

# PH370-15 Montaigne's Essays

**22/23**

**Department**

Philosophy

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Johannes Roessler

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

---

## Description

### Introductory description

PH370-15 Montaigne's Essays

### Module aims

The module aims to introduce students to central philosophical arguments and problems in Montaigne's Essays, their historical background, and their historical significance. An ancillary aim is to bring out the rich rewards to be reaped from drawing on the combined resources of Philosophy and History in studying a work like the Essays.

### 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.

Topics to be covered include the literary form of the Essays and its relation to Montaigne's conception of self-knowledge and the self; Montaigne's response to ethical diversity and his views on the authority of ethical beliefs; Montaigne's account of virtues and vices (esp. cruelty and cowardice, and the distinction between public and private virtues); the nature of friendship and its bearing on self-knowledge; Montaigne's political views and political philosophy; the nature of

Montaigne's scepticism and its relation to ancient sceptical traditions, on the one hand, and Descartes' method of doubt, on the other; human nature and the nature of non-human animals; the role Montaigne's response to the reformation and to the French wars of religion plays in his thinking; the role of the New World in Montaigne's thinking.

## Learning outcomes

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

- To allow students to develop an in-depth understanding of some key themes and arguments in Montaigne's Essays.
- To develop an understanding of the role of in the formation of modern theoretical and practical philosophy.
- To make sense of Montaigne's Essays by reference to their historical context.
- To engage critically with some of Montaigne's claims and arguments.

## Indicative reading list

Michel de Montaigne, Essays (tr. by D. Frame)

S. Bakewell, How to Live: A Life of Montaigne in one question and twenty attempts at an answer

M.A. Screech, Montaigne and Melancholy

E. Auerbach, Mimesis, ch. 12

D. Wiggins, Ethics, ch. 11

C. Taylor, Sources of the Self

U. Langer (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne

R. Popkin, The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza

M. Burnyeat (ed.) The Sceptical Tradition

J. Annas and J. Barnes, The Modes of Scepticism

Starobinski, Montaigne in Motion

David Lewis Schaefer, The Political Philosophy of Montaigne

J. Shklar, Ordinary Vices

B. Fontana, Montaigne's Politics: Authority and Governance in the Essais

Donald Frame, Montaigne: A Biography

David Lewis Schaefer, Freedom over Servitude

## Interdisciplinary

Co-taught with History Department.

## Subject specific skills

At the end of this course students will be able to understand Montaigne's approach to, and style of writing about, a number of key issues, including the nature of ethical judgment, virtues and vices, scepticism, toleration, self-knowledge, reasons of state, truth and truthfulness, dying.

## Transferable skills

At the end of this course students will be able to

- interpret complex texts in the light of their cultural/historical contexts
  - think carefully about issues regarding diversity, toleration, and tradition
- 

## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (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.

---

## 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 A4

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
1000 word essay	20%		Yes (extension)
1000 word essay			

Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
-----------	------------	---------------------------------

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

2500 word essay	80%	Yes (extension)
2500 word essay		

Reassessment component is the same

## Feedback on assessment

Individual written feedback will be provided on each of the two assessed essays.

---

## Availability

## Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations
- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 3 of UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
- UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations
  - Year 3 of GV19 Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations
  - Year 4 of GV19 Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 2 of UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy

This module is Option list E for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law