find that your friends understand the module better than you. Something again I've had my fair share of, I've left a lecture, just my brain has been swimming. I've had absolutely no idea what's been going on, but my friend has sat down with me and explained it to me and I understood it straight away. Even if going to a lecture at first is daunting, I guarantee you someone in that room will also know what's going on.. There's a lot of people you can ask.

DAVID: What would you say you're going to miss most about university?

HANNAH: Aside from like the general student life of waking up at 11, if you have a seminar at two on like a Wednesday morning or something, I do just really enjoy learning, and I don't think I'm ever going to have this structured program again of having four modules a term, you have two lectures and one seminar per week for each of those modules, and you have certain things to do for those, and you've got certain readings given to you to do, and the modules are so wide in scope and they cover such a wide array of philosophy from ancient philosophy to really, really modern like philosophy of terrorism and counterterrorism, and everything in between as well. So I think I'm really going to miss the broad scope of learning that's available here. Just because it's nice knowing things and learning things and picking up on things that you haven't known before. Also, very obviously, I'm going to really miss my friends because the group of people I'm closest to on my course I met in the first week of term in our orientation, and we just kind of gelled, I guess because we didn't know what else was going on. We got along well so we stuck together and we still have throughout third year, and obviously we've seen each other like do well at essays, do badly at essays, struggle, or like do really well, achieve our own personal victories, and it's been a journey, I think with them and I'm really gonna miss them too I think.

DAVID: Well, we'll miss all of you as well. Thank you very much for your philosophy exit interview, and good luck with everything out there in the world.

HANNAH: Thank you very much. Thank you and thank you for having me.

DAVID: Thanks.