Student-led curriculum design in joint degrees

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Content

Preface

In the classroom, students' and academics' interests are not always aligned. Students have many priorities beyond their studies. Academics, too, must balance their teaching and research obligations. In more conflictual cases, students may demand a change to disciplinary canons that reflect a lack of diversity, posing a perceived threat to academics who have built careers around these canons. Our experience in student-led curriculum design has convinced us that although these conflicts can be real, they are also largely avoidable through discourse about the interests and aims of both students and teachers.

Students and teachers share an interest in studying interesting topics that reflect and help them make sense of their world. Though they may each be enthused by different topics, this shared interest provides a point on which a rewarding and innovative class can be built. Co-creation helped us see where important concepts could be illustrated through topics students found interesting. It also opened our eyes to new topics and issues we wouldn't have previously considered for the module. Although both of us had experience designing and teaching interdisciplinary modules for advanced undergraduates, we couldn't have designed a module that was as cohesive, innovative, and exciting in both its content and assessment without extensive student-led input. Less than 10% of the core readings and only a handful of the general topics were suggested by academics. The assessment methods differ from any we have used in previous modules.

Yet, the final design of the module also reflects our, and our colleagues', years of experience teaching university students. By explaining differences in the quality of source material, discussing the effect of different forms of assessment on student learning, and sharing our thoughts about how different topics might flow into and re-enforce others, we too helped shape the module. But our contributions were primarily informed by pedagogical theory and not by views about the module's particular topical content. What has emerged is a module with balanced, diverse, and timely content, that uses assessment activities students are enthusiastic about. In short, at its core, this module was created by students, for students, while managing to be one we are extremely excited and motivated to teach.

1 Context

This handbook offers guidance to university educators who intend to co-create interdisciplinary modules for joint degrees. It builds on insights from the project "student-led curriculum design in joint degrees", which was funded by Warwick International Higher Education Academy (WIHEA). In this project, students and staff re-designed the optional module 'PPE: Interdisciplinary Topics', which is offered to intermediate and final year students on the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) undergraduate degree course at the University of Warwick. While PPE students are typically trained in the Philosophy, Politics and International Studies, and Economics separately, the course also aims to bridge the disciplines through several interdisciplinary modules. Concretely, in their final year, students choose two modules which bridge two disciplines each[1]. Even though the intermediary-level 'PPE: Interdisciplinary Topics' module previously followed the structure of other PPE modules, in which different topics were discussed from different disciplinary perspectives separately[2], we wanted to create an interdisciplinary module in which the three disciplines are integrated in each week. Following the research interests of the module leader, we decided to focus the module on 'the PPE of food' as an overarching topic.

For this project, we recruited eight PPE student co-creators who were divided into two groups. Four students, as well as the two project leaders formed the Curriculum Group which proposed the module's curriculum, including weekly topics, readings, potential guest lecturers, and assessments. The remaining four students, as well as the two project co-leads, the PPE Director of Student Experience and Progression, and one member of academic staff from each of the three PPE disciplines formed the Directors Group. This group provided feedback on the proposals, added their own ideas, and made final decisions.

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[1] Philosophy & Politics, Politics & Economics, Economics & Philosophy.
[2] For example, one week on economic perspectives on inequality, one week on political science perspectives on inequality.

	Curriculum Group	Directors Group
Composition	Four students (3 first-year, 1 finalist) Two members of staff • Project co-leads, simultaneously module director and Director of PPE	Four students (2 first-year, 2 finalist) Six members of staff • Project co-leads • One member of academic staff from each of the three PPE departments (Philosophy, Politics, Economics) • PPE Director of Student Experience and Progression
Function	Propose the design of the curriculum (structure, topics, reading list, assessments, guest lectures)	Provide feedback on the Curriculum Group proposals, suggest counterproposals to the Curriculum Group, final decision-making instance

We created this second group as an instance of blind review to elicit pedagogic feedback from staff and students. The inclusion of academic staff from all three constituent departments also ensured that all three disciplines were appropriately incorporated into the module. The inclusion of several staff members further meant that there was a broad experience with different institutional requirements, which eased the module approval process.

The two groups met separately throughout the project's duration, except for a final meeting in which students from both groups brainstormed lecture and seminar activities and discussed the module's online platform. Moreover, students in both groups were encouraged to engage in independent research, with most independent research time allocated to the Curriculum Group's identification of module readings. Beyond engagement with the two groups, the project leaders convened individually with other members of the university to ensure that our ideas would be in line with institutional requirements. They also discussed specific ideas for which there was little experience in either group (e.g., student peer review) with other staff members who had implemented these practices previously, and beyond this consulted the pedagogic literature.

After the syllabus was finalised, the project co-leads carried out one-hour interviews with six student co-creators, the insights of which are incorporated into this handbook. Students were paid for their participation in meetings, interviews, and independent study through temporary

worker contracts (Unitemps), to which most of the project funds were allocated. The project timeline is provided in Annex A and a syllabus in Annex B.

This handbook is intended to draw from the project's experiences to provide guidance for future co-creation activities for interdisciplinary modules in joint degrees. It first elaborates the value of interdisciplinary modules for joint degrees and broader benefits of co-creation activities before discussing the project's challenges. While observations mirror those by other co-creation projects, certain aspects arose specifically due to the interdisciplinary nature of the module. The handbook then provides guidance on different stages of the co-creation process, especially recruitment, syllabus decisions, and student-staff interaction. Finally, the document outlines some possible avenues for increasing students' understanding of and involvement in module design short of a full co-creation project.

2 Reasons for implementing a co-creation project for interdisciplinary joint degree modules

Interdisciplinarity has attracted a curious mix of attention and disregard. On the one hand, interdisciplinary research and teaching are seemingly encouraged by university strategies. On the other hand, truly interdisciplinary research and teaching are constrained by limited funding opportunities, few prestigious interdisciplinary journals and available reviewers, and teaching which is organised according to disciplinary boundaries in university departments.

This creates challenges for joint degrees. Students in these degrees often study the disciplines separately, rather than thoroughly bridging the insights offered by each discipline in interdisciplinary study. This may contrast with students' expectations of their course, as they may be particularly interested in how 'their' disciplines can interact to address pressing problems in the world:

> "One thing I've realised [...] is my learning in the first year is more about developing the foundations of the three different disciplines [...] separately. So, I haven't really experienced how they connect with each other, so I've kind of made my own connections. [...] I think it's really different in that this module allows students to make that connection across these different disciplines" (ID 1).

While it is vital that students develop disciplinary foundations, interdisciplinary modules which explicitly connect the constituent disciplines of a joint degree therefore offer several advantages. First, they may enhance student experience, as they meet students' expectations for interdisciplinary learning. Even though students may choose interdisciplinary modules offered in one of the three constituent departments especially in the fields of Political

Economy and Political Philosophy, several students highlighted that they expected more explicitly interdisciplinary 'PPE modules' as part of their joint degree.

> "I feel there should be interdisciplinarity throughout the degree […] especially for core modules, because you expect that when you are applying for an interdisciplinary degree" (ID 2).

Second, these modules allow students to utilise insights they gained in introductory modules in each discipline to solve interdisciplinary problems. Many first- and second-year modules introduce core skills, but students often find it difficult to identify that or how they should apply this knowledge in other modules or after graduation. Students in our interviews argued that this would be clearer through interdisciplinary modules such as the one they co-created.

> "If you do either Metrics 1 or Applied Metrics, and you're learning […] how regressions work and then you read one of the more econ papers, you're like 'oh my god, this is the stuff I'm learning here in practice!'. Or similarly, for […] ethics and applied ethics, and then we get the week on vegetarianism […] you're going to feel like your learning is being used again." (ID 7).

Third, interdisciplinary modules may allow for the discussion of what students perceive as 'real world issues', which students in our interviews contrasted with the more theoretical insights from their disciplinary modules. In turn, students advocated for additional interdisciplinary PPE modules, including in earlier years.

> "I think that's what most students are looking for. Of course, knowing theory in three separate disciplines is important as well. But I think what drives most students together is the interdisciplinary aspect of it. So, I think if we had that element in each year a little bit, it helps students be motivated" (ID 3).

> "This is the kind of module that I signed up to uni for. […] I think that this kind of module is what PPE should be about, and especially doing PPE here. […] we talk a lot about it being interdisciplinary. It's more than just […] three pillars. But it feels like you save a lot of that conversation for final year, so dragging that back down to second year is really important. […]" (ID 7).

Typically, interdisciplinary modules are expected to require foundational knowledge in several disciplines and bear risks that students may feel overwhelmed. However, Usherwood discussed the question of when students should be introduced to difficult aspects of their degrees. He proposes introducing these from the first year, as it may allow for an earlier transition into critical and reflective thinking (Usherwood 2022). Indeed, exposing students to interdisciplinary thinking early may ease the anxieties many students experience when approaching their PPE modules in final year. In these modules, students often worry about combining insights from different disciplines for their assessments. Introducing an interdisciplinary module in their first year could acclimate students to this work in a low-stakes environment, as their first-year module marks do not affect their final degree classification in this programme.

Beyond the value of creating further interdisciplinary modules for joint degree courses, we also identified several broader benefits for the students and staff involved in the project. In interviews, student co-creators identified several benefits of the project for their own academic and personal development. One main benefit identified by students was feeling that their opinions were heard and feeding back into the programme. Students also saw participating in the project as one way to voice feedback on previous modules or other learning activities they had experienced at university. The project was evaluated positively especially compared to standard module feedback forms.

> "I feel like this module definitely set a good precedent for student involvement, and I wish that more modules did that […] I know there is […] feedback for every module at the end of each term […] but I feel like it's a bit limiting […] And I don't know if my feedback ever had an impact. […] I believe that for this […] specific module it will because I see my professors' engagement with it, but I don't know if other modules will be the same" (ID 2).

