Module Specification

Ethics, Technology and the Posthuman

Version: 2028-29, v1.0, 11 Apr 2025

Contents

Part 1: Information

Module title: Ethics, Technology and the Posthuman

Module code: UZRYQ9-30-3

Level: Level 6

For implementation from: 2028-29

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: Students will conduct analyses of the fundamental philosophical, ethical, and social problems arising from current and future developments in technology.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: Help students develop the critical tools and conceptual skills necessary to be attentive to the wider ethical, social, and political context surrounding technology.

Allow students to foster critical thinking about the promises and perils of human enhancement, automation, and digital transformation.

To empower students to develop the ability to critically analyze the ethical implications of emerging technologies, including AI, biotechnology, and robotics.

Outline syllabus: This module introduces students to the fundamental philosophical, ethical, and social problems arising from current and future developments in technology.

Some of the philosophical themes that are expected to arise are as follows: the role of ethics in shaping technology and innovation; defining technology and its societal impact; historical perspectives on technology and ethics; responsibility and AI; ethical implications of merging technology with biology; the debate over human augmentation and cyborg ethics; the nature of modern technology; the environmental impact of technological innovation; sentience, autonomy and agency; freedom, control, automation; data and dataism; technology and the problem of progress; posthumanism and the posthuman; what is intelligence?

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 Identify and critically evaluate different ethical questions that arise from our relationships with artificial intelligence and other forms of technology.

MO2 Deploy critical thinking to reflect on the societal and global implications of technological advancements.

MO3 Effectively communicate different philosophical approaches and concerns that arise from our relationships with artificial intelligence and other forms of technology.

MO4 Critically discuss key debates relating to the domain of post-humanism and posthuman ethics.

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 https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/C6044B98-EBE4-E5FA-555D-1C26DAD7E1F2.html?lang=en-GB&login=1

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Summative Assessments:

Assessment Task 1: 3000 word (maximum) essay.

Rationale: The essay will give students the opportunity to provide an in depth analysis of a chosen topic, supported by a range of reading, engaging concretely with interpretations in the literature and in-depth textual analysis. Students will be encouraged to select their topic well in advance of the deadline and discuss their approach with their module leader.

Assessment Task 2: Briefing paper of 3000 words (maximum).

Rationale: The briefing paper is an opportunity to present students with a real-world

problem and challenge them to come up with a fresh and creative solution to a problem or philosophical concern covered in the module. This form of assessment also allows for the possibility for a live brief to be embedded in the module, and for the topic of the briefing paper to be set by the external partner.

The essay provides an opportunity to evidence learning in a traditional format, the briefing paper offers an opportunity to develop this in the context of an assessment that also develops and evidences transferable skills appropriate to the subject matter. Plagiarism will be dealt with in the normal ways adopted for written assessments.

Assessment tasks:

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: Essay

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: Briefing paper

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO2, MO4

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description:

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: Briefing paper

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO2, 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