

# PH143-15 Existence, Experience, History: Key Topics in Continental Philosophy

**20/21**

**Department**

Philosophy

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 1

**Module leader**

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

9 weeks

**Assessment**

Multiple

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

PH143 - Existence, Experience, History: Key Topics in Continental Philosophy

### Module aims

The aim of the module is to introduce students to key topics in post-Kantian continental philosophy. Texts by central figures in this tradition will be analysed and discussed in relation to specific philosophical problems and themes. These problems and themes include the nature of human existence and experience, the loss of meaning occasioned by the 'death of God', the question of what it means to be free, and the problem of how to understand philosophically such essentially historical concepts as enlightenment and humanism. The work of philosophers who can be studied at honours level, including Foucault, Nietzsche, Sartre, Hegel and Marx, will be introduced.

### 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.

Week 1: Enlightenment as critique (Kant, 'An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"'; Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?'); Week 2: Dialectics of recognition (Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit; Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks); Week 3: Alienation and ideology (Marx, 'From the Paris Notebooks (1844)'; Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'); Week 4: Death of God, nihilism, eternal recurrence (Nietzsche, excerpts from The Gay Science, Beyond Good and Evil, Twilight of the Idols, The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo; Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy); Week 5: The genealogy of morality (Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morality; Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History'); Week 7: Existentialism and humanism (Heidegger, Being and Time, 'Letter on "Humanism"'); Sartre, Existentialism is a Humanism); Week 8: Freedom, oppression, and the other (Sartre, Existentialism is a Humanism; Beauvoir, The Second Sex, The Ethics of Ambiguity); Week 9: Phenomenology of the body (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception; Young, 'Throwing Like a Girl'); Week 10: Ethics and the boundaries of the human (Levinas, Totality and Infinity; Derrida, The Animal That Therefore I Am)

## Learning outcomes

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

- By the end of the module, the students should be familiar with many of the main philosophical approaches and concerns associated with continental philosophy. They should be able to engage in a close, critical reading of key texts in this philosophical tradition, and to present and discuss in an informed way the main ideas and problems presented in these texts.
- ... have a systematic knowledge and understanding of many of the key topics associated with 'continental philosophy' as discussed in some of the classic texts associated with this philosophical tradition. On this basis, the students should also be able to understand how the ideas and arguments they encounter differ and to offer an independent critical assessment of them.
- Key skills: ... to communicate clearly and substantively in speech and in writing on the issues raised by their close reading and critical analysis of relevant texts. They should be able to engage with these texts in a way that appreciates their relevance to wider issues.
- Cognitive skills: ... be able to analyse and critically evaluate the different theories and arguments connected with the topics presented, and to come to an independent assessment of their merits.

## Indicative reading list

Judith Butler, 'What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue' (2001); Samuel Fleischacker, What is Enlightenment? (Routledge, 2013), pp. 11-31; Michel Foucault, 'What is Critique?' In The Politics of Truth, ed. S. Lotringer (Semiotext(e), 2007), pp. 41-50; Susan Buck-Morss, 'Hegel and Haiti,' Critical Inquiry 26:4 (2000), pp. 821-822, 832-849; Phillip Honenberger, "'Le Nègre et Hegel": Fanon on Hegel, Colonialism, and the Dialectics of Recognition,' Human Architecture 5:3 (2007), pp. 153-162; Robert Stern, The Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit (Routledge, 2002), pp. 71-85; Allen Wood, Hegel's Ethical Thought (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 77-93; Banu Bargu, 'Althusser's Materialist Theater: Ideology and Its Aporias,' Differences 26:3 (2015), pp. 86-89, 92-101; Rahel Jaeggi, Alienation,

ed. F. Neuhouser (Columbia University Press, 2014), pp. 3-16, 22-42; Sean Sayers, *Marx and Alienation: Essays on Hegelian Themes* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 78-100; Allen Wood, *Karl Marx*, 2nd edition (Routledge, 2004), pp. 3-60; Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton (Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 5-11; Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (Routledge, 2002), pp. 371-373; John Richardson and Brian Leiter (eds.), *Nietzsche* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 118-149; Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 21-53; Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 121-146; Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, 2nd edition (Routledge, 2015), pp. 133-177; Jesse Prinz, *The Emotional Construction of Morals* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 215-243; Martin Saar, 'Understanding Genealogy: History, Power, and the Self,' *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 2 (2008), pp. 295-314; Gary Cox, *Sartre: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Continuum, 2006), pp. 59-87 and 151-155; Thomas Flynn, *Existentialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 45-80; Michael Inwood, *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 9-30 and 69-78; Richard Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction* (Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 1-7, 85-88, 164-171; Nancy Bauer, *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism* (Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 172-199; Gary Cox, *Sartre: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Continuum, 2006), pp. 91-122; Laura Hengehold and Nancy Bauer (eds.), *A Companion to Simone de Beauvoir* (Wiley Blackwell, 2017), pp. 174-184 and 260-270; Taylor Carman, *Mzerleau-Ponty* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 78-133; Ann Ferguson and Mechthild Nagel (eds.), *Dancing with Iris: The Philosophy of Iris Marion Young* (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 41-51 and 69-78; Komarine Romdenh-Romluc, *The Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Merleau-Ponty and Phenomenology of Perception* (Routledge, 2011), pp. 4-35 and 62-102; Matthew Calarco, 'Deconstruction is not Vegetarianism: Humanism, Subjectivity, and Animal Ethics,' *Continental Philosophy Review* 37:2 (2004), pp. 175-201; Michael Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 59-84; Judith Still, *Derrida and Other Animals: The Boundaries of the Human* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 1-66.

### **Subject specific skills**

(a) The ability to understand the distinctive features and aims of the 'continental' tradition in philosophy. (b) The ability to recognise the different forms taken by certain recurrent topics/concepts (freedom, experience, power, master/slave dialectic, etc.) in different continental philosophers. (c) The ability to pursue independent philosophical research.

### **Transferable skills**

Transferable skills: (a) The ability to communicate information (verbally and in written form) to people both expert and non-expert in the field; (b) The ability to analyse, evaluate, critique and apply complex information gathered from reading, reflection, reasoning or communication. (c) The ability to effectively manage schedules and deadlines.

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## **Study**

## Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	18 sessions of 1 hour (12%)
Seminars	8 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Private study	124 hours (83%)
Total	150 hours

## Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

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

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
1000 word essay	20%	
2500 word essay	80%	

### Assessment group R

	Weighting	Study time
2,500 word essay	100%	

## Feedback on assessment

Feedback on essays will be provided via Tabula, addressing standard areas of evaluation and individual content.

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## Availability

## Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- UIPA-V5L8 Undergraduate Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 1 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 1 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
- Year 1 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 1 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- UPHA-V700 Undergraduate Philosophy
  - Year 1 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 1 of V700 Philosophy
- Year 1 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - Year 1 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 1 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 1 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)

This module is Option list B for:

- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 1 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 1 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 1 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy