

# PH304-30 Textual Studies

**20/21**

**Department**

Philosophy

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Eileen John

**Credit value**

30

**Module duration**

20 weeks

**Assessment**

50% coursework, 50% exam

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

Textual Studies is a core module for 3rd year students on the Philosophy & Literature degree. Students on this degree have one term of joint teaching in their 1st year, and this 3rd year module builds on that work, along with the intervening study in Philosophy and in English, to complete the degree with a full-year, jointly taught module. The core 1st and 2nd year modules on the degree are assumed.

### Module aims

Textual Studies aims to engage students with in-depth inquiry into texts and issues that benefit from combined literary and philosophical study. The module is intellectually and pedagogically central to the Philosophy & Literature BA course. It addresses the literary and philosophical concerns that animate specific works, as well as broad questions about the relations between literary and philosophical practices (e.g., what problems, methods, and values do these practices share? how do they conflict with, complement, and interact with each other?). Students are encouraged in this final year to develop their intellectual independence and to find their own ways of combining the disciplines in their interpretative, critical, and constructive theoretical work. The module is organised around seminar and tutorial meetings: students meet for nine weeks across Terms 1 and 2 for a jointly taught seminar that focuses on three texts. The texts are chosen in general with an eye to their richness as sources for joint study, but also with some of the

following considerations in mind: that as a group they represent different historical periods, different genres and formal modes, and differences in philosophical orientation while sharing thematic links. Students are furthermore required to write one substantial essay on texts and topics they choose for themselves (addressing texts not studied in the seminar). Each student has two tutorials, held with both tutors, to provide supervision on the essay.

## **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.

### Sample syllabus

Core texts: Plato, Phaedrus; Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols; Flannery O'Connor, Complete Stories

#### Term 1

Weeks 1, 2, 3:

Introduction to module, including discussion of independent essay projects

Seminar meetings, with group work and presentations, on the Phaedrus

Themes and problems: displacement and recantation, from city, reason, self, and text; poetic and philosophical status of Socrates' fable; mythical, divine, and monstrous transformation; writing versus speech in relation to rhetoric and truth

Weeks 4, 5, 7 (reading week in Week 6):

Seminar meetings, with group work and presentations, on Twilight of the Idols

Themes and problems: truth, illusion, and will; style and self-creation; needing and rejecting tradition; aphorism, authority and irony; Dionysus and human aspirations in philosophy and art

Weeks 8, 9, 10:

Individual tutorials, held with both tutors, on essay plans

#### Term 2

Weeks 1, 2, 3:

Seminar meetings, with group work and presentations, on O'Connor stories

Themes and problems: irrationality, submission, and faith; transforming powers of violence and of love; normality and fraudulence in relation to self and other; satire, cruelty, indifference, and ethical responsibility

Weeks 7, 8, 9:

Individual tutorials, held with both tutors, on essay drafts

## **Learning outcomes**

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

- Show understanding of central concepts and methods deployed in literary and philosophical inquiry, and understanding of thematic issues linking texts across literary and philosophical traditions
- Express views effectively in speech and writing, communicate and work together well with peers, organise and keep to deadlines on independent work

- Identify central themes and arguments in texts, provide detailed textual support for interpretations, respond critically to arguments and interpretations, and reflect on methodological issues
- Use research skills relevant to both literary and philosophical study, including competent use of library resources (secondary literature, search engines, bibliographies) and management of sources contributing to independent research

## **Indicative reading list**

Core texts with sample of secondary readings drawn on for each

Plato, *Phaedrus*, tr. Christopher Rowe (Penguin Classics, 2005)

Derrida, J. 'Plato's pharmacy', in his *Dissemination*, tr. B. Johnson (Athlone & Chicago, 1981)

Ferrari, G. R. F., *Listening to the Cicadas: A Study of Plato's Phaedrus* (Cambridge UP, 1987)

Nussbaum, M. C., "'This story isn't true": madness, reason and recantation in the *Phaedrus*', in her *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge UP, 1986)

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R. Polt (Hackett, 1997)

Kaufman, W. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton UP, 1974)

Reginster, B. 'The will to power and the ethics of creativity', in *Nietzsche and Morality*, eds. B. Leiter and N. Sinhababu (Oxford UP, 2007)

Warner, M. 'Nietzsche's philosophical hammer', in his *Philosophical Finesse: Studies in the Art of Rational Persuasion* (Clarendon Press, 1989)

Flannery O'Connor, *Complete Stories* (Faber & Faber, 2004)

Bell, V. 'On the critique of secular ethics: an essay with Flannery O'Connor and Hannah Arendt', *Theory, Culture and Society* 22, 2005

Cobb, J. 'Pascal's wager and two modern losers', *Philosophy and Literature* 3, 1979

Humphries, J. 'Proust, Flannery O'Connor, and the aesthetic of violence', in *Flannery O'Connor*, ed. H. Bloom (Chelsea House, 1986)

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## **Interdisciplinary**

This module is taught by two departments: Philosophy, and English and Comparative Literary Studies.

## **Subject specific skills**

Students will:

develop their abilities to understand major works of philosophy and literature

develop their capacity for various aspects of textual analysis: formal, literary, philosophical, etc.

develop an advanced capacity for interpretative reading of difficult material

develop a grasp of the relations and differences between philosophical modes of reading

develop their capacities for independent research and formulating an original project

## **Transferable skills**

students will:

hone their ability to express themselves clearly and concisely

develop their skills of analysis, interpretation, argument and presentation

develop their capacity to understand difficult material

develop their capacity to work alone and in small groups

develop an ability to research, synthesise and summarise

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	18 sessions of 1 hour 30 minutes (9%)
Tutorials	2 sessions of 30 minutes (0%)
Private study	272 hours (91%)
Total	300 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.

### Assessment group C1

	Weighting	Study time
5,000 word essay	50%	
Online Examination	50%	
A 2-hour exam.		

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- Online examination: No Answerbook required

### Feedback on assessment

Students receive detailed written feedback on their essay and individualised feedback on their exam. Students also have an opportunity to submit a 500

[Past exam papers for PH304](#)

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## **Availability**

## **Courses**

This module is Core for:

- Year 3 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
- Year 4 of UPHA-VQ73 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature with Intercalated Year