Students also valued experiencing the implementation of their input and compared this experience to other student-staff forums such as the Student Staff Liaison Committee (ID 1). Connectedly, students were asked to reflect on whether the project made them re-evaluate the **relationship between students and staff**, and all interviewees confirmed that the project had a positive impact, as illustrated by the following quotes:

> "It's not fair but I think sometimes it feels like […] staff are pitted against students […]. It's really nice just to have a space in the co-creation group and it's like 'staff do want the best for you and do want you to learn well and they do want it to be more creative […] because learning is an enjoyable and interesting experience rather than just […] something that you paid for'" (ID 7).

> "You guys have the same excitement, the same passion for certain projects, but a lot of times […] what you want to just show us may not be in line with what a university is supposed teach and show us and I think, and I think that is when students come to the realisation that the teacher is a lot more exciting than what they've actually seen. […] it starts to erase the divide […] she or he [… is] not just a teacher, lecturer. She or he is also another person that has their own interest and excitement and, and I think sometimes as students we really fail to realise and acknowledge that" (ID 4).

At the same time, one interviewee asserted that this made them reflect more negatively on previous learning experiences:

> "I feel like this project was my first opportunity of actual dialogue with a teacher that is not just one-sided, just asking for information, receiving the information […] Definitely between us and the staff that we worked with, that was definitely a positive experience, but it put into perspective how, I guess, we're being approached and are treated from other members of staff who, I don't want to overstep, but some seem to ignore us until […] we come to office hours or just the module is too big to be controlled by only the individuals that are there" (ID 2).

The ability to shape the module was also associated with feelings of pride, confidence, fulfilment, and growth both in creating the module and the broader model for interdisciplinary modules. One student particularly contrasted this with their earlier experiences as a student during the coronavirus pandemic.

> "[…] in a more general sense, I think confidence. Because before, and it was already getting better the third year, but I think this really helped push it above and beyond, […] because of COVID as well, I didn't really always feel that comfortable speaking to professors because at advice and feedback I suppose it's not always the best time because you got like 10-15 minutes […]. Whereas here, I think I really got to know, you know, people doing […] these module designs together and be able to speak up and voice my mind. I think that was a hugely important skill, like, not just in academia but in […] work and life in general" (ID 5).

In the interviews, we as project leaders also recognised that students had developed reflective skills. Frequently, they noted the need for further research before offering opinions, listed the advantages and disadvantages of their recommendations, or qualified their thoughts. To illustrate, students often mentioned that the quality of the module they had designed can only be ascertained after the module had already been implemented and student feedback collected.

Students also reported that the project not only helped them develop social skills, but also created feelings of community, connection to other students and to the university as a whole.

> "I think it's a positive experience because you find people with common interests […] through the academic aspect of work. Maybe through societies and other means […] we can interact with each other better, but I feel like through our modules we weren't pushed […] to interact as much. And I feel like this module changes that as well" (ID 2).

> "I think it helped me be more involved with the university if that makes sense. When I kind of felt like I had some sort of contribution to something that was significant in the university. So maybe appreciate being there a little more because I felt like I was doing something that was outside of my everyday studying but still significant" (ID 3).

One student argued also that this would also help them feel more connected to the university as an alumnus:

> "I think it makes me feel like a student that's like giving back to something that's continuing. […] It's like as an [alumnus], I fed back and influenced something that current students will be participating in […] We become one big cohort again by becoming more engaged at these intervals and that's quite nice" (ID 7).

Students also frequently discussed that the project helped them develop a wide range of **skills**. This includes primarily the development of academic skills such as literature search, which several students argued would be helpful for their future academic development.

> "I feel more prepared to carry on in the second, third year and to also graduate because I know that I have this sort of basic working knowledge" (ID 4).

Beyond academic skills, students highlighted their development of other employability skills. One skill several students identified was time management. Students expressed that this was often combined with their development of teamwork skills:

> "the difficulty that I've had is trying to coordinate in a group setting because in a group you have the issue of […] you're more likely to think that the onus is less on yourself and you externalise some of that. […] And it's important to be cognizant of that and really step up and offer your help. And I think that's something that […] everyone in the group did. Everyone in the group did offer to cover for each other

and step in if needed […]. So, I think the growth was not so personal, but more about how to deal with time management and deadlines in a group setting" (ID 1).

Two student co-creators are considering academia or teaching as career options and noted this project helped them develop relevant skills as well as a better understanding of this field of work, and one co-creator argued that the project made them consider expanding their academic activities, which they also contrasted with previous experiences at the university.

"I think I gained a lot of insight in terms of how these things work and I hadn't really thought about if I'd be interesting in being on this side of academia […]. But given this opportunity, I really realised that's something that I like to do and to be involved in ore academia like that […] Because the general route is just supposed to be something to do with corporate, and that was in your head before […] I don't think the academic opportunities are preached as much as the corporate wants, because that's what you're kind of supposed to do. So maybe there needs to be a better balance […] Maybe the university should come up with more ways that academia can be embedded in degrees like that" (ID 3).

As suggested by the wider co-creation literature, student co-creators reported that they better **understood module design considerations** as well as university procedures. This is reflected in the following answer to the question about whether the student felt like they gained anything during the project.

"I think understanding […] why what we learn is important and what how we learn is important. And I think I have a new appreciation for […] what university is supposed to give you and how it works and the academic space […]. A lot of the time it can feel like as a student, you're just kind of dropped into this […] academic ocean. And you hear that certain academic things are important, and that academia as a whole is important. But at the same time, you're just a person that's left sixth form college and enjoying university, and you have all of these other interests in life. And it can feel a bit […] out there, kind of like a religion, I guess, but making academia more real and like 'we do research this way and research structures are important for this reason and we do readings like this because of this'. And unpacking it like 'why do we learn this way?' has been very nurturing." (ID 7).

When probed about which parts of the process the project helped them understand better, students discussed a wide range of aspects, including institutional constraints (e.g., workload allocations, reasonable adjustments), understanding how module structures are determined, mapping module goals, as well as the importance of academic journals in teaching and research. They also frequently mentioned that they now better understood assessment design choices. Student co-creators also argued that this project would help them in the selection and understanding of future modules.

Next to the benefits for students, the project also implied several benefits for staff. First, the module director could draw significantly from the ideas proposed by the two groups, including for the reading list, which resulted in the inclusion of topics and texts that venture off the beaten track of similar food modules. All staff members involved in the project said that they benefitted from the meetings with other members of staff and students as a way to reflect on and develop their own teaching practice further. This and similar projects may also elicit other

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tangible benefits. For instance, they may serve as the starting point for future research and can be used as examples of professional practice for professional qualifications such as those awarded by the Higher Education Academy in the United Kingdom. Thus, next to students' personal development, future projects may also want to consider the possible benefits for their own progression.

3 Challenges to anticipate when designing a co-creation project for interdisciplinary joint degree modules

Turning to the challenges of the project, the challenge most frequently mentioned by student co-creators was **interdisciplinarity**, especially as we aimed to include insights from all three disciplines in each week.

> "Say if it was a regular module […] it would be nowhere near as complex as what we were having to talk about and think about because it's not only 'are you giving enough weightage to each and every discipline?' and appropriately considering that different perspectives and angle that come about but also 'how are you merging it together in a way that students don't get confused?'. Because I think […] at UK universities, we're generally very exposed to thinking within the tunnel of your own discipline, so trying to get students out of that was definitely a challenge" (ID 1).

This challenge was particularly prominent when discussing the module's weekly topics and designing the reading list. To illustrate, the topics and especially the reading list the Curriculum Group had originally proposed were criticised in the Directors Group for not sufficiently including insights from all three disciplines, meaning that the Curriculum Group had to significantly re-work the reading list. This implied significant additional work for students, who had been encouraged to identify readings with limited a priori guidance from staff members, as discussed in section 4.4. However, students viewed this process as an opportunity to learn, which also indicates the benefit of including a feedback group in similar projects.

> "I think that was a very challenging period […] the first time going through the reading list were like 'no, no, no […] - okay, what's next?' […] but I think that was a very interesting process, because once you get that first week, then the reading list sort of started to fall into place very easily. Now we […] also knew what to look for and [it] became easier and easier to find papers" (ID 4).

Interestingly, the challenges students described mirror those typically discussed in the literature on interdisciplinary research and teaching, for instance that fewer interdisciplinary texts are published in academic journals, or the different epistemologies and methodologies applied by the three PPE disciplines.

> "I understand the difficulty of my degree even existing […] considering the limitations that are placed on what is interdisciplinarity […] finding sources that are actually interdisciplinary. Also understanding that each discipline has completely different measures and instruments to […] confer information to students. […] how difficult it is to actually publish something that is interdisciplinary. I feel like having

interdisciplinary modules are […] a first step of pushing for a more interdisciplinary academia in general, if I'm being optimistic" (ID 2).

"I think, firstly [the main challenge of the project was] the interdisciplinary aspect because you can make it quite multidisciplinary […] but to be able to combine it together as one […] big narrative of PPE of food, I think that was challenging because especially when I was looking for papers, everything's kind of just specialised into their own niche" (ID 5).

Students were also surprisingly aware of the distinction between multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. One final year PPE module briefly discusses this distinction in its introductory lecture, but we were surprised at how central this distinction was to students' considerations, especially as it was not something that we intentionally promoted in the meetings.

"the intent of the module creation process was in creating an interdisciplinary module that bridges these three disciplines rather than just multidisciplinary" (ID 1).

Overall, the challenges associated with designing an interdisciplinary module were productive rather than constituting a problem to be solved. Interdisciplinarity, as mentioned above, improved student learning. It was also seen as valuable unique selling point of the module, and as something that PPE students were looking for in their degree.

