Module Specification

Existentialism and Questions of Human Nature

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Contents

Part 1: Information

Module title: Existentialism and Questions of Human Nature

Module code: UZRYFC-30-1

Level: Level 4

For implementation from: 2022-23

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

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 aims to give students a grounding in the importance of understandings of the human in the 18th and 19th century and the influence of these debates on 20th-century existentialism and its consideration of moral agency and freedom.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The aims of this module are to:

Give students a grounding in the importance of understandings of the human, and human life, in the 18th and 19th century and the influence of these debates on 20th century thought including the tradition of existentialism and its consideration of human agency and freedom.

Allow students to explore how philosophical conceptions of what it means to be human have been challenged from various perspectives, which could include feminist philosophy, post-colonial thought and other non-Western perspectives.

Provide students with the background knowledge and core conceptual skills to progress to modules at level 2 and 3 which focus on human flourishing and ethics, as well as those such as post-humanism that explore more radical challenges to the humanist paradigm in recent philosophy, and to contribute to interdisciplinary discussions on our wellbeing and future as a species.

Outline syllabus: The module will consider questions such as:

To what extent is human nature shaped by our social environment?

To what extent are we as human being able to change?

Is humanism a useful concept?

Have conceptions of what it means to be human neglected our corporeality or privileged reason?

Can our understanding of the human expand to encompass a broader range of political subjectivities?

How does secularism change our understanding of our selves and our purpose?

How should we understand human agency?

What are the implications of theories of the unconscious or drives for our understanding of ourselves?

What challenges are the existentialist thinkers addressing and what can we learn from them regarding our own lives?

These questions will be addressed through the study of both major philosophers and

literary writers, supported by recent scholarship addressing their work, such as: Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Kafka, Freud, Sartre, Camus, Ortega y Gasset, de Beauvoir, Foucault, Said and Fanon.

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 Display a knowledge of European philosophy, especially themes regarding human nature and existentialism

MO2 Demonstrate skills in reading philosophical texts and understanding the philosophical arguments they contain

MO3 Think critically about the nature of existence and understandings of the human

MO4 Engage reflectively with philosophical issues from a personal perspective

MO5 Show transferable communication skills developed through the presentation and analysis of philosophical concepts and arguments

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Total = 300

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/332E2BD4-790E-8E1C-CA8C-24F4820E0F76.html?lang=en-US&login=1

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Assessment for this module is as follows:

Component A: 2 portfolios (50% each) typically consisting of 2 identical reflective multi-media journals (one per term) comprising 3 entries each. Each entry will be a maximum of 800 words or a 6 minute recording.

Rationale: The personal journal format combines detailed engagement in the arguments and concepts of philosophical texts with evidence of a capacity for self-reflection and making connections between everyday life and philosophy. It allows students to evidence their gradual development in knowledge and understanding of a topic. The reflective nature adds an element of controlled assessment. The option of different media allows students to demonstrate transferable skills and select formats that suit them. The two assessment points will encourage continuous module engagement and assist in students managing their assessment load, while leaving some flexibility for how they write their journal entries. They also provide multiple feedback opportunities supporting continuous improvement.

In the referral, students will have to submit 1 portfolio (typically a journal comprising 6 entries) instead of 2 portfolios (typically a journal comprising 3 entries).

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

Assessment components:

Portfolio - Component A (First Sit)

Description: Portfolio 1 (first term) - typically a multi-media journal comprising three entries. Each entry will be a maximum of 800 words or a 6 minute recording.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

Portfolio - Component A (First Sit)

Description: Portfolio 2 (second term) - typically a multi-media journal comprising three entries. Each entry will be a maximum of 800 words or a 6 minute recording.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

Portfolio - Component A (Resit)

Description: Resit Portfolio - typically a journal comprising six entries. Each entry will be a maximum of 800 words or a 6 minute recording.

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

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