

PH9F2-20 Research Methods

20/21

Department

Philosophy

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Naomi Eilan

Credit value

20

Module duration

20 weeks

Assessment

80% coursework, 20% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

What is it to do research in philosophy? Among other things, it is to engage in philosophers' particular ways of "doing philosophy", which reflect themselves in particular ways of arguing, writing, and discussing. What is distinctive about philosophy is that right from the earliest Presocratic thinkers up to the present day, this activity of doing philosophy is itself subject to philosophical investigation and reflection. In this module, you will become part of this tradition, by both improving and reflecting on your practice of doing philosophy.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The module aims to improve students' ability to study and reflect on philosophical methods, and develop research skills in preparation for further scholarly research, by engaging with a broad range of philosophical issues that are central to different philosophical traditions. For each seminar, students will have read in advance a philosophical text representative of a distinctive philosophical tradition, approach and methodology. Students will give an oral presentation on the text to initiate guided critical discussion of the reading. During these discussions students will be guided in their reflection upon philosophical methods, research techniques, and the most effective ways of presenting arguments and ideas orally and in writing.

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.

TERM 1

Week 2: Russell on the value of philosophy

Russell, Bertrand (1912) 'The Value of Philosophy' Problems of Philosophy Chapter XV [\[link\]](#) [\[questions\]](#)

Week 4: Strawson on Analytical Philosophy

Strawson, Peter (1992) 'Reduction or Connection? Basic Concepts' Analysis and Metaphysics Chapter 2 [\[link\]](#)

Week 7: Williams on the Relation between Philosophy and Science

Williams, Bernard (2006) 'Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline' in Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline [\[pdf\]](#) [\[link\]](#)

Week 9: Nagel on the Subjective and Objective

Nagel, Thomas (1979) 'Subjective and objective' in Mortal Questions Cambridge University Press [\[pdf\]](#)

TERM 2

Week 2: Stroud on Transcendental Arguments

Stroud, Barry (1968). 'Transcendental arguments'. Journal of Philosophy 65 (9):241-256.[\[link\]](#)

Week 3: Strawson on Free Will

Strawson, Peter (1962). 'Freedom and resentment'. In Strawson Freedom and Resentment and other Essays. [\[link\]](#)

Week 5: Davidson on the physical and the mental

Davidson, Donald (1970). 'Mental Events'. In Davidson Essays on Actions and Events. [\[link\]](#)

Week 7: Anscombe on Moral Philosophy

Anscombe, G. E. M. (1958). 'Modern Moral Philosophy'. Philosophy 33(124): 1- 19. [\[link\]](#)

Week 9: Sorensen on Thought Experiments

Sorensen, Roy (1992). 'Thought Experiments and the Epistemology of Laws'. Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 22: 15- 44. [\[link\]](#)

Learning outcomes

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

- Have a systematic and advanced understanding and knowledge of the texts covered in the module, the main arguments of the texts, and critical responses to those arguments.
- Be able to communicate at an advanced level clearly and substantively in speech and in writing on the questions addressed in the module. They should be able to provide critical analysis of the relevant texts.
- Be able to work autonomously to articulate their own view of the relative merits of arguments, methodologies and positions in the literature, and engage critically with other points of view.
- Be able to demonstrate the skills involved in philosophical discussion, they will have improved abilities to analyse and critically assess complex concepts and arguments. They will

be able to communicate at an advanced level clearly and substantively in speech, as well as in writing, the philosophical arguments and concepts covered in the texts. They will be able to demonstrate sound judgement and initiative in selecting appropriate texts and methods for their investigation of a specifically circumscribed problem and should have acquired an advanced ability to pursue and organize philosophical research using a range of sources (print and electronic media), documenting research carefully, and showing the ability to engage independently in philosophical debate.

Indicative reading list

See outline syllabus

Subject specific skills

By the end of the module students will:

- Have a systematic and advanced understanding and knowledge of the texts covered in the module.
- Be able to communicate at an advanced level clearly and substantively in speech and in writing on the questions addressed in the module.
- Be able to work autonomously to articulate their own view of the relative merits of arguments, methodologies and positions in the literature, and engage critically with other points of view.
- Be able to communicate at an advanced level clearly and substantively in speech, as well as in writing, the philosophical arguments and concepts covered in the texts.

Transferable skills

By the end of the module students will have acquired an advanced ability

- to pursue and organize independent research
 - to understand, analyse and critique complex arguments
 - to use a range of sources (print and electronic media) in documenting research
 - to present the outcome of research in writing
- To present their research orally to audiences, using power point and handouts

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (9%)
Private study	182 hours (91%)
Total	200 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group D

	Weighting	Study time
1st Critical Essay (2500 words) 2500 word essay	40%	
2nd Critical Essay (2500 words) 2500 word essay	40%	
Oral presentation	20%	

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback on essays and presentation transcript in Tabula

[Past exam papers for PH9F2](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of TPHA-V7P2 Postgraduate Taught Continental Philosophy