"It would have been so easy for this to become 'one week we're looking at […] the economics of meat consumption, and then the next week we're going to do the ethics of should we eat meat and then the week after that, we're going to be doing what are the policies around meat consumption?' and […] that's not how we're going to do it, we're going to make sure it's really joined throughout every single week and everything that you read. Because I think that's why you sign up to PPE as well […] you sign up to PPE because you see issues in the world like climate change, like poverty […] and you go 'there are many lenses here, how can I unpack this issue through all of those lenses and answer all of the questions so that I understand better?' And having a structure where every single week a student has an interdisciplinary approach was probably the biggest challenge for us but also the most rewarding part" (ID 7).

A second major challenge student co-creators identified were **perceived knowledge differences** between students as well as between students and staff. First, when asked what they thought determined how well students could contribute, many students identified the differences in knowledge and experience between first- and third-year students in the project.

"I think the only area which probably influences students' comfort […] is probably their year. Because [third-year student] had a lot more valuable inputs to share than any of us first-years could have brought to the table" (ID 1).

"I think there is definitely a difference between third-years and first-years not in that […] one group […] finds it harder to speak, but I suppose as a first-year there is probably going to be different things that you wouldn't be as comfortable speaking up on […] especially because […] first-years just haven't seen as much of the uni" (ID 5).

"maybe third-year students had seen what Warwick modules looked like […] and maybe that helped them to determine how well this module was built as compared to first-years because obviously we don't have that, but I don't think that's significantly impacted how our opinions were heard" (ID 3).

"[third-year student] managed to bring in a lot of insights that the three first-years couldn't, simply because he was a third-year and he had seen the whole process, he's been through so many modules already" (ID 4).

Importantly, this was not a challenge that we as project leaders recognised during our meetings. While is sensible for other projects to anticipate these differences, this should not imply only inviting students from higher cohorts for similar co-creation activities or that first-year students should be viewed in a deficiency framework. Indeed, student co-creators emphasised the value added by first-year students, as well as the positive interaction between first-year students and finalists.

"But the one thing that first-years have that third-years don't have is that they have a stake in the module and they […] get to bring this module to fruition. Naturally, I think if you have […] an interest in developing a module that you yourself will be taking part in, in all likelihood, you'd probably want to invest more time and effort into it" (ID 1).

"It was actually really interesting as a third-year to watch the opinions of the first-years and to remember myself how I used to think some of those things […] I think that was one of the best bits in the module because they would have something that, it wasn't naïve, it was just unconstrained, I guess. But then being able to have a third-year go 'actually, that's really helpful' or 'you'll kind of grow to love it even if it's annoying now', or 'yes, it's different to what you did at A-level, but this does work best in the long term'. It was really good" (ID 7).

Students in this context also mentioned that the shortcomings in knowledge they thought first-year students had, were alleviated by the project leaders, who provided additional guidance for instance on appropriate readings. Therefore, to reassure first-year students that their input is valuable, future projects may make this more explicit from the beginning, rather than re-designing group composition or excluding first-year students altogether. Some students also reflected on the difference in pre-existing knowledge on the module's topics. While we asked student co-contributors about their interest in food during the recruitment process, we did not exclude students who had no experience in the field. This may have impacted for instance the speed at which co-creators could identify readings. However, students did not reflect particularly negatively on these differences, and often highlighted that the most important aspect in recruitment should be students' passion for the project, meaning that future projects should similarly not exclude students without previous knowledge on the module's topics.

Interestingly, students did not discuss the differences in knowledge and experience between students and staff in similar ways. When students did discuss the differences between staff and students, they typically referred to an awareness of institutional and more widely

academic procedures, which they thought was helpful in providing some guidance. One student reflected on the student-staff co-creation aspect as an "eye opener":

> "Before I saw it, if […] somebody randomly said to me like 'why don't you go and design a module with some professors?', I would be like 'surely I don't have the expertise for this kind of thing', but this has […] been an eye opener to see how it works out" (ID 5).

This contrasts some of the student co-creation literature, which had highlighted students' reservations in contributing to shaping the curriculum beyond offering feedback on existing modules (Carey 2013).

A third main challenge was the **separation between the two groups and resulting differences in workloads**. When we interviewed students ahead of the project's official start, we briefly explained the two groups and asked students to register their preference. As all students preferred the Curriculum Group, we had to allocate students. Primarily, we drew on the motivations students shared and whether these connected to the module topic, but also their marks as we did not want to jeopardize students' academic performance with potentially conflicting project responsibilities. We also decided to include more first-year students in the Curriculum Group, as these students would have the opportunity to enrol in the module, and more finalists in the Directors Group, as we expected them to draw from a wider experience with other modules when evaluating Curriculum Group proposals. We then kept both groups separate, simulating the blind peer review process, as we tried to elicit unmediated criticism from the Directors Group. In a final meeting, we brought students from both groups together to brainstorm on seminar and lecture activities as well as the module's Moodle online platform. However, in our interviews, students widely expressed confusion about the separation. Especially students in the Directors Group found it difficult to determine which parts of the module they had shaped, even though they had been central especially for counter-proposing weekly topics and assessments. For example, when asking about the challenges of the project, one student replied:

> "I would have to ask the students that picked the curriculum because I could imagine that there is not much bibliography about what we tried to do. I don't know to what extent they had to spend their time to do research, which could have been challenging. But from my perspective, I don't know" (ID 2).

This quote illustrates a few themes that were visible across interviews with co-creators in the Directors Group. On the one hand, students in this group found it difficult to determine the contribution they made and that indeed *they* were the final instance that "picked the curriculum". On the other hand, the student nonetheless viewed the project as a collective

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endeavour, as something that "we" tried to do. Interestingly, when asked about student contributions to the module, both groups highlighted the reading list – but in different directions. While students in the Directors Group thought that students had limited input on the reading list, students in the curriculum saw this as one of their biggest contributions.

> "I think students had a little less input on what their readings were" (ID 3)

> "I think definitely a lot of it [main ways in which students contributed] was through the ideas and the readings. The reading list was practically student-created" (ID 4).

Students in both groups argued that the separation could have been better communicated and that they would have benefitted from more insights into the developments that took place in the meetings of the other group. Connectedly, especially students in the Directors Group expressed that they had expected a much higher workload and that they were unsure *how* to work independently between meetings and how to feed back on the proposals.

> "I wasn't sure how to […] work for it, particularly when you're not having these meetings. Of course, I could read through the emails that you sent and all the documents that you have, but apart from that and a little bit of extra research, I wasn't sure how to […] make headway with finding more material" (ID 3).

> "I just wouldn't know where to start with how to criticise, how to be negative with what the other group's done. Especially because we met so less frequently than the other group, I go in thinking like 'Okay, well, these people maybe spent the past four weeks crafting this out and now what? I'm just going to come here with a few hours work and say 'no, you're wrong'?' I suppose I wasn't really confident enough to do that" (ID 5).

However, students were also uncertain about how this challenge could be addressed. Some students suggested that students from both groups may participate in the Directors Group meetings (or vice versa), but also saw the downsides and challenges of this suggestion:

> "I don't know to what capacity, but just being present I think would give us a better insight, I wouldn't necessarily recommend proposing as well ideas to the other group because that would kind of defeat the purpose or create a bit of chaos. But I don't know if that would be the case, I think there is a lot to test in this process, for sure" (ID 2).

> "if our group also was the group that talks to directors and maybe had more conversations with staff […] but again, it's just really hard to say, would that have been better because that would have been a smaller group and […] would everyone have committed to that high level involvement?" (ID 7).

> "I know that one challenge that could come up with having us sit in is it could probably get very chaotic […] I think it's a balance. Maybe trialling it, seeing how that will go and […] scrapping it if it doesn't work" (ID 1).

To address the challenge of group differences, future project could more transparently communicate the selection procedure and expectations for each group. For instance, in the introductory meetings, while the group discussed expectations for the module and project,

the project co-leads could have instead provided more information on the group selection and on their ideas on how the two groups should function. For instance, one student co-creator suggested that students in the Directors Group could benefit from a checklist before each meeting, which may be one way to better guide student co-creators in this group, at least initially. Moreover, the timing of the meetings could be improved. In our project, the Directors Group had minimal time to reflect on the first proposal for topics and reading list, which meant that they could not search for alternative readings ahead of the meeting. Ideally there should be a two-week period between receiving the proposal from the Curriculum Group and the Directors Group meeting to allow students to better react to these proposals with own ideas as suggested in section 4.4.

It could also be valuable for the student co-creators in the Directors Group if their contributions were illuminated better. While co-creators in the Directors Group had a significant input on all areas of the module, as noted above, they did not always recognise their involvement. One explanation could be the lack of written feedback. While the Curriculum Group received written feedback on their proposals after Directors Group meetings, students in the Directors Group only received the edited proposal rather than a document that explicitly described how the Curriculum Group implemented the feedback, as would be the case for instance in journal peer review processes. Instead, we outlined the responses by the Curriculum Group to the Directors Group verbally, which may make it less tangible and left little opportunity to reflect and prepare a response.

Several students advocated for additional meetings, which could include additional meetings between the two groups. For example, students suggested that the discussion of topics and readings could be divided into two different meetings on the modules' two halves (weeks 1-5, weeks 7-10; ID 3). However, students also argued that these activities would increase the workload for students or may be incompatible with staff timetables, which they similarly problematised:

> "you don't want the students to be pressed to do this activity" (ID 2).

> "the other thing that could also solve this issue [connection between groups] would be to have more frequent meetings. But then, […] I know that from you guys' perspective, […] logistically it just wouldn't make sense to have the Directors Group meeting every week" (ID 5).

