



Module Specification

Understanding Capitalism

Version: 2022-23, v3.0, 12 Jan 2022

Contents

Module Specification	1
Part 1: Information	2
Part 2: Description	2
Part 3: Teaching and learning methods	4
Part 4: Assessment.....	5
Part 5: Contributes towards	6

Part 1: Information

Module title: Understanding Capitalism

Module code: UZRSYS-15-2

Level: Level 5

For implementation from: 2022-23

UWE credit rating: 15

ECTS credit rating: 7.5

Faculty: Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences

Department: HAS Dept of Social Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Delivery locations: Frenchay Campus

Field: Philosophy

Module type: Standard

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: The module explores philosophical concepts for understanding the historical origins and nature of capitalism - up to the present day.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The aims of this module are to:

Explore the historical origins and nature of capitalism.

Introduce students to early thinkers who have significantly influenced our understanding of capitalism. In particular the liberal political economists on the one hand, and Karl Marx on the other.

Explore a range of Marxist thinkers up to the present day, together with neo-liberal, social democratic, and post-Marxist thinkers who have influenced our thinking about capitalism.

Examine of the conditions of 21st century capitalism.

Outline syllabus: Following an introduction to the historical context, students will be introduced to some early thinkers who set the terms for most subsequent debate regarding the nature of the the capitalist economic system and its accompanying social and political forms and institutions.

This will certainly include Karl Marx, but may also include a range of the liberal political-economists with whom Marx was engaging such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and James Mill.

The emphasis will be, particularly on the influence of Marxist economic concepts in understanding capitalism. To this end, students will use one of the guides to Marx's Capital such as those by David Harvey and Michael Heinrich.

The module will move on to examine a range of themes such as humanist vs anti-humanist Marxism; capitalism, ideology, and political hegemony; structuralist Marxism; capitalism and colonialism; post-structuralist critiques of Marxism (post-Marxism); neo-liberalism and the Marxist analysis of neo-liberalism; Marxist analysis of surveillance/cognitive capitalism; the future of work; decentralisation of capital and finance (cryptocurrency, the 'emancipation of capital' etc); neoreactionary theory; disaster/shock/catastrophe/disruptive capitalism; the anthropocene; post-capitalism

In examining such themes - a range of 20th and 21st century neo-liberal, social-

democratic, Marxist and post-Marxist thinkers will be encountered, such as: Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Franz Fanon, J M Keynes, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman and the 'Chicago School' of Economics, James Buchanan, J F Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Fredric Jameson, Mark Fisher, mckenzie wark, Nick Srnicek, Shoshana Zuboff, Thomas Piketty.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: The module will employ a combination of lectures, seminars, and workshops. Our pedagogy is interactive, discussion-based, and student-facing. Students are an active part of the learning process, and will be asked to contribute ideas, questions, and critical standpoints. The learning environment is designed to promote peer-to-peer support and exchange.

While teaching and learning will be predominantly classroom based, appropriate use will be made of online resources and learning environments.

The content of the module would be appropriate for the use of live briefs.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Demonstrate a critical knowledge of the historical origins and nature of the capitalist economic system and its social and political institutions

MO2 Show a critical knowledge of, and ability to critically assess, a range of thinkers contributing to our current understanding of capitalism

MO3 Effectively communicate a critical knowledge of a range of themes and theoretical concepts relating to the potential applicability of Marxist theory to understanding contemporary capitalism

Hours to be allocated: 150

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 117 hours

Face-to-face learning = 33 hours

Total = 150

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzrsys-15-2.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzrsys-15-2.html>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Assessment for this module is as follows:

Component A: a portfolio (50%), which will typically comprise tasks such as discussion board contributions

Rationale: this kind of tasks retain a degree of 'controlled conditions' while assessing both subject content and a range of transferable skills. It also ensures engagement across the module

Component B: a 2000-word written assignment (50%), which will typically comprise tasks such as written essay; review; briefing paper.

Rationale: these tasks provide an opportunity for more in depth coursework and assess the students ability to convey ideas in an extended written format.

Component A tasks provide opportunity for formative assessment.

Assessment components:

Portfolio - Component A (First Sit)

Description: The portfolio will typically comprise tasks such as discussion board contributions.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

Written Assignment - Component B (First Sit)

Description: The written assignment will typically comprise tasks such as written essay; review; briefing paper.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

Portfolio - Component A (Resit)

Description: The portfolio will typically comprise tasks such as discussion board contributions

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

Written Assignment - Component B (Resit)

Description: The written assignment will typically comprise tasks such as written essay; review; briefing paper.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Philosophy [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Philosophy [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Philosophy {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Philosophy [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Philosophy {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Philosophy [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20