



Module Specification

Philosophy of Ecology

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Philosophy of Ecology

Module code: UZRYFF-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 the claim that our dominant conception of nature is, in part, responsible for the global environmental emergency. Alternative conceptions of life and nature are, therefore, explored as a basis for establishing a sustainable future.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The aims of this module are to:

Explore the reasons for and alternatives to a mechanical materialist conception of nature (including the forms of science, prediction, manipulation, and exploitation that follow from this) .

Offer the students a range of alternative concepts to that of mechanical materialism, as a basis for understanding life and living systems.

Offer students theoretical viewpoints that enable them to provide innovative solutions to address the crisis in our relationship with the natural world – in particular climate change and the collapse of biodiversity.

Outline syllabus: The module addresses the philosophy of life and living systems. It does so in the context of a critical approach to mechanical materialist conceptions of nature.

This is intended to equip students with theoretical concepts enabling them to address issues relating to aspects of the environmental emergency such as climate change, and the collapse of biodiversity.

Students will learn something about the evidence base relating to such issues. This will be done through reading studies such as those by: Elizabeth Kolbert, Joseph Romm, Naomi Klein

As stated in our aims, the key argument that the module explores is that our dominant conception of nature is itself implicated in the genesis of environmental crises. As such the reasons for this, together with alternatives, must be explored. In this context the module will explore relevant philosophical themes such as the emergence of living systems and ecosystems; evolution and coevolution; life and biology; philosophy/ontology of nature; complexity and self-organisation; phenomenology and living systems; process philosophy; panpsychism; deep ecology; extinction

The above is an indicative list of themes bearing on the problem of the relationship between philosophy of nature and the environmental crises – and providing conceptual tools with which to address it.

Relevant thinkers might include Aristotle; F W J Schelling; A N Whitehead; Susanne Langer; Jacob Von Uexkull; Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela; Fritjof Capra; Ilya Prigogine; Georges Canguilhem; Gilles Deleuze; Raymond Ruyer; Thomas Nagel

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 critical knowledge of evidence relating to aspects of the environmental emergency.

MO2 Demonstrate critical awareness of the ways in which ontological commitments, with respect to life and nature, have practical consequences.

MO3 Effectively communicate knowledge of subject material covered on the module.

MO4 Demonstrate a critical ability to draw practical implications from various alternative approaches to life and living systems.

Hours to be allocated: 150

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 114 hours

Face-to-face learning = 36 hours

Total = 150

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link

<https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/5D8AEFB3-B6FD-1BE0-7B4F-9239B364887D.html?lang=en-GB&login=1>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: The aims of this module are to:

Assessment part A: a portfolio (50%) which will typically comprise tasks such as: Discussion Board contributions; Viva Presentation.

Rationale: these kinds of tasks retain a degree of 'controlled conditions' while assessing both subject content and a range of transferable skills.

Assessment part B: a 2000-word written assignment (50%) which will typically comprise tasks such as Essay; Briefing paper; Review.

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 part A tasks provide opportunity for formative assessment.

Assessment tasks:

Portfolio (First Sit)

Description: A portfolio (50%) which will typically comprise tasks such as: Discussion Board contributions; Viva Presentation.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: A written assignment (50%) which will typically comprise tasks such as Essay; Briefing paper; Review.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Portfolio (Resit)

Description: A portfolio (50%) which will typically comprise tasks such as: Discussion Board contributions; Viva Presentation.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: A written assignment (50%) which will typically comprise tasks such as Essay; Briefing paper; Review.

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) 2022-23

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

Philosophy [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2022-23

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

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

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

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