Indeed, increasing the number of meetings would have posed additional organisational difficulties. In particular, Directors Group meetings were already difficult to schedule, as we

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needed to find a common free slot for the group's ten participants. As a result, not all members could attend each meeting. For example, only two members of staff could join the introduction meeting. Subsequently, the substantial meetings on the syllabus were organised at timeslots which were less attractive for students[3]. Moreover, we relied on staff volunteering their time from already very demanding schedules. One way to address this challenge would be to reduce the number of staff involved. However, student co-creators valued that a wide range of staff members participated.

> "Staff-wise, I think it was a good number because with many of you, you obviously had more perspectives of people from different departments as well" (ID 5).

> "I think having staff members from different departments [present in the meetings] is really helpful [...] especially because there are times where [...] marking criteria, or handbooks and stuff differ, so when you're making a joint course, it's helpful to have input from everyone" (ID 7).

Instead, projects such as this one would be factored into staff workloads and timetables, allowing for more frequent meetings.

A final challenge highlighted by students were **institutional constraints**, such as workload allocations of the module leader, assessment regimes, lecture and seminar schedules, or policies such as on reasonable adjustments. One concrete challenge highlighted by co-creators was that they had to condense their ideas for weekly topics into a nine-week module schedule.

> "I think at the start there were so many weeks that students wanted to put in there, so many exciting ideas, but once we actually laid them out in [...] a week-by-week format and see how they play out they realised that 'hey, this wouldn't work. I really want this, but you know it's not gonna work out in the whole picture" (ID 4).

> "I think that there was a really big scope of where we could have gone with it, especially [...] in the initial ideation stage. It was very much 'we're doing a module on food and it's going to be interdisciplinary'. And people had so many different perspectives on that [...] you might think that you'd agree to what it's covering one week, and it turned out that people were thinking vastly different things. And when you then fit it into [...] a one-hour lecture, what needs to stick?" (ID 7).

Students also often wished that institutional guidelines were more open to change beyond the module or course in question. For instance, students frequently provided feedback on other modules' structure or university assessments in general. However, even though students, as discussed above, perceived that they better understood module design procedures as a result of the project, they were not always able to pinpoint which instance (the other group, departments, or the university) had which competences, and were rarely specific about concrete constraints. We propose that these perceptions could have resulted

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[3] 9am, which is particularly difficult for students due to an insufficient bus service to campus at this time.

from several factors. First, they may be connected to the lack of transparency between the two groups, which made it difficult for students to ascertain responsibility for decisions. For instance, students in the Directors Group may have thought that some proposals by the Curriculum Group had been pre-decided by university/departmental guidelines rather than being up for debate. Again, increasing the communication with the Directors Group and a clearer outline of tasks could help alleviate this issue in future projects. Second, students likely retained misconceptions about the organisational structure of universities, which decisions are made at which level, and which constraints actually exist. Partly, we think the perceptions of limitations resulted from pre-conceived notions on module design which students had developed throughout their time at university. As a result, the final module (Annex B), while including many methods which are rarely utilised, looks suspiciously like a 'normal' university module which is heavily informed by best-practices in other modules. Nonetheless, we do not think that we should have formally introduced students to existing constraints a priori. Indeed, this was discouraged by student co-creators, too:

> "I think if you start the project with 'here's a load of limitations', you're going to constrain people's […] capacity to have very great ideas, like if the first meeting had been 'we have to do this, we have to do that, we have to do that', then would we have been as creative in the first place? […] I think the way we did it was probably best to just go, have loads of broad, slightly crazy ideas about the module and then let's figure out what we can do within the constraints, because otherwise you're going to just end up making a traditional module again" (ID 7).

One challenge identified by the project co-leads rather than student co-creators was that of **student recruitment**, specifically attracting students across all programme cohorts. We advertised the opportunity to participate via the programme newsletter and during in-person events with first-year students and finalists. While we intended to include students from each year-group, no second-year student applied. We primarily explain this through the lack of personal contact with second-year students in lectures or other events at that time. Building on previous experience, mentioning opportunities such as this one in lectures or other in-person events greatly increases participation. We considered re-opening the call to ensure that second-year students were involved but decided against it after our initial meetings with potential co-creators who demonstrated high levels of motivation which we prioritised over demographic factors such as year-group. While we did not think that the absence of second-year students had a negative impact on the project, future projects may want to ensure that they reach out to prospective co-creators early and in person. Moreover, only two female students applied to participate. Although, considering the small sample size, this may have

been random, future projects should explicitly encourage potentially interested female students to apply. In our interviews, no co-creator expressed that gender (or international/home status) influenced student participation during the project, even when probed.

One challenge that may arise from our recruitment is that the students involved were exceptionally motivated to contribute to their course and/or more interested in the topic of food, which likely impacted their choices to create an ambitious, truly research-driven module. During meetings and in our interviews, students frequently argued that they expected that their peers would be more involved in this module than other modules, which may project their own motivation rather than representing those of their peers. To illustrate, when asked what they would remove from the module, one student suggested

> "reading week, because it's actually […] really interesting. I think once you actually get learning and you've studied the content, students are gonna really enjoy it, and reading on these different issues every week […] they're not going to get bored, you're not going to get burnt out […] Yes, you're going to have to read a bit, but none of your readings are actually that long, and if you read effectively, reading shouldn't take you that long" (ID 7).

Although we experience our broader PPE student body as very driven, they also engage in a wide range of activities which may at times compete with their purely academic commitments. Therefore, while we hope that students' commitment to the module matches those anticipated by the co-creators, this remains an empirical question.

Connected to the lack of clarity for expectations on independent work by co-creators was the challenge of **budgeting**. Our proposed project budget was entirely allocated to student co-creators to participate in meetings and interviews as well as independent work such as consulting readings. Initially, we planned that each student in the Curriculum Group would spend 14 hours in individual study, and that each student in the Directors Group would spend five hours reflecting on the Curriculum Group proposals. While the number of hours for individual study especially by the Curriculum Group were overestimated overall, they also differed between individual co-creators, which complicates planning for future projects. While we reallocated some of the remaining budget to invite a guest lecturer who was selected by co-creators, we did not spend all budget funds. Again, future projects may better communicate the expectations for individual study to student co-creators or plan additional meetings. Additionally, budget funds could be used for other activities. We would have benefitted from a transcription service for our interviews, but this was not possible due to

timelines for ethics approval for our proposed changes. There could also be a budget for limited catering for the meetings. Although our meetings were uncatered, we encouraged participants to bring food, benefitted from other meetings' leftovers, and provided donuts for the final meeting. This was not only fitting for a module on food, but it also arguably contributed to the flat hierarchy between staff and students that was praised in all student interviews, and which was one of the clear strengths of this project.

One final, minor challenge was that we completely redesigned a module which had not been offered for several academic years, which meant that we had minimal foresight **on potential student numbers**. In several meetings, when discussing potential design choices our ideas were constrained by how many students could potentially select the module. One activity for which student numbers would have a significant impact is the planned student conference at the end of the module. For instance, while traditional panel presentations may be possible with a module of 15 students, this would not be the case for 100 participants. Similarly, this applies to questions of assessment design and feedback speed, as well as lecture and seminar activities. Whenever possible, we considered several options for different cohort sizes. For instance, a panel conference could be substituted by a 'speed meeting' formula, in which students would briefly present their research ideas to several other students and receive feedback.

4 Designing a student co-creation project for a joint degree module

This part of the handbook draws on the experiences described above to offer guidance for implementing similar projects. Therefore, it starts with the discussion of basic design decisions, i.e. the scope, budget, and timeline of the project, before discussing recruitment. Subsequently, the handbook offers some guidance on how to approach different decisions involved in module design, such as weekly topics, readings, assessments, and student engagement in lectures and seminars. Finally, the handbook offers some insights into designing a meeting environment conductive to co-creation. Each section concludes with core messages in bullet point form.

4.1 The basics

When designing a co-creation project for interdisciplinary modules, several overlapping fundamental decisions must be made, including the project's scope, timeline, and funding. As

is discussed in the academic literature, the scope of co-creation projects can vary widely from a simple provision of feedback through standard forms to the complete determination of the curriculum by students without academic staff interference (Bovill & Bulley 2011). Hence, one of the first decisions should be the **extent to which students should be involved**. Will students only provide ex post feedback on an existing module, perhaps offering some suggestions on topics or seminar activities? Or will they be expected to design the entire module, including its reading list, and perhaps even (parts of) the lectures? Will students be involved in basic design decisions, such as the length and timing of the module, or the module director? In our project, we opted for a co-creation project in which students contributed to the design of a module after many foundational decisions, such as the module director, optionality, availability, and length, had already been taken. We also pre-determined the overarching theme of the module, 'the PPE of food'. While it is not imperative that the overarching theme of the module is selected a priori, it helped us attract students who were passionate about the module's topic. Students then were central in proposing and deciding most other module aspects: weekly topics, reading list, assessments, guest lectures, seminar and lecture activities, and the module's online platform. Connectedly, the project should consider the number of student co-creators and division into groups. We included eight student co-creators, divided into two groups, and despite the aforementioned challenges, felt like this structure was appropriate for our project, which was confirmed by student co-creators in interviews.

While the project's **timeline** depends on its scope, we would suggest any project with a similar scope to ours to stretch up to three terms. This allows project leaders to address some of the challenges highlighted above, for instance the lack of reflection time between Curriculum and Directors Group meetings. Project leaders should be aware of the institutional timelines on student recruitment and financial procedures, which limit the timeframe during which meetings can be organised. The timeline should also be cognizant of competing student responsibilities, especially around typical assessment periods. Student co-creators in our project reflected positively on the flexibility and long-term deadlines:

> "I do appreciate the fact that you guys have laid off us a bit as […] exams and all. So I think that there's a very fine balance whereby there's a certain amount of pressure to deliver, but not to such an immense amount of stress and pressure" (ID 4).

