



## **Module Specification**

### **Understanding Capitalism**

Version: 2023-24, v3.0, 29 Jun 2023

#### **Contents**

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

## Part 1: Information

**Module title:** Understanding Capitalism

**Module code:** UZRSYS-15-2

**Level:** Level 5

**For implementation from:** 2023-24

**UWE credit rating:** 15

**ECTS credit rating:** 7.5

**Faculty:** Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences

**Department:** HAS Dept of Social Sciences

**Partner institutions:** None

**Field:** Philosophy

**Module type:** Module

**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 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:

Assessment One: 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

Assessment 2: 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.

Assessment one tasks provide opportunity for formative assessment.

### Assessment tasks:

#### Portfolio (First Sit)

Description: Portfolio

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

**Written Assignment (First Sit)**

Description: 2000-word written assignment

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

**Portfolio (Resit)**

Description: Portfolio

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

**Written Assignment (Resit)**

Description: 2000-word written assignment

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][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Philosophy [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] - Withdrawn BA (Hons) 2022-23

Philosophy [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Philosophy [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] - Withdrawn BA (Hons) 2022-23

Philosophy [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Philosophy {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Philosophy [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Philosophy {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

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