Nottingham Trent University
Module Specification

	Basic module information	
1	Module Title:	Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy
2	Module Code:	PHIL20107
3	Credit Points:	20
4	Duration:	Half Year
5	School:	Arts and Humanities
6	Campus:	Clifton
7	Date this version first approved to run:	October 2013

8	**Pre, post and co-requisites:**

These are modules that you must have studied previously in order to take this module, or

modules that you must study simultaneously or in a subsequent academic session

Pre, Co, Post	Module Code	Module Title
Normally PHIL 101		

9	**Courses containing the module**				
Level	Core/Option	Mode	Code	Course Title	
		FT	HUMA008	BA (H) Communication & Society and Philosophy	
		FT	HUMA016	BA (H) English and Philosophy	
		FT	HUMA023	BA (H) European Studies and Philosophy	
		FT	HUMA028	BA (H) Film & TV and Philosophy	
		FT	HUMA033	BA (H) Global Studies and Philosophy	
		FT	HUMA038	BA (H) History and Philosophy	
		FT	HUMA042	BA (H) Linguistics and Philosophy	
		FT	HUMA045	BA (H) Philosophy and International Relations	
		SW	MODL014	BA (H) French and Philosophy	
		SW	MODL027	BA (H) German and Philosophy	
		SW	MODL039	BA (H) Italian and Philosophy	
		SW	MODL058	BA (H) Spanish and Philosophy	
		FT	EURX001	European Exchange (First Half Year)	
		FT	EURX002	European Exchange (Second Half Year)	

FT	EURX003	European Exchange (Full Year)
FT	INTX001	International Exchange (First Half Year)
FT	INTX002	International Exchange (Second Half Year)
FT	INTX003	International Exchange (Full Year)

| 10 | **Overview and aims** |

This module will introduce you to the ideas of the key thinkers that have helped to shape contemporary philosophy. The module will engage with these ideas in order to examine two issues that dominated philosophy in 20th century.

1. The nature and significance of 'meaning' and the question of how to live a 'meaningful life'.
2. The broader question of the nature of being and existence, especially when confronted with the emergence of science and technology as a significant shaper of modern life.

Specific ideas and themes covered will include: the philosophical significance of Darwin's theory of evolution, Nietzsche and 'the death of God', Husserl and phenomenology, Heidegger on the authentic life and a variety of contemporary philosophers on the nature of 'understanding'. These issues will be addressed via an examination of the work of philosophers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Kristeva and Butler as well as more recent work on the nature of language by British and American analytic philosophers.

At the end of the module, you should know why these questions dominated the work of philosophers in the 20th century and the extent that they remain central to any attempt to understand the nature of modern life in the 21st century.

| 11 | **Module content** |

The module will typically consist of three sections:

Section 1 – Existentialism and Phenomenology

The aftermath of Darwinism, Nietzsche, nihilism and the 'death of God'. Meaning and the nature of consciousness. The problem of intentionality. Meaning and the problematic of temporality. The phenomenological reduction. Heidegger's

appropriation of Husserl in Being and Time. The question of being, Dasein, authenticity, fallenness, the always and already, mood and care. The later Heidegger and the historico-ontological turn in phenomenology. Technology and nihilism. This section will also look at the ethical and political dimensions of phenomenology and existentialism in relation to autonomy, freedom and feminism.

Section 2 – Post-Structuralism

This section will present the ideas of contemporary philosophy in the latter part of the 20th Century up to the present day. Post-structuralism and the critique of traditional modes of philosophising. Identity and difference. Language and signification. Knowledge as relational. Power and knowledge. Ethics, Responsibility and difference. Interpretation and Hermeneutics. Ethics after totalitarianism. Contemporary political issues.

Section 3 – Meaning and the Philosophical Problem of Language

The question of meaning in Frege and Russell. Logicism and Psychologism. The distinction between sense and reference. Logic, sense and nonsense. Meaning, verification and science – the ideas of the Vienna Circle. The Analytic-Continental divide. 20th century empiricism: the analytic and the synthetic; necessity and possibility. The idea of possible worlds. The work of Quine, Kripke and Rorty.