> "I also spent less time on the module […] than maybe my colleagues have, because I had my exams and some essays happened to coincide with when I had to work for this module. But I certainly never felt that it was overbearing" (ID 2).

At the same time, one co-creator argued that having conflicting commitments does not necessarily impede participation in similar projects, as it may imply that students are also more likely to have developed time management skills (ID 7).

Another fundamental design decision is the **project budget**. In the case of our project, we applied for a budget of £2,826 to cover the participation in meetings and independent study of eight student co-creators. We strongly recommend that students be paid for their work on similar projects considering co-creators' significant contributions to the module. When we queried students about whether being paid shaped their motivation to participate in the project, all students emphasised that their primary motivation was not monetary. Most students instead argued that the money was a welcome additional incentive but that they would have participated in the project nevertheless. However, these students also contextualised these statements by stressing that they were not in a place of financial need and contended that this may differ for students with fewer financial resources. One student contended that especially for students from widening participation backgrounds, being paid for the project could be vital, as they may have to choose between participating in the project or finding a job (ID 7). They also reflected on being able to engage with a project "you're actually passionate about", and that even though the hours and thus the money students earned from the project was not extensive that it "can be quite life changing […] because it's quite enriching and it allows you to not stress" (ID 7). Students also highlighted that being remunerated for their work helped them prioritise project activities:

> "being paid puts a different sort of value for you. There's not just a voluntary basis, but I'm being paid. […] I think that creates a very different mindset. There's always that pressure to […] deliver, to hit the deadlines and to actually put out a decent attempt" (ID 5).

Summary
✓ Identify the scope of student involvement in the module design process ✓ Allow students to flexibility respond to competing priorities, such as assessments ✓ Pay student co-creators

4.2 Recruitment

Once scope, budget, and the general timeline have been determined, the project moves to recruit co-creators. Of course, this primarily includes students. Our project benefitted from the recruitment of students from different cohorts, including current first-year students who

may select the module in the future, and finalist students who can reflect on their time at university. Student co-creators encouraged us to retain this aspect of the project.

> "I think the variety of your groups, definitely keep that [...] it's pretty helpful for everyone because it reminds the third-years why they signed up to this degree in the first place and it [...] helps the first-years to understand where they're going to be going" (ID 7).

As mentioned, students should be recruited from as wide a range of the programme's population as possible, which implies flagging the opportunity early and ideally during in-person events, which increase the visibility of the project. However, aspects such as year-group should not be decisive in the selection of student co-creators. Instead, several students lobbied for passion for the project and interest in the module topic as the most important characteristic for successful student contributions, which should therefore be prioritised in recruitment.

This phase also involves the recruitment of staff co-creators. In our project, the pedagogic insights from other academic staff beyond the module leader were invaluable. As mentioned in section 3, the inclusion of a broad range of staff was also seen as beneficial by students, who felt like this signalled that their concerns were being heard and that the project was significant. Including a range of staff members is particularly important for interdisciplinary modules in joint degrees. Even though the project co-leads are members of two PPE departments, we found that the three academic members of staff also partly acted as representatives for their specific disciplines, ensuring that the module would not sway too much into one discipline's direction, and that each week and assessment bridged the disciplines. Therefore, future projects should similarly attempt to recruit members of academic staff from all departments involved in the respective joint degree. Importantly, we did not approach members of academic staff solely based on their expertise on the module topic, but broader pedagogical considerations. One co-creator's research agenda covered food, but they were also involved in teaching other interdisciplinary modules. Another co-creator already directed a PPE module, and a third co-creator was known to the project leaders as particularly innovative in their teaching. Therefore, mirroring student co-creator recruitment, the recruitment of staff co-creators should not necessarily prioritise research agenda overlap with the module topic, but broader pedagogical rationales.

Summary

- ✓ Recruit a wide range of students from different cohorts
- ✓ Prioritise students' passion, not pre-existing knowledge
- ✓ Recruit at least one member of academic staff from each department involved in the joint degree
- ✓ Prioritise concerns such as experience with interdisciplinary teaching or innovative pedagogies over research expertise in the module's topic (even though the latter helps).

4.3 Introductory meetings

Once all co-creators have been recruited, an introductory meeting can better explain the scope and goals of the project as well as settle basic administrative questions, such as the timeline. The introductory meeting is also a space in which co-creators can be introduced to each other, share their expectations for the project, and the potential challenges they anticipate. In our experience, this meeting was vital in setting the informal and collaborative tone which was reflected in all other meetings and remarked on positively by student co-creators as elaborated on in section 4.7. The meeting may also set out future modes of communication. In our project, students in the Curriculum Group organised a group chat in which they asked questions and organised their group's workload, especially ahead of looming deadlines. In our interviews, students did not feel like this should have been organised by the project leaders, but modes of communication within and between groups could nonetheless be discussed in an introductory meeting. This initial meeting can also be used for early brainstorming. For example, one suggestion from our introductory meetings was to conclude the module with a student conference in the final week, which was carried over to the final module syllabus and contributed to the research-led design the module followed overall. While in our project the Curriculum and Directors Group met separately, future projects could consider combining the introductory meeting for both groups. This could help address the aforementioned challenges and result in a shared understanding of project goals, expectations, and responsibilities. However, in our project, we already struggled finding a timeslot in which all members of each respective group were available, and this would obviously be further complicated by combining both groups.

Summary

- ✓ Use an introductory meeting for discussing shared expectations and initial ideas
- ✓ The introductory meeting is vital for developing productive group communication

4.4 Module topics and reading list

After the introductory meeting, module's weekly schedule and reading list can be determined. At the end of the introductory meeting, student co-creators in the Curriculum Group should be encouraged to reflect on topics they would like to include. Subsequently, these ideas can be collected in a one-hour meeting, in which the project leaders should take a passive approach (see section 4.7). In our experience, it was helpful for us to merely note all topics suggested by students on the whiteboard, only trying to cluster similar ideas. In a subsequent steps, students and staff in the Curriculum Group could identify a red thread that structures the module. In our project, we initially considered structuring the module in a 'farm-to-fork' theme, first considering agricultural production before gradually moving to issues of consumption. Staff and students considered that finding an overall structure for the module was advantageous and that it interacted with the module's interdisciplinary outlook:

> "I think there's a certain degree of substitutability in a normal degree module. I can take topic eight out and I can slot in another topic in its place and I don't believe that would affect things as much as it would in a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary module where the topics are connected to each other – there's a story to be told across the module […] a journey that the student will engage in throughout the module. And if you upset any aspect of this journey, that doesn't allow the module to flow so well" (ID 1).

Then, the Curriculum Group may discuss the relative benefits and downsides of weekly topics, for instance if they easily lend themselves to an interdisciplinary exploration through the joint degree's disciplines. In our project, this was when we as project leaders became more active, as we offered insights into some of the considerations we previously made when designing modules. For instance, we discussed the benefits of including a topic that closely mirrors the module director's research interests as well as the strategic timing of guest lectures to increase turnout. In general, the biggest challenge of this meeting was to distil the great number of possible topics into a schedule which balances variety and clarity, especially considering additional anxieties that may arise for students for whom this would be their first explicitly interdisciplinary module.

During this meeting, it is helpful to reiterate that the schedule remains flexible and that the Curriculum Group will receive feedback on their ideas from the Directors Group. This also means that beyond the general weekly topics (e.g. vegetarianism/veganism) and some rough ideas on the lecture content (e.g. animal ethics), the discussion remained surface level. This contributed to a project environment in which students can share their thoughts with limited pressure to propose concrete ideas on implementation. In this meeting, we also introduced

the possibility of guest lectures, which was later realised by students especially as a response to Directors Group encouragement to include philosophical views more explicitly. As a result, the module's first iteration will include four guest lecturers, three of whom are trained as Philosophers. If permissible and reflected in the project budget, we recommend that future projects similarly consider guest lectures, as this could ensure that all experts from different disciplines are included. This was also explained by student co-creators in our interviews:

> "We have to look maybe for guest lecturers and finding experts in different disciplines because of course not a single person is [an expert]in all three [disciplines] together." (ID 3)

After the schedule is sketched, the Curriculum Group can jointly set a deadline for identifying weekly readings in independent study. Project leaders should consider the guidance they would like to offer students at this stage. In our project, we provided only limited guidance beyond those typically shared by the PPE departments at Warwick, i.e. core readings consisting of three or fewer texts amounting to fewer than 100 pages. Offering limited guidance for readings has both positive and negative implications. On the one hand, students retain full ownership and creativity at this point, which can also facilitate innovative suggestions. On the other hand, some readings will likely not meet academic standards, especially if the group includes first-year students who are not as proficient in identifying academic literature yet. We resolved this in a follow-up meeting by discussing some of the typical considerations we take in selecting readings, such as publication venue and creating seminar debates. Nonetheless, we forwarded the unedited schedule and reading list proposed by students to the Directors Group, while at the same time preparing students for the likelihood that they have to revise their readings. In our project, most readings which had been initially proposed by students were included in the reading list, albeit typically as recommended and not core readings.

As discussed above, the Curriculum Group proposals for the topics and reading list should be communicated to the Directors Group at least two weeks prior to the respective Directors Group meeting. This also needs to anticipate potential delays in the Directors Group processes. Students in this group may struggle to meet this first deadline, being potentially new to identifying appropriate readings or project work altogether. Therefore, project leaders should carefully balance flexibility and respect for students' competing workloads with the need to progress. Hence, we propose the following timeline as a guide to be tailored by each

project, for instance reflecting term or assessment times as well as additional curricular and extra-curricular responsibilities.

