

IP903-40 The Good Life: Flourishing and Belonging Within Communities

24/25

Department

Liberal Arts

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

William Rupp

Credit value

40

Module duration

20 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The purpose of this module is to help students understand a wide variety of perspectives around a question that has always been at the very centre of what it means to study the Liberal Arts: what is “the good life” and how can it be explored through the lenses of citizenship, society, belonging, tradition, and rebellion. In particular, this module will give students opportunities to examine the concept of human flourishing within communities across myriad time periods, cultures, and disciplinary perspectives such as: psychology, philosophy, religious studies, sociology, literary studies, history, gender studies, economics, health and epidemiology.

Module aims

The module aims to empower students to understand and reflect on the importance of understanding what it means to live a good life within society and an understanding of broader social structures, along with how these impact on research, community and service modes of work.

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.

The module explores a variety of approaches to the good life as embedded within human communities. Using a combination of case studies, primary sources, and hands-on workshops, it engages with questions such as “What does it mean to truly self-actualise as a human being and can personal development improve our communities?;” “Is engaged citizenship a fundamental aspect of the human experience or a cultural construct?;” “How have different philosophical and religious traditions (such as Aristotelian Ethics and Tibetan Buddhism) defined human flourishing and its relationship to community engagement?;” “Can we ever lead a meaningful life if we withdraw/forsake our responsibilities to each other or to the planet?;”

We then consider theories and ideas of the good life from the perspective of rebellion and opposition. We will ask what constitutes “good” citizenship, and explore radical social and political movements. Using predominantly historical and cultural methods, we will study topics such as civil disobedience, protest, countercultures and alternative ways of living.

In the second term we move towards looking at social structures and how people fit in or do not, and the concept of alienation. We pay particular attention to trying to understand different kinds of social structures.

This social approach also leads us towards a social scientific consideration of how the good life is measured. This final section of the module will consider concepts and measurement of well-being, families, care and caring, social inequality, education, labour and more.

This module will train students in navigating complex interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary questions as they shuttle between “Big Questions” that have been (and continue to be) asked for centuries, and focussed case studies that explore such issues within the complex and often messy world of human society. It aims to not only develop advanced interdisciplinary research skills, but also to help students practice weaving together multiple perspectives and methodologies in order to find a pathway through the material that is meaningful to them and supports their research interests.

Using a student-led Problem-Based Learning approach, students in the module will gain a richly-nuanced perspective on how our society is structured, how that structure shapes individual health, wealth and well-being, and the social contracts that exist therein. Moreover, by confronting some of these Big Questions, they will come to create their own meaningful understanding of what human flourishing and engaged citizenship means for them at this pivotal time of overlapping existential crises in human history. They will achieve this through an exploration of various theoretical frameworks, historical and cultural contexts, practical case studies, quantitative and scientific methods, and hands-on experience. Students will have the opportunity to apply theories, models of practice and research skills from their other core modules to develop their own strategic goals.

The syllabus below provides an indicative overview of what the module may cover:

Section 1:

- Eudaimonia vs. Pietas: The Roots of Human Flourishing and Duty in the Ancient World
- Otium vs. Negotium: Withdrawal from the World and the Duty of a Liberal Artist

- Charity and Love: Good Works and Citizenship In Religious Traditions
- Toppling the Hierarchy of Needs: Self-Actualisation and Transcendence

Section 2:

- Cultural Politics
- “Resist Much, Obey Little”: Civil Disobedience
- The Art of Protest
- Exploring Utopia: Creative Imagination as Activism

Section 3:

- Love and Alienation: Love and Society
- Love and Alienation: Love and Work
- Co-creation and anti-competitiveness: working together
- Alienation case study

Section 4:

- Who counts? And who does not?
- Families, social connections, caring and well-being
- Global Surveys: Who we are, how we live and how do we rank?
- Global to local: Inequalities in health and wealth

Learning outcomes

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

- Compare and contrast different theories of the good life and human flourishing from multiple disciplines and traditions within a global perspective.
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the role of art and culture and how it impacts and shapes modes of citizenship, including the role of rebellion and rebelliousness.
- Critically evaluate issues relating to alienation and its effects in a range of social, historical, political, and intellectual contexts.
- Understand and interpret statistical measures, data sources and scientific approaches to the good life, including global surveys, national studies and contrasting metrics of wealth, health and equality.
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of and ability to apply appropriate research skills in the delivery of assessments.

Indicative reading list

Scott Barry Kaufman. *Transcend: The New Science of Self-Actualisation*.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Virgil. *The Aeneid*.

Craig Kallendorf. *In Praise of Aeneas*.