12	**Indicative reading**
	Ayer, A.J. (1980) *Language, Truth and Logic*
	Carrol, J. (1995) *Humanism: The Wreck of Western Culture*
	Grondin, J. (2004) *The Philosophy of Gadamer*
	Freud, S. (1985) *Civilisation and Discontents and Other Works*
	Kripke, S (1984) *Naming and Necessity*
	Sartre, J.P. *Existentialism and Humanism*

13	**Learning outcomes**
	Learning outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of the module
	Knowledge and understanding. After studying this module you should be able to:

Assess the significance of the analytic theories of linguistic meaning

Understand hermeneutic theories of the relationship between language, thought and history.

Show a familiarity with arguments in the field of logic and the philosophy of language , broadly understood

Assess the significance of the writings of some of the major classical and modern philosophers

Apply techniques of philosophical reasoning and analysis

Synthesise the ideas of opposing philosophical positions

Articulate an understanding of the key arguments in the history of modern western philosophy

Apply doctrines from the history of philosophy in order make sense of contemporary philosophical debates

Demonstrate competence in a broad range of philosophical techniques – such as detecting fallacious reasoning, rhetorical excess and superficial and vague thinking

Assess the virtues and the limitations of other disciplines whilst being sensitive and empathic to a variety of opinions, practices and ways of life.

Skills, qualities and attributes. After studying this module you should be able to:

Articulate an awareness of how generalisations can be supported or weakened by detailed discussion

Understand the sense and significance of philosophical terminology

Engage in debate about philosophical issues without recourse to insult or susceptibility to take offence.

Manage your time and organise your work effectively

Identify the key assumptions underlying contemporary philosophical and other intellectual debates (B)

Describe the contemporary significance of philosophical problems and the arguments for and against their solution

Read carefully and interpret texts drawn from a variety of ages and/or traditions with sensitivity to context (B)

Evaluate the success of standard arguments (B)

Consider unfamiliar ideas and ways of thinking, and to examine critically pre-suppositions and methods within the discipline itself (B).

Think clearly and coherently

Appreciate what it means to 'live a good life' in contemporary social and political contexts

Be ready to review information with an open mind and a willingness to change one's mind when appropriate

Work in a flexible and adaptable manner

Apply the skills your have acquired and to recognise their relevance in today's labour market

Identify textually based arguments and subject their structure and implications to rigorous assessment

14	**Teaching and learning**
	Range of modes of direct contact
	This indicates the range of direct contact teaching and learning methods used on this module,
	e.g. lectures, seminars
	Lectures
	Seminars
	Total contact hours: 39
	Range of other learning methods
	This indicates the range of other teaching and learning methods used on this module, e.g.
	directed reading, research
	Total non-contact hours: 161

15	**Assessment methods**
	This indicates the type and weighting of assessment elements in the module
	<u>Element</u> <u>Weighting</u> <u>Type</u> <u>Description</u>

number	
100%	Seen Exam

Diagnostic/formative assessment

This indicates if there are any assessments that do not contribute directly to the final module

mark

Tutorial meetings to discuss topics covered during the module, assessment and development of work.

Seminar discussions with informal formative feedback where appropriate

Further information on assessment

This section provides further information on the module's assessment where appropriate

	Document management		
16	Module Title:	Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy	
17	Module Code:	PHIL 20107	
18	Subject (JACS) Code	V500	
19	Cost Centre	141	
20	School:	AAH	
21	Academic Team	ECM	
22	Campus	2 (Clifton)	
23	Other institutions providing teaching	*Please complete in box 23 a-d - if applicable*	
		Institution	%
23a	Other UK Higher Education or Further Education Institution- Please name Percentage not taught by NTU		
23b	Other public organisation in the UK- Percentage not taught by NTU		
23c	Other private organisation in the UK - Percentage not taught by NTU		
23d	Any other Non-UK organisation -		

	Percentage not taught by NTU	
24	Date this version was formally approved by SASQC/DAG:	