

# PH378-15 Philosophical Issues in Behavioural Science: from Individual to Collaborative Action

**24/25**

**Department**

Philosophy

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Stephen Butterfill

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

PH378-15 Acting Together: from Individual to Collaborative Action

### Module aims

To equip students to investigate philosophical issues in behavioural sciences with a focus on acting together; and to introduce them to some research in behavioural sciences in which philosophical issues arise.

### 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.

Acting together is emerging as a major topic in both philosophy and behavioural sciences. Philosophical investigation is indispensable for fully understanding many discoveries in the

behavioural sciences, and for identifying new areas of investigation. Conversely, theories and discoveries in behavioural sciences can inform and constrain philosophical investigation.

Key questions include: When two or more agents act together, in virtue of what can their actions have a collective goal? What is it for agents to act together cooperatively, or to be committed to do so? Are there distinct roles for intention and motor representation in explaining the purposiveness of action? How if it all do motor representations shape experiences of actions, one's own or others'? Are there multiple systems for tracking others' actions, beliefs and other mental states?

## Learning outcomes

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

- Students should be able to understand, accurately report and critically evaluate philosophical accounts of acting together. They should be able to relate these to theories and discoveries in behavioural sciences. Students should also be able to identify philosophical questions arising from such theories and discoveries, and to relate them to current controversies in philosophy.
- Students should be able to pursue and organize philosophical and psychological research using a range of sources (print and electronic media), to critically evaluate reports of experiments and to engage independently in philosophical debate.

## Indicative reading list

Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (2011). *A Cooperative Species: Human Reciprocity and Its Evolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bratman, M. E. (1992). Shared cooperative activity. *Thee Philosophical Review*, 101(2):327–341

Bratman, M. E. (2014). *Shared Agency: A Planning Theory of Acting Together*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Butterfill, S. (2012). Joint action and development. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 62(246):23–47

Davidson, D. (1987). Problems in the explanation of action. In P. Pettit, R. Sylvan, & J. Norman (Eds.), *Metaphysics and Morality: Essays in Honour of J. J. C. Smart* (pp. 35–49). Oxford: Blackwell.

Dickinson, A. (1985). Actions and habits: the development of behavioural autonomy. In L. Weiskrantz (Ed.), *Animal Intelligence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Dickinson, A. & Pérez, O. D. (2018). Actions and Habits: Psychological Issues in Dual-System Theory. In R. Morris, A. Bornstein, & A. Shenhav (Eds.), *Goal-Directed Decision Making* (pp. 1–25). Academic Press.

Jeannerod, M. (2006). *Motor Cognition: What Actions Tell the Self*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Jeffrey, R. C. (1983). *The Logic of Decision*, second edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mandler, M. (2001). A difficult choice in preference theory: Rationality implies completeness or

transitivity but not both. In E. Millgram (Ed.), *Varieties of practical reasoning* (pp. 373–402). Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

von Neumann, J., Morgenstern, O., Rubinstein, A., & Kuhn, H. W. (1953). *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. Princeton, N.J. ; Woodstock: Princeton University Press.

Osborne, M. J. & Rubinstein, A. (1994). *A course in game theory*. MIT press.

Pacherie, E. and Dokic, J. (2006). From mirror neurons to joint actions. *Cognitive Systems Research*, 7 (2-3):101–112.

Rizzolatti, G. and Sinigaglia, C. (2008). *Mirrors in the Brain: How Our Minds Share Actions, Emotions*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Rizzolatti, G. and Sinigaglia, C. (2010). The functional role of the parieto-frontal mirror circuit: interpretations and misinterpretations. *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience*, 11(4):264– 274.

Ross, D. (2018). Game Theory. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 ed.). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.

Roth, A. S. (2010). Shared agency. In Zalta, E. N., editor, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2001 Edition)

Sebanz, N., Bekkering, H., and Knoblich, G. (2006). Joint action: Bodies and mind moving together. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 10(2):70–76.

Sinigaglia, C. and Butterfill, S. A. (2015). On a puzzle about relations between thought, experience and the motoric. *Synthese*, pages 1–14.

Sugden, R. (2000). Team preferences. *Economics and Philosophy*, 16:175–204

Tomasello, M. and Rakoczy, H. (2003). What makes human cognition unique? from individual to shared to collective intentionality. *Mind and Language*, 18(2):121–147

Tversky, A. & Simonson, I. (1993). Context-Dependent Preferences. *Management Science*, 39 (10), 1179–1189.

Velleman, D. (2000). *The Possibility of Practical Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vesper, C., Butterfill, S., Knoblich, G., and Sebanz, N. (2010). A minimal architecture for joint action. *Neural Networks*, 23(8-9):998–1003.

## **Interdisciplinary**

Considers philosophical issues arising in behavioural science. For example, psychological and neuroscientific research on action control is linked to what philosophers call *The Problem of Action* (Frankfurt, 1968); and a connection is made between game theory and theories of shared intention via theories of team reasoning (Sugden, 2000; Bacharach, 2006).

## **Subject specific skills**

Students should be able to pursue and organize philosophical and psychological research using a

range of sources (print and electronic media), to critically evaluate reports of experiments and to engage independently in philosophical debate.

## Transferable skills

Students should be able to communicate clearly and substantively in speech and in writing on the questions addressed in the module.

Students should be able to isolate the important claims within readings, both philosophical and scientific. They should be able to understand a range of experimental methods interpret data presented in tables and charts. They should be able to understand the structure of arguments, test views for strengths and weaknesses, make pertinent use of examples, and compare the substance of views consistently.

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	123 hours (82%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

Reading, seminar preparation.

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## 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
2500 word essay	80%	

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>
1000 word essay	20%	

## **Feedback on assessment**

Feedback on essays will be provided on the coversheet for the essay, addressing standard areas of evaluation and individual content. Feedback on Assessed Exercises will be given through peer review and seminar activities, typically including discussion of drafts; written feedback on Assessed Exercises will not normally be provided.

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## **Availability**

### **Courses**

This module is Core for:

- UPHA-L1CA Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of L1CC Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway)
  - Year 2 of L1CC Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway)
  - Year 2 of L1CD Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway)
  - Year 2 of L1CD Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway)
  - Year 2 of L1CE Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway)
  - Year 2 of L1CE Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway)
  - Year 2 of L1CF Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Tripartite Pathway)
  - Year 2 of L1CF Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Tripartite Pathway)

This module is Optional for:

- UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
  - Year 2 of VL78 Philosophy with Psychology
  - Year 3 of VL78 Philosophy with Psychology
- 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
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy

- Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
- Year 3 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations
- UPHA-V700 Undergraduate Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 3 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 3 of V700 Philosophy
- UIPA-V5L8 Undergraduate Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 2 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 2 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 3 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 3 of V5L8 Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development
- UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 2 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 3 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - Year 2 of all
  - Year 3 of all