

PH3HM-15 Philosophy of Psychiatry & Mental Health

26/27

Department

Philosophy

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Chenwei Nie

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module introduces key philosophical issues in psychiatry and mental health. It consists of two parts. Weeks 1–5 examine philosophical debates surrounding representative symptoms and phenomena. Questions include: Why does a person believe that their partner has been replaced by an imposter, or that they themselves are dead? Is depression a very low mood? Do people choose to be addicted? Must anorexia nervosa involve a misbelief about body weight? In what sense, if any, is there a mutual lack of understanding between autistic and non-autistic people? Building on the studies from the earlier weeks, Weeks 7–10 focus on broader philosophical questions in the field: What makes one condition, but not another, a mental disorder? How are different levels of explanation—biological, computational, and psychological—related to one another? Are individuals with mental disorders necessarily irrational? To what extent are individuals responsible and blameworthy for their mental disorders and behaviours?

Module aims

This module has three principal aims: first, to foster students' understanding of key philosophical issues in psychiatry and mental health and to develop their skills in analysing and critically evaluating philosophical responses to these issues; second, to deepen their understanding of the

mutually illuminating relationship between philosophy and empirical studies and to cultivate their engagement with interdisciplinary methods; and third, to develop their ability to identify and assess the implications of psychiatric conditions for both descriptive and normative theories of the human mind and action. Through participation in the module's lectures and seminars, students will also develop their oral communication skills and their ability to contribute effectively to discussions.

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.

Week 1. Delusion.

Week 2. Depression.

Week 3. Addiction.

Week 4. Anorexia Nervosa.

Week 5. Autism.

Week 6. (Reading Week).

Week 7. What makes one condition, but not another, a mental disorders?.

Week 8. Causation and Explanation in Psychiatry.

Week 9. Rationality and Irrationality.

Week 10. Responsibility and Blame.

Learning outcomes

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

- Have a good understanding of key philosophical issues arising from representative psychiatric conditions and of the broader philosophical questions connected with them.
- Employ key concepts used by philosophers to critically evaluate theories of the human mind and action.
- Apply interdisciplinary methods to the investigation of other normal and abnormal human conditions.

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Interdisciplinary

In addition to the philosophical literature, the module draws on and critically examines work in psychiatry and mental health, as well as relevant work from other disciplines, including psychology

and cognitive science.

International

The philosophical questions examined in this module, along with the related clinical and ethical issues, arise across cultures and national contexts, and the module draws on scholarship, case studies, and debates from a range of global perspectives.

Subject specific skills

Students should be able to communicate clearly and accurately using philosophical language, identify and analyse philosophical questions arising from mental health and psychiatric conditions, and participate independently in philosophical debate.

Transferable skills

- (i) The capacity to read complex material effectively and critically.
 - (ii) The capacity to explain ideas and arguments clearly, briefly and accurately.
 - (iii) The capacity to think about problems by deploying the capacity for clear thinking and reasoning
 - (iv) The capacity to communicate effectively in a group environment.
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Study

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 study and reading

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	Eligible for self-certification
Class participation	20%		Yes (waive)
Seminar participation including oral communication and contribution to discussion.			
2500 word essay	80%		Yes (extension)

Assessment group R

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
3000 word essay	100%		Yes (extension)

Feedback on assessment

Essays will be returned 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 Optional for:

- UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
 - Year 2 of V1V5 History and Philosophy
 - Year 3 of V1V5 History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)
- Year 4 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations
- 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
- Year 4 of UIPA-V5L9 Undergraduate Philosophy and Global Sustainable Development (with Intercalated Year)
- Any PH programme