Project week	Task	Group
1	Introductory meeting	Both groups
1-3	Independent reflections on possible module topics	Curriculum Group
3	Meeting on module topics	Curriculum Group
3-6	Independent research on module readings	Curriculum Group
6	Uploading proposed readings to shared folder	
7	Meeting on readings, initial proposal sent to Directors Group	Curriculum Group
7-10	Independent reflection on initial proposal, identifying other topics and readings	Directors Group
10	Meeting on topics and readings	Directors Group
10 onwards	Integrating feedback	Curriculum Group

In the Directors Group meeting on topics and readings, a member of the project involved in the Curriculum Group should briefly outline the proposals and key rationales. While this role was filled by the project leaders in our project, it could be occupied by a student co-creator, as this may further alleviate the perceived opacity of both groups' work processes. Then, Directors Group members are invited to share their feedback on the proposals and propose own ideas on the module. In our meetings, this resulted in a broad discussion and significant changes to the original proposal, as especially the overarching structure of the module was perceived as less clear than we thought, and as the Directors Group felt that philosophic insights had not been considered explicitly enough. This feedback and any proposed changes will then need to be communicated to the Curriculum Group. In our project, we shared a document that summarised main points and proposed future steps. While students in our interviews appreciated these documents, including a student co-creator from the Curriculum Group in the Directors Group meeting or convening a brief meeting communicating the feedback verbally could help co-creators in the Curriculum Group understand the feedback better.

Importantly, the module structure, topics, and readings will also likely be discussed at all subsequent meetings. For instance, once we had decided on an assessment structure which prospective students are likely unfamiliar with, we removed most topical content from the introductory lecture. Instead, this lecture now focuses on communicating the basic rationale of – and excitement for – the module and allow for sufficient time to explain the assessments

in detail. Therefore, it will be helpful for future projects to not move through the co-creation process dogmatically and instead flexibly respond to changes in other aspects of the module. Connectedly, while there was focus on including perspectives from all three disciplines in each week, we avoided dogmatism as to the concrete split. When asking students about recommendations for similar projects in the future, they evaluated this as important:

> "I think the biggest issue is to see what the scope is and how to balance out […] three sides of the topic […] I think to strike that balance, […] do you even accept that in that certain area they're looking at, there is more of a bias towards one discipline. [… and not] fighting for equality when […] the subject itself isn't equal" (ID 4).

> "I think there are certain weeks that focus more on one discipline […] but on […] an overall level, I think there's […] a good balance because […] I don't think you can have […] a good 33% split between all three each week because some topics have it more, some topics have it less and because we're also bound by literature to a certain extent" (ID 3).

Summary

- ✓ Collect potential topics through an open brainstorming process driven by students, not staff
- ✓ Encourage students to find readings for the topics they suggested
- ✓ Provide minimal guidance during initial steps to encourage creativity
- ✓ Aide students by sharing own experiences only when necessary
- ✓ Allow flexibility and continuous changes to the modules' structure, topics, and readings
- ✓ Reiterate the necessity for interdisciplinarity but avoid dogmatism

4.5 Assessments

While student co-creators should, similar to their involvement in topics and readings, be able to freely voice their ideas and opinions on assessments, this area of the module is more tightly pre-determined by institutional constraints. This includes university, departmental, and programme-level assessment guidelines, as well as the fact that any assessment would have to be implemented by both the administrative team and the module director. For instance, in our project, student co-contributors proposed oral assessments, which could not be implemented for several reasons. First, in case of a large module, it would be impossible that the module leader could carry out each oral assessment. Second, it was not clear how such an assessment could be moderated, what reasonable adjustments could be implemented, and how re-assessments could be carried out. Instead, what is important when co-creating modules, is to identify what students find valuable about the assessments they propose. In this case, there was a consideration by students that assessments should foster debate and that active engagement by students should be rewarded. Consequently, we decided to

implement a minor assessment component (5%), which rewards active participation and the facilitation of seminar debates by submitting seminar questions.

Moreover, it is important that the module's structure, topics, readings, and assessments should be cohesive. For instance, as our module's topics and readings were research-led, for example through the module conference planned for the final week, it made sense to also include a research component in the assessments. Having already discussed the option in introductory meetings, we identified research papers as potential assessment type early on. This also triggered discussions on submitting student papers as a special issue to an undergraduate research journal, which would offer another personal development opportunity to students. In the Curriculum Group's designated assessment meeting, we therefore quickly settled on a research paper as main assessment component of the module, and from there designed earlier assessments.

Hence, students' role in this part of the module design process may be better suited to provide feedback on a wide range of options and broader assessment considerations. In our project, students reflected broadly on the benefits of different assessment weights and numbers, for instance. Co-creators also shared their anxieties around certain assessment types, and especially voiced a preference for earlier assessments which provided scaffolding and allowed students to test their skills ahead of more significant assessment components. In our project, the Directors Group responded to these concerns by settling on research proposals as first assessment.

Importantly, the final assessment should keep in mind the interdisciplinary nature of the module, especially as different disciplines use different criteria for evaluating students' work and the quality of academic work generally. As the programme already offers joint modules, this module can benefit from bespoke Warwick PPE marking criteria which have been agreed by the three departments. Nonetheless, these programme-specific marking criteria are only applied in a small number of modules, which may imply initial confusion for students and therefore require careful explanation by the module leader. In our experience, students are particularly anxious about interdisciplinary assessments, as they worry that they do not include all disciplines to a sufficient degree. We hope that because all disciplines are included in each lecture, rather than separating them weekly, these anxieties are somewhat alleviated.

Summary

- ✓ Consider other module decisions
- ✓ Allow students to contribute in the way they feel they are best equipped to
- ✓ Focus on underlying goals when identifying assessment alternatives

4.6 Student engagement in seminars, lectures, and online learning environment

Beyond the thematic meetings on topics, readings, and assessments, co-creation is particularly valuable for gathering broader insights about lecture and seminar design as well as the online learning platforms for modules. In our project, we gathered these insights in two ways. First, we took note whenever either student or staff co-creators mentioned their experiences or ideas in this area. Second, we organised a final meeting with student co-creators from both groups which allowed them to brainstorm on potential lecture and seminar activities.

Again, these activities should be in line with broader design considerations. As we had settled on two research-focussed assessments and considering that students voiced that they would prefer more guidance especially on new assessment types, we discussed possible ways to integrate relevant scaffolding into the seminars. Thus, we collected a list of questions on which students would appreciate more clarity. For instance, students expressed that they did not always know how to critically engage with academic journal articles – aren't the authors experts after all? Hence, we discussed possible ways in which we could develop these skills in seminars.

In this session, students could also be encouraged to list ways in which to activate students during lectures. In our meetings, students focused on suggesting activities for the first lecture which would allow students to map their own expectations. Students may also be able to provide feedback on other areas of the lecture design, such as on the use of slides. Especially considering the increasing use of blended learning and thus online platforms, this meeting can also discuss the online learning activities students find valuable. In our project, students had differing views on additional material such as podcasts or videos, for instance. Overall, this meeting is an opportunity to discuss 'all the other stuff' on which the module leader would like to hear students' thoughts, and which are not part of the formal module approval process.

Organising a final meeting in which students are encouraged to brainstorm about the issue of student engagement in seminars and lectures is beneficial for several reasons. First, it brings students from both groups together and therefore contributes to the group cohesion the lack of which co-creators criticised in our project. Second, it allows students to share ideas with limited staff engagement and no 'filter' through the Directors Group, as only the module leader was present. Third, the meeting signifies a positive end point to the project in which students could voice any ideas and feedback they had not yet been able to share. At the same time, it is necessary to communicate that not all ideas may be taken up in the final module, as lectures have likely not been finalised at this stage, and especially if the module involves guest lectures. Communicating this clearly is important as it contributes to students' understanding of the 'whys' which students highlighted as one of the main determinants of a good co-creation environment as elaborated on in the subsequent section.

Summary

- ✓ Allow for an open session in which students can voice remaining ideas
- ✓ Let students share opinions with limited staff involvement
- ✓ Communicate that the implementation of concrete ideas may depend

4.7 Getting student-staff interaction right

When embarking on a student-staff co-creation project, project leaders will have to decide on the co-creation environment they want to create. One priority in our project was that students had significant decision-making power, rather than relegating them to mere feedback providers. Perhaps counter-intuitively, we tried to be especially passive when it came to earlier design decisions such as the module topics and initial proposals for the reading list, as we did not want to inhibit students' creativity. Students reflected positively on this decision:

> "Being given the space to talk and […], especially in the earlier meetings, let your ideas just go and have a quite broad ideation phase of the process. Because I think if you don't feel judged at the start then you won't narrow down your thinking and just try to say what you think staff want to hear. I think if the kind of very early 'what do you want out of this module? What kind of books do you think we should be listening to?' if all those ideas are respected, even if they're not followed through, that allows students to remain quite open for the rest of the process" (ID 7).

From the outset of this project, we were conscious of potential power dynamics between staff and students which may imply that students especially in the Directors Group may be less comfortable in voicing their opinions freely. Indeed, we discussed this potential challenge with students before the project started. Yet, students in both groups perceived the group dynamic between students and staff as balanced.

"I think nobody was really looked at with the eye of 'you're the student' or 'you're a staff member' but [...] whoever had more experience, or the better ideas was the one who was [...] picked up on. So, I thought that was [...] a better way to go because it [...] blurs those boundaries" (ID 3).

Crucially, every interviewed student co-creator argued that they felt that they could voice disagreement with staff and other students freely, and some indeed described dissent during the project as constructive.

"I think challenging each other was actually one of the best ways that we contributed, which sounds a bit contradictory, but I think we saw that a lot that there were times when we would maybe, not clashed, but have small disagreements on the direction and then being able to talk that through and realise why we had slightly different perspectives allowed us to go back to what the core of the module was and [...] why it was important and why we were doing it" (ID 7).

