



## **Module Specification**

### Existentialism and Questions of Human Nature

Version: 2023-24, v2.0, 29 Jun 2023

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## Part 1: Information

**Module title:** Existentialism and Questions of Human Nature

**Module code:** UZRYFC-30-1

**Level:** Level 4

**For implementation from:** 2023-24

**UWE credit rating:** 30

**ECTS credit rating:** 15

**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 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 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.

**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 humans 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?

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

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### **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.

**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](https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/332E2BD4-790E-8E1C-CA8C-24F4820E0F76.html?lang=en-US&login=1) 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:

Two portfolios (50% each) typically consisting of 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.

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

**Assessment tasks:**

**Portfolio (First Sit)**

Description: Portfolio 1 (first term) Typically 3 journal entries

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

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

**Portfolio (First Sit)**

Description: Portfolio 2 (second term) - typically three journal entries.

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

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

**Portfolio (Resit)**

Description: Portfolio 1 (first term) Typically 3 journal entries

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

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

**Portfolio (Resit)**

Description: Portfolio 2 (second term) - typically three journal entries.

Weighting: 50 %

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 {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Philosophy [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Philosophy {Foundation}[Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Philosophy [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Philosophy {Foundation}[Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2022-23