

PH107-15 Problems in Philosophy and Literature

20/21

Department

Philosophy

Level

Undergraduate Level 1

Module leader

Eileen John

Credit value

15

Module duration

9 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

PH107 - Problems in Philosophy and Literature

Module aims

This module is the 1st-year, jointly taught module that is core for the BA in Philosophy and Literature. It is designed to introduce students to combined study of the two disciplines. We discuss basic conceptions of philosophy and literature and how they relate, and we address four specific topics of importance to this relation (e.g., emotion and reason, belief and unbelief, ethics and aesthetics, poetic language).

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

1. Philosophy and Literature: basic ideas and questions

2. Emotion and Reason

Weeks 2 and 3: J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*

Extracts from:

Aristotle, *Poetics*

Thomas Nagel, 'What is it like to be a bat?'

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

3. Belief and Unbelief

Week 4: Flannery O'Connor, short stories: "A Good Man is Hard to Find"; "Everything That Rises

Must Converge"; the three O'Connor stories are all included in a pdf [here](#)

Week 5: Flannery O'Connor, "A Temple of the Holy Ghost"; "Novelist and Believer"; Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Faith in Man" (1959, trans. 1964)

4. Ethics and Aesthetics

Weeks 7 and 8: Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

Extracts from: Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*

Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*

Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*

5. Poetic Language

Week 9: William Wordsworth, "The Brothers"

Week 10: Martin Heidegger, ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . ."; Friedrich Hölderlin, 'In Lovely Blue'

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand how central themes are addressed in the core texts, and understand how philosophical and literary concerns combine in addressing these themes;
- Articulate their own views on how to interpret and evaluate the achievements of the core texts, showing ability to support claims with textual detail, enter into debate and respond constructively to other points of view;
- Critically analyse and evaluate philosophical and interpretive arguments on central issues in philosophy and literature;
- Recognize the distinctive contributions made by various texts that have combined philosophical and literary significance.

Indicative reading list

(included in syllabus above)

Interdisciplinary

Co-taught across two departments.

Subject specific skills

- Understanding of what it means to bring the disciplines of philosophy and literature together
- Apply philosophical concepts and arguments to literary works and vice versa
- Ability to critically discuss literary and philosophical texts
- Ability to support claims with textual detail, enter into debate and respond constructively to other points of view

Transferable skills

- Close reading, analysis and interpretation of complex texts
 - Ability to discuss complex texts and identify themes
 - Ability to communicate (both oral and written communication)
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour 30 minutes (9%)
Other activity	30 minutes (0%)
Private study	136 hours (91%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Other activity description

Private study

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
2500 word essay	90%		Yes (extension)
500 word essay	10%		Yes (extension)
Close reading exercise			

Assessment group R

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Resit Assignment (2500 words)	100%		Yes (extension)

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback on essays (using standard Philosophy feedback cover-page)

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
- Year 1 of UPHA-VQ52 Undergraduate Philosophy, Literature and Classics

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 1 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 1 of UPHA-V700 Undergraduate Philosophy