Student co-creators identified two main reasons for being confident in voicing their views throughout the project, the first of which was the informal atmosphere in the meetings:

"Definitely I feel there was freedom enough to speak our minds, because also the meetings were not very formal. There was some levity in the room. It was more of a human interaction than like a business meeting" (ID 2).

"I was very much surprised as to how open and welcoming that was because that's not kind of the atmosphere I was in during my high school years. So, it was interesting to see how [...] welcoming that was in terms of there isn't [...] a distinction where [...] you're supposed to speak a specific way, you're not supposed to say these things [...]. So that was really refreshing" (ID 3).

The second major reason students noted was that staff members clearly communicated why some ideas may not be feasible, for instance if they clashed with resource or other institutional constraints. This applied in particular to the feasibility of different types of assessment and their alignment with the time available to markers as well as other considerations for instance regarding reasonable adjustments or resits. Students explained that this way, they felt that their ideas were taken seriously, even if they were not implemented. Both factors resulted in the feeling of 'not being judged', which students argued enhanced their creativity and willingness to contribute innovative ideas as well as disagree with members of staff and their peers.

"I think that happened a few times where, you know, there was just a little bit of a difference of opinion, but I think everybody could very much voice what they thought [...] I guess like the staff members or the people heading the meeting [...] were very receptive to that. So, you were open and made the room comfortable enough that we could say something and that not be the wrong answer or the right way to look at something. So that made us have the opportunity to say something, even if it wasn't [...] in line with what everybody else was saying" (ID 3).

Overall, students seemed to value the inclusion of staff and would not have preferred a process in which they had broader decision-making powers. Several students described how involving staff helped guide students' ideas better, tied separate threads together, ensured

that the module's bigger picture was not lost and that it complemented other modules offered as part of their course:

> "You guys were there to assist […] students' ideas were being led in a certain manner […] being directed towards creating a module rather than just being all over the place and having these random ideas pop up here and there. I think that there was a very beautiful process to watch in the sense that how both of you were leading the four of us to […] create a module rather than telling us how to create a module" (ID 4).

Summary
✓ Create an informal and open environment in which students view themselves as part of a group that collectively works towards a shared goal rather than as separate from and inferior to staff co-creators ✓ Collect ideas broadly and consider each idea seriously ✓ If an idea may not be feasible, clearly explain why that is the case

5 Engaging students in module design beyond co-creation

Evidently, engaging in a comprehensive co-creation project requires resources that may not be available in all contexts. This includes financial resources but also the time invested by staff members. Hence, we queried our student co-creators about how students could be better informed about and involved in module design without embarking on a similar project. Our co-creators offered several recommendations directly related to module activities and beyond.

When discussing activities for specific modules, the interviewed stressed to communicate to students "why they're learning what they're learning" (ID 3). However, students were divided on how to integrate the communication about module design. While one student suggested that the introductory lecture for each module should explain the rationales for topics and readings, another argued that these more formal methods of communication may decrease students' engagement and sense of ownership over their learning:

> "When you start a module and you get this […] PowerPoint to read before or a big document and it explains the assessment and the reading […] that can feel quite corporate and like […] 'You've given us nine-and-a-half thousand pounds, here is the proof of what you're going to be getting in this module'" (ID 7).

Hence, educators will need to carefully integrate the communication about module design choices, instead of front-loading the information in syllabus documents. In our interviews, students argued that this communication should also include the peculiarities of the module. To illustrate, one student co-creator argued that their favourite part about the module was the set-up of seminars which includes student-driven discussion and extensive scaffolding for

students to develop research skills. However, they also argued that they feared that students may not attend these seminars as they may expect seminars to mirror those in other modules with which they had not found helpful (ID 2). Students also argued that students would both better understand module choices and feel more comfortable to offer their own ideas on module design in an open environment in which tutors signal that students' ideas are valuable:

> "Even just scheduling a one-on-one to feed back your thoughts on a module, or possibly suggestions that could […] help the module in the future. I think advertising these different options would be very beneficial" (ID 1).

At the end of modules, students proposed focus groups which should reflect on the relative strengths and weaknesses of student proposals, as this would simulate the module considerations co-creators grappled with during the project:

> "To have a focus group to gather feedback regarding the module […] then in the process of taking the feedback, we can also put up the weeks and […] ask them 'Ok, so if we had these nine weeks in these kind of topics, where would your topic or where would your idea fit?'. And so, we're going through the process to […] figure out where their week would fit in, and then you see that 'Oh, it doesn't quite work out here'. Or maybe […] the lecturers themselves may see that this topic might really fit here" (ID 5).

Short of focus groups, students also suggested different ways of collecting student feedback at the end of the module, for instance with an open document that encourages students to share their feedback on the material they found engaging, the seminar and assessment experience (ID 2). This suggestion may have three advantages over standard feedback forms for which engagement with open questions is typically limited. First, the questions may be more tailored to the specific module than standardised feedback forms, which possibly improves engagement. Second, standardised feedback forms are often dominated by Likert-scale measures in an attempt to quantity student feedback with optional open-ended questions typically relegated to the end of the questionnaire. Student evaluations have been criticised in the academic literature due to their tendency to express racialised and gendered biases (for a review of the literature see Wallace et al. 2019), but they are also arguably more targeted at measuring performance than improving module design. By only collecting qualitative data through open-ended questions, students may be better prompted to offer ideas for future module iterations. Third, students may think that this form of feedback better communicates ideas directly to the module leader compared to standard feedback forms. In our project, students expressed confusion as to how their module feedback form reaches module directors and whether their suggestions are implemented.

Beyond measures to be incorporated by specific modules, co-creators also offered broader reflections on ways in which students could be better informed about and involved in module design. One participant suggested that this could be achieved in an "introduction to university"-type module, which clearly delineates the differences between school and university:

> "[in this module] we set expectations about academic study. […] to come in when we were talking about […] conservatism, liberalism, the UK Parliament in A-level politics to suddenly go to […] talking about […] quantitative versus qualitative research foundationalism […] you guys have a reason to put that kind of stuff in the module […] but I don't think students come in with the right expectations because they probably come in thinking – at least I did that – 'Oh, we're gonna learn more politics. […] What more is there to learn about liberalism, conservatism?' We didn't realise that there was so much foundational stuff that was missing. […] A introductory module to university […] getting involved into academic life thing at the start of first year would be really helpful" (ID 5).

Another student suggested that the module design process could be shared via university social media accounts:

> "Students are addicted to Instagram, myself as well, and I think maybe if they keep reels or some kind of engaging content like 'hey, this is what this is, what teachers and staff go through in creating a module, they look at these aspects and this is how maybe you can also give suggestions for a module'" (ID 1).

Several students argued that these discussions should be broader than individual co-creation projects or modules and instead be better connected to the university at large. Several students argued that what constrained students' interest for and engagement in module design was that they felt like they were viewed as passive recipients, rather than having an active role in designing their learning. To illustrate, to the question of what we could do to help students better understand module design short of a co-creation project, one student answered:

> "I think, to be blunt, part of it is having a less corporate university atmosphere. I feel like a lot of the time […] as a student, it feels like you're receiving a service rather than engaging in learning. […] Whereas having a more open, an academic and less corporate environment in your module so that students feel like […] dropping into your office when your door is open is a normal thing to do, and discussing things […] That's how you can make sure that that engagement is there, because I think a lot of the time if you've received all that information in quite a corporate way and it feels like you're just receiving a service […] You just feel really detached. […] I think the disconnect comes from a sense of anonymity. Like you don't feel like your tutor or even your department necessarily […] know you as a person" (ID 7).

6 Conclusions

Staff-student curriculum co-creation is increasingly promoted as way to improve student experience and learning, although students in these processes are often relegated to the provision of feedback rather than exercising true ownership over the process. At the same time, interdisciplinarity is marketed by universities and research councils as crucial in

addressing global challenges. Students similarly are interested in joint degree programmes, in which they can synthesise knowledge from several subjects. Yet, curiously, few co-creation projects have been designed with interdisciplinary learning and joint degree students in mind. As a result, the specific benefits and challenges for designing learning in these contexts have hardly been explored. In this project, we brought together eight students and six members of academic staff to design an interdisciplinary module for the University of Warwick's PPE programme.

Interdisciplinary education is difficult. It involves many moving pieces and requires integrating diverse disciplinary perspectives. Developing interdisciplinary modules on one's own can also be frustrating. It is energy and time intensive and the balances that must be struck inevitably leave some students disappointed. However, this difficulty and disappointment can be avoided by actively involving students in the fundamental parts of module design. In our experience, the resulting module is higher quality, easier to create, and more rewarding to both teach and attend.

7 References

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Wallace, S.L., A.K. Lewis, and M.D. Allen. 2019. The State of the Literature on Student Evaluations of Teaching and an Exploratory Analysis of Written Comments: Who Benefits Most? *College Teaching*, 67(1), 1–14.

Annex A: Project Timeline

Advert for the co-creation project	17 October 2023
Initial meetings with potential co-creators	24-29 October 2023
WIHEA internal funding deadline	31 October 2023
Project Approval	14 November 2023
Curriculum Group Introduction Meeting	17 January 2024
Directors Group Introduction Meeting	26 January 2024
Curriculum Group meeting on weekly topics	08 February 2024
Curriculum Group meeting on reading list	07 March 2024
Directors Group meeting on weekly topics and reading list	08 March 2024
HSSREC application submission	25 April 2024
Curriculum Group meeting on assessments	10 May 2024
Directors Group meeting on assessments and final remarks	24 May 2024
Final HSSREC approval	5 June 2024
Final meeting with co-creators, discussing learning activities, Moodle, design of first lecture and seminar	13 June 2024
Interviews with co-creators	23 June 2024 – 3 July 2024

PH255 PPE: Interdisciplinary Topics (15 CAT)

Academic Year 2023/2024

Syllabus

The topic of food interacts profoundly with the three disciplines we study in PPE. Is eating animals ethical? What role do national governments play in protecting 'authentic' food? Who benefits from fair trade labels? Often, we cannot answer important questions pertaining to food by only considering one discipline, either. For instance, the question of dairy substitutes raises political, economic, and philosophical questions such as: what can be defined as milk and how are substitute products regulated? What shapes consumers' preferences in buying dairy replacements - and should they?

