



Topics in Contemporary Philosophical Research | PIP88162

Year	PhD Student
ECTS Credits	10
Contact Hours	22 (11 x 2-hour seminars)
Pre-requisite	None
Co-requisite	None
Semester	Hilary Term
Module Leader & Lecturer	Dr. Ashley Shaw
Contact Email	ashley_shaw@me.com [TCD email pending]

Module Outline:

This module explores the nature of desire and its role in our practical lives as rational agents. Questions we will consider include: What is desire? Can we desire something we believe to be bad? How, if at all, can desire make a difference to what it is rational to do? Can desires themselves be rational or irrational? We will consider how desire is related to motivation and action, affective states of mind like pleasure and pain, and the capacity for thought, perception, imagination, and learning. We will pursue a wide-ranging and interdisciplinary approach, drawing on work in the history of philosophy on rational agency, as well as cutting-edge work in the philosophy of mind and action, moral psychology, behavioural psychology, and neuroscience, and the philosophy of reasons and rationality.

Assessment:

The assessment for this course will be a final essay, with word limit of 3,000 words (including footnotes but not bibliography). Students can choose the topic of their essay but should be cleared with me at least three weeks before the deadline.

Recommended Reading List:

An extended reading list will be provided at the start of the module. A piece of useful preliminary reading is:

Schroeder, Tim, "Desire", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/desire/>>.