



## **Module Specification**

### **Post-Humanism**

Version: 2023-24, v3.0, 06 Jul 2023

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## Part 1: Information

**Module title:** Post-Humanism

**Module code:** UZRK9X-15-3

**Level:** Level 6

**For implementation from:** 2023-24

**UWE credit rating:** 15

**ECTS credit rating:** 7.5

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

**Department:** HAS Dept of Applied 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 is concerned with post-humanist philosophies arising from the current juxtaposition of accelerating technological development (artificial intelligence, robotics, human enhancement, digital surveillance, automation etc.) and social/political/economic/environmental crisis.

**Features:** Not applicable

**Educational aims:** The module aims to examine a range of convergent tendencies towards the critique and general erosion of the modern humanist worldview, which considers the 'human' as the fundamental validating principle of social and political normativity (what is good for humans, is what is good).

A number of important avenues of critique/surpassing of humanism have emerged;

1. Critical posthumanism arising in the wake of poststructuralist and postmodernist thinkers, many of whom argued that humanism was in fact implicated in a whole range of regimes of power.
2. Artificial intelligence, robotics, machine learning, advanced biotechnology – have set in motion a blurring of the boundary between human and machine on the one hand, and 'transhumanist' aspirations for liberation from the 'limitations of the organic human body' on the other.
3. Speculative posthumanisms which flirt with ideas around posthuman forms of life and intelligence arising from, but perhaps 'disconnecting' from human technologies. Some of these ideas involve radical forms of 'accelerated' social/political/technological change.
4. The rise of surveillance capitalism. In a world where the algorithm knows you better than you know yourself – where does that leave 'human' freedom, reason, democracy?
5. The literal 'dehumanising' effects of anonymous online existence
6. Is the continued elevation of the human as the ultimate normative measure compatible with the continued existence of the rest of the natural world?

The module aims to explore these tendencies together with the dangers inherent in them.

**Outline syllabus:** The module will cover a number of themes relevant to the module aims, such as:

Transhumanist speculation regarding human enhancement technologies.

Critical post-humanist critiques of humanism and transhumanism.

Speculative post-humanist arguments concerning possible 'disconnection' of 'post-human life' from the human.

Accelerationist/nihilist/disruptive post-humanism.

The digital automation of society, economy, and politics.

Post-human ontologies and philosophies of nature.

The module will engage with thinkers such as Kurzweil, Bostrom, Haraway, Braidotti, Roden, Land, Nagle, Zuboff, Harari, Stiegler.

### **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** Critically understand the key debates relating to, and philosophical implications of, post-humanism

**MO2** Critically engage with arguments or theories of particular philosophers and writers in this area

**MO3** Articulate philosophical concepts to non-experts

**MO4** Relate philosophical concepts and argument to practical problems with a critical awareness of the conceptual complexity involved

**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://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/BC82FD03-47A0-A6CE-7F88-39BF394D791D.html) via the following link <https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/BC82FD03-47A0-A6CE-7F88-39BF394D791D.html>

## **Part 4: Assessment**

**Assessment strategy:** The assessment for the module will consist of

Assessment task A: a portfolio (50%), which will typically consist of discussion board postings.

Rationale: The discussion board postings will demonstrate a broad engagement with the module as a whole.

Assessment task B: a 2000-word written assignment in the form of a briefing paper (50%)

Rationale: the briefing paper will demonstrate an in depth engagement with a particular aspect of the module. It will aim to convey to a lay person, who has responsibility for decision making in a political or organisational context, some aspect of post-humanism, its sources, and its potentially practical consequences.

Formative assessment will be undertaken within lectorial and seminar/workshop sessions

**Assessment tasks:**

**Portfolio (First Sit)**

Description: A portfolio of discussion board postings

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

**Written Assignment (First Sit)**

Description: Briefing paper (2000 words)

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

**Portfolio (Resit)**

Description: A portfolio of discussion board postings

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

**Written Assignment (Resit)**

Description: Briefing paper (2000 words)

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

## **Part 5: Contributes towards**

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

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

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

Philosophy [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

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

Philosophy {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20

Philosophy [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BA (Hons) 2018-19