

PH3B1-15 Group Mindedness: Perspectives from Economics, Philosophy and Psychology

23/24

Department

Philosophy

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Richard Moore

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The module introduces students to questions spanning the disciplines of economics, psychology and philosophy and aims to set the three disciplines in interdisciplinary dialogue with each other.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module will consist of a series of lectures exploring issues related to group thinking, the nature of reasoning that characterises group interactions, and the ways in which group thinking can lead to failures of reasoning. There will be a particular emphasis on the ways in which the study of the issues discussed in the course can be informed by interdisciplinary dialogue.

The course material will be organised by reference to two key questions, which will be revisited throughout the course:

How do philosophical issues (e.g. concerning the characterisation of target phenomena) affect the collection and interpretation of data on these topics?

How might issues of the interpretation of data have implications for policy formation?

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.

Group Thinking: EPP Capstone Module

This module consists of a series of lectures on issues related to group thinking, the nature of reasoning that characterises group interactions, and the ways in which group thinking can lead to failures of reasoning. We will consider a range of group-thinking phenomena through the disciplinary lenses of Economics, Philosophy and Psychology, and consider how the issues discussed in the course can be informed by interdisciplinary dialogue.

The course will be cotaught by Richard Moore (Philosophy), an economist (TBC), and Daniel Read (WBS). We will discuss interdisciplinary approaches to a range of group thought phenomena, including the Tragedy of the Commons (our collective tendency to exhaust finite resources through poor management), zero-sum thinking (the tendency to incorrectly frame problems as zero-sum, where one person's gains necessarily imply a loss for others), my-side reasoning biases (the hypothesis that we evaluate evidence in a way that is biased towards our prior beliefs (Stanovich 2021)), dehumanisation (the tendency of members of certain groups characterise out-group members as 'less than human' (Haslam 2006; Livingstone Smith 2012; Over 2021)), and a range of issues in collective decision making, including the need to account for externalities (indirect costs of behaviour) in collective decision making (Schelling 1973).

The psychological phenomena under discussion will be addressed through two key questions, which will be revisited throughout the course:

1. How do philosophical issues (e.g. concerning the characterisation of target phenomena) affect the collection and interpretation of data on these topics?
2. How might issues of the interpretation of data have implications for policy formation?

This lecture series will also include a number of discussion sessions, in which lecturers and students will discuss overlapping ideas in the course materials, and developing connections between the topics of discussion, and the ways in which topics have been researched within and between disciplines.

Learning outcomes

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

- Demonstrate a good understanding of the ways in which a range of phenomena identified as aspects or consequences of group mindedness has been conceptualised in economics, psychology and philosophy.
- Demonstrate a good understanding of the different types of questions about group mindedness that are raised in each of the EPP disciplines.

- Demonstrate a good understanding of how the answers to these different types of questions bear upon one another, and upon issues of policy formation.
- Critically evaluate different theoretical accounts of group mind behaviours across the EPP disciplines.

Indicative reading list

Ashraf, N., Bau, N., Low, C. & McGinn, K. (2020). Negotiating a better future: How interpersonal skills facilitate intergenerational investment. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 135(2): 1095-1151.

Bowles, H. R., Thomason, B., & Bear, J. B. (2019). Reconceptualizing what and how women negotiate for career advancement. *Academy of Management Journal*, 62(6), 1645-1671.

Esses, V.V.M., Dovidio, J.F., Jackson, L.M. & Armstrong, T.L. (2001). The immigration dilemma: The role of perceived group competition, ethnic prejudice, and national identity. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3): 389-412.

Frischmann, B. M., Marciano, A., & Ramello, G. B. (2019). Retrospectives: Tragedy of the commons after 50 years. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 33(4), 211-28.

Haaland, I. & Roth, C. (2020). Labor market concerns and support for immigration. *Journal of Public Economics*, 191: 104256.

Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162(3859): 1243-1248.

Ongis, M. & Davidai, S. (2021). Personal relative deprivation and the belief that economic success is zero-sum. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.

Ostrom, E. (2008). Tragedy of the commons. *The new Palgrave dictionary of economics*.

Ostrom, E. (1999). Coping with tragedies of the commons. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2(1), 493-535.

Over, H. (2021). Seven challenges for the dehumanization hypothesis. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 16(1), 3-13.

Schelling, T. C. (1973). Hockey helmets, concealed weapons, and daylight saving: A study of binary choices with externalities. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 17(3): 381-428.

Sebenius, J. K. (1992). Negotiation analysis: A characterization and review. *Management science*, 38(1), 18-38.

Smith, D. L. (2011). *Less than human: Why we demean, enslave, and exterminate others*. St. Martin's Press.

Stanovich, K.E. (2021). *The bias that divides us: The science and politics of myside thinking*. MIT Press.

Warsitzka, M., Zhang, H., Loschelder, D. D., Majer, J. M., & Trötschel, R. (2022). How cognitive issue bracketing affects interdependent decision-making in negotiations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 99, 104268.

Interdisciplinary

This is an interdisciplinary module that explores issues at the intersection of Economics, Psychology and Philosophy.

Subject specific skills

Students should be able to express themselves using the accurate vocabulary employed within economics, psychology and philosophy, and appreciate the difference as well as connections between debates in the three disciplines. Additionally, they should be able to articulate the ways in which the theoretical issues of conceptualisation and data interpretation addressed in class might bear on policy formation.

Transferable skills

Students should be able to come to their own understanding of the relevant literature, explain key positions and arguments in their own words, and express themselves clearly in both spoken and written words. Students should be able to identify the important claims within readings, understand the structure of arguments, test views for strengths and weaknesses, make pertinent use of examples, and compare the substance of views consistently.

Study

Teaching split

Provider	Weighting
Philosophy	62%
Economics	19%
Warwick Business School	19%

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

Private reading and study of literature on the reading list.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

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

Assessment group D1

	Weighting	Study time
Video Presentation	20%	
A short groupwork film assignment, in which students must make a video discussing policy ideas for addressing one issue discussed in the Capstone module, and illustrating the importance of interdisciplinary research for the design of effective policies		
Online Examination	80%	
Final exam on topics covered in the course. Students will be expected to answer one question from a list of three or four.		
~Platforms - AEP		

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

Assessment group R1

	Weighting	Study time
2 hour Examination	100%	
Final exam on topics covered in the course. Students will be expected to answer one question from a list of three or four.		
~Platforms - AEP		

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

Feedback on assessment

Video projects will be marked and students provided with written feedback on Tabula, in line with the Philosophy department's policies and guidance on giving feedback to students.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- UPHA-L1CA Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
 - Year 3 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
 - Year 3 of L1CC Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway)
 - Year 3 of L1CD Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway)
 - Year 3 of L1CE Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway)
- UPHA-L1CB Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (with Intercalated Year)
 - Year 4 of L1CG Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway) (with Intercalated Year)
 - Year 4 of L1CH Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway) (with Intercalated Year)
 - Year 4 of L1CJ Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway) (with Intercalated Year)
 - Year 4 of L1CB Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (with Intercalated Year)
 - Year 4 of L1CB Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (with Intercalated Year)