

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
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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 |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1000 word essay | 20% | |
| 1000 word essay | | |
| 2500 word essay | 80% | |
| 2500 word essay | | |

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
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
 - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)

This module is Core option list A for:

- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
 - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
 - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
 - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy

This module is Option list A for:

- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
 - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
 - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
 - Year 3 of GV17 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
- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
 - Year 2 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
 - Year 2 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
 - Year 2 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy

This module is Option list E for:

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