

PH9HB-30 The Logic of Life

24/25

Department

Philosophy

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Andrew Cooper

Credit value

30

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module tackles a pressing question in both continental and analytic philosophy: what is the relationship between animality and rationality? Our focus will be on the question's logical character: how does the form of thought specific to human beings, manifest in our practical and epistemic activities, relate to the form of living beings as such? After Descartes, there is a tendency in modern philosophy to separate inner mental life from extended material substance, raising a series of problems regarding the relation of mind and world. Our task will be to trace an alternative, neo-Aristotelian stream in modern philosophy that situates human thought in the animal body. After a brief study of Aristotle's *De Anima*, we examine Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger's distinctive attempts to reanimate Aristotle's notion of living form. We then consider how various thinkers such as Marx, Arendt, and Agamben confront the obstacles that inhibit the form of flourishing distinct to animals like us. Students taking this module for assessment will give a seminar presentation and write an essay on one of the topics covered.

Module aims

To introduce students to neo-Aristotelian accounts of life in modern philosophy.

To explore responses to the problem of mind and world that situate human rationality within the animal body.

To examine the practical and epistemic implications of our thinking about life.

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 will introduce students to the logic of life as a pressing philosophical question spanning continental and analytic philosophy. It combines historical and analytical methods, turning to key texts in the history of modern philosophy to shed new light on contemporary problems. Topics will be based on primary texts, which normally include:

Aristotle, *De Anima*
Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*
Hegel, *The Philosophy of Nature*
Hegel, *The Science of Logic*
Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*
Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*
Arendt, *The Human Condition*
Agamben, *Homo Sacer*

Learning outcomes

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

- contextualise and analyse historical texts
- evaluate the epistemological and ethical implications of our thinking about life
- understand the historical roots of the contemporary problem of mind and world
- critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of alternative accounts of the logic of life

Indicative reading list

Primary texts may include:

Agamben, *Homo Sacer*
Arendt, *The Human Condition*
Aristotle, *De Anima*
Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*
Descartes, *Meditations*
Hegel, *The Philosophy of Nature*
Hegel, *The Science of Logic*
Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*
Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*
Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

Secondary texts may include:

Bernstein, 'Judging Life: From Beauty to Experience, from Kant to Chaim Soutine'
Boyle, 'Essentially Rational Animals'
Cooper, 'Do Functions Explain?'
Ginsborg, *The Normativity of Nature*

Jonas, 'Life, Death, and the Body in the Theory of Being'
Korsgaard, 'Two Kinds of Matter'
Lovelock, 'Gaia: A planetary emergent phenomenon'
MacIntyre, Dependent Rational Animals
McDowell, Mind and World
Nussbaum, Aristotle's De Motu Animalium
Thompson, E., Mind in Life
Thompson, M., Life and Action

Subject specific skills

Close textual reading skills.
Advanced reasoning skills.
Fluency in essay writing.

Transferable skills

Strong presentation skills, verbally and in writing.
Skills in logical and analytical reasoning.
Skills in creative thinking and critical evaluation of ideas and arguments.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (3%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (3%)
Private study	282 hours (94%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

Private study, reading, seminar and essay preparation.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
5000 word essay	100%		Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			

Feedback on assessment

Feedback on essays will be provided on the coversheet for the essay, addressing standard areas of evaluation and individual content.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of TPHA-V7P2 Postgraduate Taught Continental Philosophy

This module is Option list A for:

- TPHA-V7PN Postgraduate Taught Philosophy and the Arts
 - Year 1 of V7PN Philosophy and the Arts
 - Year 2 of V7PN Philosophy and the Arts

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy

This module is Option list E for:

- Year 1 of TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy