

PIU44202— Philosophy of Mind and Action

Module Information	
Module Code	PIU44202
Module Title	Philosophy of Mind and Action
Department	Philosophy
Year Group	Senior Sophister
Module Personnel	Dr. Ashley Shaw
Academic Year	2026/27
Credit Weighting	10 ECTS
Semester	2
Contact Hours	22 (11 x 2-hour seminars)

Module Content	
Module Description	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.
Module Learning Aims	The aim of this module will be introducing students to a range of topics in the philosophy of mind and action by considering the nature of desire and its relationship with cognition, motivation and affect.
Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this module, students will be able to: describe and critically evaluate many contemporary theories of desire and rational agency; develop philosophical arguments; carefully read and evaluate philosophical articles

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	and texts; develop philosophical views about questions and topics in the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of action.
Indicative Reading / Resources	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.).

Assessment

Assessment Components	1 x Essay and 1 x Exam.
Assessment Details	Essay worth 50%. Exam worth 50%.

Additional Information

Prerequisites	None.
Co-requisites	None.