- Petrarch. *Bucolicum Carmen* (I Tatti Press bilingual edition)
- Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536)
- Miriam Frenkel and Yaacov Lev, eds. *Charity and Giving in Monotheistic Religions* (2009)
- Nicholas Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity: Women, Politics, and the Reform of Poor Relief in Renaissance Italy* (2013)
- Luke Perera, "Bodhicitta and Charity: A Comparison," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 35 (2015):121-146.
- Judith Barad, "The Understanding and Experience of Compassion," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 27 (2007): 11-29.
- Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini, *Utopia, Method, Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*. Peter Lang, 2007.
- T.V. Reed, *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*. University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Timothy Scott Brown, *Sixties Europe*. Cambridge, 2020.
- Mark Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism*. University of Princeton Press, 2011.
- bell hooks. *All About Love*. William Morrow, 2016.
- Richard Gilman-Opalsky. *The Communism of Love*.
- Peter Warr. *Work, Happiness and Unhappiness*. Routledge, 2007.
- J Cylus, P.C. Smith, "The economy of wellbeing: what is it and what are the implications for health?" *BMJ* 2020; 369:1874.
- Richard Horton, "Rediscovering human dignity," *The Lancet*, Volume 364, Issue 9439 (2004): 1081-1085
- Michael Marmot, "Dignity and inequality," *The Lancet*, Volume 364, Issue 9439 (2004): 1019-1021
- David Spiegelhalter, *The art of statistics : learning from data*. London. Pelican, 2019.

Research element

Healey & Jenkins (2009) propose that Research-led-teaching design should consider four discrete opportunities. This module has been designed to include the first three of these opportunities. Research-led learning, where the module syllabus is developed from current research in relevant fields, being based on contemporary and seminal, peer reviewed and other high quality research literature. As such, all knowledge for student engagement will be consciously and specifically chosen for its merits in reference to broader academic understanding.

Research-tutored learning, where students engage actively in discussing high quality, contemporary and seminal research literature. In exploring this module's case studies, and critical discussion around methodology, students will engage with high quality contemporary and seminal academic literature.

Research-orientated learning, where students are actively taught methodological understanding and skills for the independent creation of new knowledge. This module expressly provides students with the practical and conceptual understanding required to carry out well-considered and robustly-designed independent research. Research-based learning, where student use developing methodological skills to create original knowledge of their own. Though students will not use the methodological skills acquired for the independent creation of knowledge in this particular module, successful completion of it will enable them to do so in other master's level modules.

Interdisciplinary

Positive global transformations are widely recognised to require transdisciplinary approaches. This module has been designed according to our signature problem-based, response-focused pedagogy, and as such will draw on transdisciplinary knowledge, pedagogy and methodologies in the design and delivery of learning opportunities. This module is expressly designed to provide students with skills and understanding that can be applied flexibly to a range of disciplinary contexts, while authentic assessment methods will require students to demonstrate transdisciplinary aptitude in tasks that are reflective of the practical application and critical evaluation of research design and implementation. Transdisciplinary aptitude will be explicitly embedded in relevant marking rubrics, as adapted from the standard university scale and descriptors

International

This module is designed with an inherently international approach in mind. As material is taught, students will be encouraged to consider each source from multiple perspectives and a wide variety of voices from both the centre and the margins, multilingual and multicultural approaches, and lenses from multiple cultures and time periods. While the material and approaches will be inherently internationalising, students may choose to focus on their local community, but will do so by being able to contextualise and nuance their approaches in light of various international perspectives.

Subject specific skills

As a transdisciplinary module, all skills associated with it are inherently transferable and are outlined below.

Transferable skills

- Ability to conduct independent and collaborative transdisciplinary research.
- Interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data.
- Critical thinking.
- Project management skills.
- Professional networking and communication skills.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	20 sessions of 2 hours (10%)
Private study	185 hours (46%)
Assessment	175 hours (44%)
Total	400 hours

Private study description

Weekly readings and groupwork tasks

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 A

	Weighting	Study time
Essay	40%	60 hours
Students will write a critical research essay related to one of the themes covered in the course. The topic will be free choice.		
Group Presentation	15%	35 hours
This will be a creative group presentation that explores one "big question" on the topic of the Good Life. Students will have the option of creating a variety of media formats such as a live oral presentation, a video, a podcast, or an H5P interactive text-based video game.		
Final Project	45%	80 hours
Students will have the option to choose from two options for their final project.		
Option A will be a research project and option B will be a community engagement project. The word count will depend on type of assessment chosen.		

Feedback on assessment

Students will be provided with written feedback on Tabula for all assessments and may request oral feedback as well.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of TIPA-LA9Z Postgraduate Taught Community, Engagement and Belonging (MA Sc)
- Year 1 of TIPA-LA9X Postgraduate Taught Community, Engagement and Belonging (PGCert)
- Year 1 of TIPA-LA9Y Postgraduate Taught Community, Engagement and Belonging (PGDip)