This module introduces students to questions spanning the disciplines of philosophy, politics, and economics, and provides insight into how these disciplines can help illuminate the topic of food. It will also encourage students to bridge their knowledge in the three disciplines to arrive at an interdisciplinary perspective.

This module has been designed in co-creation with a group of eight PPE students, which we hope makes for an even more exciting module.

Please note that while this document contains some of the most important information on the module, such as the weekly schedule, core readings, and assessments, additional information will be shared during the lectures, seminars, in email conversation, and on Moodle. This includes for instance the formation of study groups or seminar norms.

Module aims
Drawing on a wide range of intellectual traditions across the social sciences, the module aims to expose students to the assumptions and methodologies that underpin each of the three PPE disciplines, which will be explored through the topic of food. The module aims to help you integrate the discipline-specific foundations covered in the first year into an interdisciplinary approach so that you will be able to answer relevant questions on the PPE of food. The module also provides an introduction to and/or complements the PPE-specific modules in Principles in Political Economy covered in the final year.

Learning outcomes
By the end of the module, students should be able to

- Demonstrate and apply an understanding of interdisciplinary research in PPE
- Apply critical thinking and reasoning skills such as making inferences and assessing limitations of knowledge claims
- Represent and critically respond to multiple points of view through effective persuasive writing
- Explain and assess core concepts and ideas in the PPE study of food
- Demonstrate data literacy applied to the PPE research of food

Weekly schedule overview

Week	Topic
1	Introduction: the PPE of food
2	The global food system: a fair trade?
3	Inequality and malnutrition: built into our global food system?
4	It's (not) a small world: global versus local foods
5	Meals as Art
6	Reading Week
7	Food and the body
8	Champagne, Tequila, and Curry: Local specialties, cultural patrimony, and the global market
9	Demystifying veganism
10	Module conference

Module director

Dr Laura Gelhaus

E-Mail: L.Gelhaus.1@warwick.ac.uk

Staff website: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/people/gelhaus/

Advice and Feedback Hours: TBC, booking form on website

Office: S 1.48A (Social Science building)

Detailed schedule

The full reading list including further readings can be found under: https://rl.talis.com/3/warwick/lists/6E6209AA-652C-B3A7-79BA-92D8CCA6AF2A.html?lang=en&login=1

Week 1   Introduction: the PPE of food

Topics covered in the lecture
- Why study the PPE of food?
- Introduction to the module: topics, assessments, expectations

Topics covered in the seminar (seminars run in the subsequent week)
- The PPE of food
- Interdisciplinary perspectives
- Research questions
- Peer review

Core readings
Please choose one of the following readings and prepare to discuss it for the seminar in week 2.

Hansen, H.O. 2013. *Food Economics: Industry and Markets*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis., chapter 1: the uniqueness of food markets

Kaplan, D.M., ed. 2012. *The philosophy of food*. Berkeley: University of California Press., chapter 1: Introduction: the Philosophy of Food.

Alkon, A.H. and J. Agyeman, eds. 2011. *Cultivating food justice: race, class, and sustainability*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press., chapter 1: Introduction: the Food Movement as Polyculture

Week 2   The global food system: a fair trade?

Topics covered in the lecture

- Food security and food sovereignty
- Debates on the global food system and food trade
- Fair trade

Topics covered in the seminar
- Fair trade and the global food system
- Research articles

Core readings

Wilson, M. and P. Jackson. 2016. Fairtrade bananas in the Caribbean: Towards a moral economy of recognition. *Geoforum*, 70, 11–21.

Schneider, M. 2019. China's Global Meat Industry: The World-Shaking Power of Industrializing Pigs and Pork in China's Reform Era. *In*: B. Winders and E. Ransom, eds. *Global Meat*. The MIT Press, pp. 79–100.

Week 3   Inequality and malnutrition: built into our global food system?

Guest lecturer: Dr Benjamin Richardson

Topics covered in the lecture
- Famine
- Malthusian fears
- Preventing food insecurity
- Development and economics

Topics covered in the seminar
- Food (in)security and famine theorising
- Finding sources (session with academic support librarians for Economics, Philosophy, and Politics and International Studies)

Core readings

Sen, A. 2001. *Development as freedom*. 1. ed., 6th print. New York: Alfred A. Knopf., Chapter 7: Famines and other Crises

Edkins, J. 2002. Mass Starvations and the Limitations of Famine Theorising. *IDS Bulletin*, 33(4), 12–8.

Week 4   It's (not) a small world: global versus local foods

Guest lecturer: Prof Benjamin Ferguson

Topics covered in the lecture
- Buying local versus buying global
- Food miles
- Carbon offsets and food transportation
- Economic benefits

Topics covered in the seminar
- Locavores and global foods
- Case selection

Core readings

Ferguson, B. and C. Thompson. 2021. Why Buy Local? *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 38(1), 104–20.

Week 5	Meals as Art

Guest lecturer: Prof Eileen John

Topics covered in the lecture
- Taste
- Food and meal aesthetics
- Food and meaning

Topics covered in the seminar (week 7)
- Meals as Art
- Critical engagement

Core readings

John, E. 2014. Meals, Art, and Artistic Value, 51(2), 254.

Week 6	Reading week

Week 7	Food and the body

Guest lecturer: Dr Clare Moriarty, Trinity College Dublin

Topics covered in the lecture
- TBC

Topics covered in the seminar
- Food and the body
- Assessment review and deciphering marking criteria

Core readings

Moriarty, C.M. and B. Davies. 2023. Feeding Infants: Choice-Specific Considerations, Parental Obligation, and Pragmatic Satisficing. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*.

Week 8	Champagne, Tequila, and Curry: Local specialties, cultural patrimony, and the global market

Topics covered in the lecture
- Local specialty protection (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage and Geographical Indications)
- Localism and Cosmopolitanism
- Constructing authenticity
- Gastronationalism

- The political economy of local specialties

Topics covered in the seminar
- Curry as a local specialty?
- Peer review refresher and conference preparation

Core readings
1. Please read the Bowen and Zapata (2009) reading and prepare to discuss it in the seminar.
2. Then, please select either one of Palat (2015) or Varman (2017) and prepare to discuss it in the seminar with a view to answering the seminar question posed at the end of the lecture.
3. Please also have a brief look at the other text so that you can discuss its core argument in the seminar.

Bowen, S. and A.V. Zapata. 2009. Geographical indications, terroir, and socioeconomic and ecological sustainability: The case of tequila. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 25, 108–19.

Palat, R.A. 2015. Empire, Food and the Diaspora: Indian Restaurants in Britain. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38(2), 171–86.

Varman, R. 2017. Curry. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 20(4), 350–6.

Week 9   Vegetarianism and Veganism

Topics covered in the lecture
- Animal and environmental ethics
- The political economy of alternative proteins

Topics covered in the seminar
- The PPE of meat consumption
- Engaging with counterarguments

Core readings

Jamieson, D. 1998. Animal Liberation is an Environmental Ethic. *Environmental Values*, 7(1), 41–57.

Week 10   Module conference

Please prepare a mini presentation of your plans for the research paper (under 2 minutes). During the conference, you will present your ideas individually to other students in a 'speed meeting' setting and provide feedback on their ideas.

Assessments

More information on the assessment will follow during the lectures and seminars and on Moodle.

Module Engagement

Deadline: rolling until Week 9, Term 2

Weight of the module mark: 5%

You will be able to demonstrate your active engagement by collecting points for submitting a seminar discussion question which demonstrates your understanding of and critical engagement with the core readings for a particular week. To pass (mark 100) the assessment, you will need to submit 4 questions of sufficient quality. You can submit your questions via the Seminar Question Submission Form Google form (on Moodle under general module information) by the indicated deadline. If you do not collect 4 points, you will fail (mark 0) this assessment.

The module leader will select a question for discussion for each seminar group, and the student who submitted this question may be asked to briefly delineate their idea behind proposing the question to start our seminar discussion. This does not form part of the assessment but should help us kick-start the discussion in a way that allows students to shape their own learning experience.

Research Proposal

Deadline: 12 noon, Wednesday Week 5, Term 2

Weight of the module mark: 15%

You will design a research proposal on any of the topics discussed in the module (weeks 2-9). In this proposal, you should engage with the relevant academic literature to propose an independent research question and delineate a feasible strategy to answer the question. You may, but are not bound to, use this proposal and the feedback you receive to inform your research paper. A detailed assessment guide and examples for research proposals can be found on the PH255 Moodle.

We will develop some core research skills necessary to completing the research proposal throughout the seminars, but you can also draw on methodological insights gained in other relevant modules. The skills corner on this Moodle could also be helpful, and of course please do not hesitate to discuss any questions with me.

Research Paper

Deadline: 12 noon, Wednesday Week 2, Term 3

Weight of the module mark: 80%

You will produce an independent research paper on a topic discussed in the module. For this paper, you select your own research question and carry out the appropriate research to answer it. The research project may build on insights gained in completing the research

proposal. This means that you may write the research proposal and research paper on the same topic, keeping in mind university guidelines on self-plagiarism. You may however also choose a different topic for your research paper. We will develop some core research skills necessary to completing the research paper throughout the seminars, but you can also draw on methodological insights gained in other relevant modules. The skills corner on this Moodle could also be helpful, and of course please do not hesitate to discuss any questions with me.