

# **MA in Consciousness and Embodiment**

## **UCD School of Philosophy**

**The School of Philosophy at University College Dublin is pleased to announce a new exciting one year taught MA Programme on the topic of embodied consciousness and cognition.**

The MA draws on the research interests of philosophers and cognitive scientists in UCD. It brings together expertise from the phenomenological and analytic traditions in philosophy as well as empirical approaches to the study of the mind/brain to offer a unique taught Masters course on a much discussed and important topic.

### **Background**

Until quite recently, the experience of embodiment and the role that the body plays in shaping the mind had been neglected. Descartes's view of the body as a machine assigned its study to physics and mechanics rather than to philosophy. Outside of the phenomenological circle, and the work of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty in particular, the explosion of interest in philosophy of mind and cognitive science in the 1980s and 90s, focused primarily on consciousness rather than the bodily aspects of cognition. In the last decade a new appreciation of the role of the body and its physical and social surroundings has sharpened our traditional understanding of the key issues of perception, the emotions, and attention. Moreover, the relationship between consciousness and embodiment has brought into focus the intersecting roles of agency, rationality and society in an understanding of the embodied mind. This new course draws on the research interests of philosophers and cognitive scientists in UCD to address the above issues.

### **Programme Structure**

MA (Fulltime)

Duration: 12 months. Students are required to take six modules from those listed below and complete a short dissertation on a topic relevant to the course

Post Graduate Diploma (Fulltime)

Duration: Two Semesters. Students are required to take six modules from those listed below

Part time study options are also available

### **Provisional List of Modules on offer**

#### **Phenomenology and Embodiment**

##### **Dermot Moran**

Dermot Moran's seminar aims to explore classical phenomenological approaches to the body, especially as found in Husserl, Scheler, Stein, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. Themes covered include the phenomenological approach to sensation, perception, imagination, motility, the feelings and

emotions, agency and willing, the experience of others in empathy, the experience of flesh (*la chair*), and the phenomena of intersubjectivity (interaction with other subjects), the body-for-others, and intercorporeality (interaction with other bodies, e.g. the caress).

## **Emotions**

### **Rowland Stout**

This course will examine competing theories of the nature of emotions, emotional rationality, emotional knowledge, the social purpose of emotional expression, the role of narratives in understanding emotional states, and the use of emotions in perceiving evaluative aspects of the subject's situation in their environment. Through a combination of studying set texts and tackling a series of central questions in the philosophical treatment of emotions, we will engage with such things as fear, anger, jealousy and shame

## **Post cognitivist approaches to the Mind**

### **Fred Cummins**

This module will cover a variety of recent and sometimes radical approaches to understanding core topics in cognitive science, but that do not fall within the field of computational theories or information processing theories. Topics covered will include Extended Minds, Embodiment, Ecological Psychology, Enactive approaches to perception, biological theories of mind, the scientific treatment of subjective experience, culture and cognition, and the relationship between individual and collective accounts of cognition. Together these topics span the emerging field of post-cognitive theory. Classes will consist of group discussions of material students have read in preparation

## **Carnal Hermeneutics**

### **Richard Kearney**

This module will address the question of the flesh as an epistemological, ontological and aesthetic phenomenon. It will focus primarily on questions of incarnation, eros and intersubjectivity in modern phenomenologies from Husserl and Sartre to Merleau-Ponty and Levinas. It will conclude with a sketch for a new model of carnal hermeneutics.☒

## **Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception**

### **Tim Mooney**

It was with the publication of *Phenomenology of Perception* in 1945 that Maurice Merleau-Ponty became established as one of the greatest phenomenological philosophers of the last century. Taking over and developing insights from Bergson and Heidegger, and in particular from Husserl, this work is one of the most significant treatments to be found in the European tradition on the nature of perception. The present course will be devoted to the most enduring parts of this text. We will commence by treating of Merleau-Ponty's outline and critique of the empiricist and intellectualist approaches to perception, which he regards as variants of 'objective thought.' We will then consider his alternative. Amongst the topics to be covered are the role of description, perceptual syntheses, the perceptual field, the embodied subject with its proprioceptive and skill schema and motor-

intentionality, the other, speech, sexuality and freedom. This course should interest all who wish to find support for the primacy of embodied lived experience (both affective and active) in phenomenological philosophy.

### **Advances in Neuroscience**

#### **Nuala Brady/Jessica Bramham**

An understanding of brain function is essential for a complete understanding of human behaviour and in order to appreciate how alterations in function can underpin clinical disorders. This course aims to present students with an appreciation of the multidisciplinary perspective of behavioural and clinical neuroscience research. The course will cover a range of recently published research that explores the relationship between inner neural mechanisms and observable behaviour and clinical disorders. The objective of this course is to introduce students to recent research questions, the methods used to address these questions and to develop critical thinking skills for communicating an understanding of neuroscience research.

### **Mind and World**

#### **James O'Shea**

The course will cover issues concerning self-consciousness, perception, and objectivity that stretch from Kant, Peirce, Strawson, and Sellars through Evans, McDowell, Brandom and others.

### **The Cultural Mind**

#### **Maria Baghramian**

This course focuses on current research on the interdependence between language, culturally mediated conceptual schemes and the human mind.

### **Philosophy of Mind**

The course introduces students unfamiliar with philosophy of mind to core issues of consciousness, materialism, functionalism, etc. This module is compulsory for students with no background in philosophy of mind.

### **Admissions Requirements**

A good BA, 2.1 or better, in Philosophy, Psychology, Cognitive Science, Neuroscience or other cognate subjects.

