



Module Specification

Post-Humanism

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Post-Humanism

Module code: UZRK9X-15-3

Level: Level 6

For implementation from: 2022-23

UWE credit rating: 15

ECTS credit rating: 7.5

Faculty: Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences

Department: HAS Dept of Applied Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Delivery locations: Glenside 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 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

Component 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.

Component 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 components:

Portfolio - Component A (First Sit)

Description: A portfolio of discussion board postings (20 mins)

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Written Assignment - Component B (First Sit)

Description: Briefing paper (2000 words)

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Portfolio - Component A (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 - Component B (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 {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20

Philosophy [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20