



Module Specification

Capitalism and Ecological Crisis

Version: 2027-28, v1.0, 11 Apr 2025

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Capitalism and Ecological Crisis

Module code: UZRYQ7-30-2

Level: Level 5

For implementation from: 2027-28

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Health, Science & Society

School: CHSS School 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 philosophical concepts for understanding capitalism and, in particular, the relationship between the dominant conception of nature in capitalist societies, and the global ecological crisis.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: This module aims to:

Explore a range of philosophical approaches to thinking about capitalism that may enable us to understand the conditions and characteristics of capitalism in the 21st century.

Explore the relationship between capitalism, the mechanical materialist conception of nature and the ecological crisis

Explore a range of alternative conceptions of nature to that of mechanical materialism, as a basis for understanding life and living systems. In this regard the module emphasises the importance of indigenous and non-European philosophy.

Outline syllabus: The first part of the module will examine a range of themes such as: classical political-economy and the Marxist and post-Marxist critique; ideology and political hegemony in capitalism; structuralist and poststructuralist analysis of capitalism; capitalism and colonialism; neo-liberal capitalism; surveillance/cognitive capitalism; technofeudalism/post-capitalism; neo-reactionary theory; disaster/shock/catastrophe/disruptive capitalism

The module also typically addresses a range of 'crises' that characterise capitalism in the 21st century, and, in particular, in the second part moves on to address the ecological crisis. In this context it explores philosophical themes relevant to the concept of ecology such as: the feminist critique of mechanical materialism; Indigenous philosophies of nature (and their colonial suppression); ecosystems and the living Earth; complexity and self-organisation; process philosophy and panpsychism; deep ecology; extinction.

This second part of the module typically has a particular emphasis on non-European and indigenous philosophy as a potential source of alternative ontologies of nature as a basis for sustainable life.

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 Show a critical knowledge of, and ability to critically assess, a range of thinkers contributing to our current understanding of the ecological crisis

MO2 Show a critical knowledge of, and ability to critically assess, a range of thinkers contributing to our current understanding of capitalism

MO3 Demonstrate an ability to employ philosophical concepts to assess the relationship between capitalism, dominant conceptions of nature, and the ecological crisis

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

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

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

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Summative Assessments:

Assessment Task 1: 2500 word (maximum) essay covering content from term 1 (philosophical approaches to capitalism)

Assessment Task 2: 2500 word (maximum) essay covering content from term 2 (philosophical approaches to nature and the ecological crisis)

Rationale: The module will be assessed by two 2500 word essays. The rationale for this is that the educational aims and learning outcomes clearly state that subject expertise in the two key areas (philosophical approaches to capitalism on the one hand, and philosophical approaches to nature and the ecological crisis on the other) are required. Plagiarism will be dealt with in the normal ways adopted for written assessments.

Assessment tasks:

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: 2500 word (maximum) written assignment

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO2, MO3, MO4

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: 2500 word (maximum) written assignment

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3, MO4

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: 2500 word (maximum) written assignment

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO2, MO3, MO4

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: 2500 word (maximum) written assignment

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3, MO4

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Philosophy {Foundation}[Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Philosophy [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2026-27

Philosophy {Foundation}[Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Philosophy [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2026-27