

Neurophilosophy | PIU44054

Year	Senior Sophister
ECTS Credits	5
Contact Hours	22 (11 x 2-hour seminars)
Pre-requisite	None
Semester	2
Module Leader & Lecturer	Tom Farrell
Contact Email	tfarrell@rcsi.ie

Module Outline:

Perhaps since Plato, and certainly since Descartes, there has been a thesis in philosophy that there are two substances, the one mental (the mind) and the other physical (the body). This view arose in response to certain difficulties in philosophy but has raised more problems such as how these substances interact and whether one can exist without the other.

These problems have proved so intractable that philosophers have been disposed to respond to them by rejecting one or other substance, or less dramatically by 'reducing' one to the other. None of the attempts to grapple with the 'mind-body' problem have found universal acceptance, although an ultimate reduction of the mental to the physical has been widely, if tacitly, accepted by scientists. The rapid development of neuroscience and artificial intelligence has been considered to support this view. In these seminars we will explore that apparent support.

Assessment:

1 Essay 50%:

Examination – 1 question (end of module) 40%.

10 discussions of papers – 1 mark each (weekly)

Recommended Reading List:

An extensive and detailed reading list will be made available prior to the start of the module. Useful introductory works would be -

- William Lyons: *Matters of the Mind* (Edinburgh, 2001)
- Paul Churchland: *Matter and Consciousness* (MIT 1994)