

Dr. Erik Sorem

Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION:

University College Dublin:

- PhD, Philosophy (December 19, 2011)
- MA, Philosophy (Graduated Honors: December 7, 2005)

Thomas Aquinas College:

- BA, Liberal Arts (May 27, 2003)
- Major: Philosophy and Theology/Minor: Mathematics and Science

PhD Dissertation: *An Alternative Explanation of Mind in Nature.* (University College Dublin, 2011). Supervisor: Dr. James R. O'Shea.

MA Thesis: *Can Universal Knowledge be Obtained Through Sense Perception?* (University College Dublin, 2005). Advisor: Dr. William Desmond.

BA Thesis: *Is There any Refutation of Saint Anselm's Argument for the Existence of God?* (Thomas Aquinas College, 2003). Advisor: Dr. Richard Ferrier.

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:

- Ancient and Medieval Philosophy (Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Anselm, Aquinas, Plotinus)
- Philosophy of Mind (Consciousness, Intentionality, The Mind/Body Problem, John Searle, Lonergan)
- History of Philosophy (Ancient to Modern Philosophy)

AREAS OF COMPETENCE:

- Logic (Formal and Informal) and Critical Thinking
- Philosophy of Religion
- Philosophy of Science

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS:

- Adjunct Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Azusa Pacific University (June 2013 – Present)
- Adjunct Assistant Professor of Logic and Philosophy at Fullerton College. One-year appointment. (August 2006 – June 2007)
- Senior Philosophy Tutor and Lecturer at University College Dublin (January 2006 – May 2006, September 2007 – November 2011)

PUBLICATIONS:

ARTICLES IN REFEREED JOURNALS

- "Searle, Materialism, and the Mind-Body Problem" in *Perspectives: International Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, Autumn 2010.

ARTICLES IN BOOK CHAPTERS

- “Searle, Materialism, and the Mind-Body Problem” republished in the chapter, “The Riddle of Consciousness,” in *The Mediations of Consciousness*. Edited by Alberto Lopez Cuenca (Open Humanities Press, 2011).

PHD DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

This thesis examines the idea that we are in need of an alternative explanation of the nature of the mind and its place within the natural world. There are compelling reasons to think that the received theories and their presupposed conceptual frameworks are inadequate for satisfactorily resolving many of the longstanding philosophical difficulties concerning the mind: for example, concerning intentionality, the subjectivity of consciousness, mind-body interaction problems, and mental causation. A central contention of this thesis is that our inability to satisfactorily resolve these problems, and effectively explain the nature of the mind arises from certain inadequacies in our present explanatory models, and I argue that finding a satisfactory solution requires approaching the problem from the perspective of an alternative conceptual scheme. Toward this end, I examine the philosophy of John Searle in order to determine whether his theory of 'biological naturalism' and his naturalistic conception of the irreducibility of consciousness is capable of providing an alternative explanation of the standing of mind in nature, one that can adequately overcome many of the aforementioned difficulties. After a detailed examination of Searle's account, I offer a sympathetic critique of three central components of Searle's novel but problematic conception of the mind. While accepting some of Searle's insights, and the general motivation for his account, I conclude by examining an alternative to both his biological naturalism, and to the theories he rightly criticizes. I outline the philosophical grounds for an alternative approach to the mind that is consistent with both the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophical tradition, and with the results of modern science, an approach inspired by key insights gathered from Bernard Lonergan's philosophy.

BOOKS IN PROGRESS:

- *Philosophy and the Patristics*. Co-authored with Dr. Rico Vitz.

PAPERS IN PROGRESS:

- “How to Approach Understanding Being: the Metaphysics of Aquinas and Lonergan.”
- “Beyond the Physics of Time: An Analysis of Time as Being.”
- “Apophatic Theology as a Philosophically Satisfying Way to Conceive the Nature of God.”

INVITED LECTURER:

- **University College Dublin:** Philosophy of Mind (Fall 2009), Formal and Informal Logic (Fall 2009 and 2010), Metaphysics (Fall 2010)

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS:

- “An Alternative Explanation of Mind in Nature” delivered at University College Dublin School of Philosophy. October 20, 2011.
- “Conceiving the Irreducibility of Consciousness from Lonergan’s Metaphysical Perspective” delivered at University Edinburgh Philosophy Society’s Postgraduate and Undergraduate Research Conference, University of Edinburgh. November 15, 2008.
- “Conceiving the Irreducibility of Consciousness According to Lonergan’s Metaphysical Perspective” delivered at the American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, Pasadena, California. March 20, 2008.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Accepted as a Summer Fellow to the Institute for the Study of Nature (ISN) Summer Conference and Seminar on “Reduction, Emergence, and Essence,” MIT, Boston, MA., June 15-19, 2009.
- Awarded Scholarship from University College Dublin School of Human Sciences Graduate Research and Invocations Fund, November, 2008.
- Paper accepted and delivered at the American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, March 20, 2008.
- Awarded Graduate Research and Invocations Fund Scholarship at University College Dublin, January 15, 2008.

PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY AND ASSOCIATION PRESENTATIONS:

- “Time, Humanity, and the Hypostatic Union of the Divine” delivered at Reason Together. August 25, 2008.
- “Understanding the Relationship between Faith and Reason in Saint Anselm’s *Proslogion*” delivered at Reason Together. April 28, 2008.
- “Meditations on Descartes’ Meditations” delivered at Ephphatha Philosophical Association. February 26, 2007.
- “Is ‘Epistemology Naturalized’ Really Epistemology?” delivered at Ephphatha Philosophical Association. October 2, 2006.
- “What is the Most Philosophical Way to Conceive of God?” delivered at Mars Hill Philosophical Association. August 10, 2006.

- “Philosophy in the Flesh: Can Mind Come from Matter?” delivered at Mars Hill Philosophical Association. November 30, 2005.
- “What is Mind and How Does it Obtain Universal Knowledge?” delivered at Mars Hill Philosophical Association. August 17, 2005.
- “Aristotle on Knowledge” delivered at Mars Hill Philosophical Association. July, 14, 2004.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

COURSES AND TUTORIALS TAUGHT:

Introduction to Philosophy	Fall Semester 2013
History of Ancient Philosophy	Fall Semester 2013
Introduction to Greek Philosophy	Spring Semester 2010
Intro to Ancient Philosophy	Spring Semester 2010
Intro to European Philosophy	Spring Semester 2010
Anarchy, Law, and the State	Spring Semester 2010
Logic: Formal and Informal	Fall Semester 2010
Metaphysics	Fall Semester 2010
Introduction to Problems of Philosophy	Fall Semester 2010
Introduction to Problems of Philosophy	Spring Semester 2009
Introduction to Greek Philosophy	Spring Semester 2009
Philosophy of Mind	Spring Semester 2009
Introduction to European Philosophy	Spring Semester 2009
Philosophy of Language	Fall Semester 2008
Introduction to Modern Philosophy	Fall Semester 2008
Logic: Formal and Informal	Fall Semester 2008
Knowledge and Reality	Fall Semester 2008
Introduction to Greek Philosophy	Spring Semester 2008
Late Antique and Medieval Philosophy	Spring Semester 2008
Introduction to Philosophical Anthropology	Spring Semester 2008
Experience and the World	Spring Semester 2008
History of Continental Philosophy	Spring Semester 2008
Ancient Philosophy	Fall Semester 2007
Logic: Formal and Informal	Fall Semester 2007
God and Humanity	Fall Semester 2007
Philosophy of Human Existence	Fall Semester 2007
Introduction to Ethics	Fall Semester 2007
Logic and Critical Thinking	Spring Semester 2007

Critical Thinking and Writing	Spring Semester 2007
Introduction to Philosophy	Fall Semester 2006
Logic and Critical Thinking	Fall Semester 2006
Introduction to Ethics	Spring Semester 2005
Questions of God	Spring Semester 2005
Introduction to Greek Philosophy	Spring Semester 2005
Introduction to Moral Philosophy	Spring Semester 2005

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS:

- Member of the American Philosophical Association. (2004 – Present)
- Member of Aporo: Irish Philosophical Research Group (2009 – Present)
- Member of Reason Together (2008 – Present)
- Member of Ephphatha Philosophical Association (2006 – 2007)
- Member of Mars Hill Philosophical Association. (1997 – 2006)

RELEVANT COURSE WORK:

University College Dublin Courses (2004 –2006)

Philosophy:

- Husserl and Heidegger: Transcendental Phenomenology, Professor Dermot Moran.
- Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, Dr. James O’Shea.
- The Emergence of the Individual in Political Society from Myth to Philosophy, Dr. Brendan Purcell.
- Naturalism, Dr. Jack Ritchie.
- On Intellect (Platonic and Peripatetic discussions), Dr. Alexandrine Schniewind.
- Philosophy of Mind, Dr. James O’Shea
- Plato’s Republic, Dr William Desmond.
- Readings in Classical Metaphysics, Dr Fran O’Rourke.

Thomas Aquinas College Courses (1999-2003)

Philosophy :

- *Plato, Porphyry, Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas.* Dr. Sean Collins, Freshman Year.
- *The Pre-Socratics: Fragments, Aristotle: De Anima, Physics.* Dr. Richard Ferrier, Sophomore Year.
- *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, Politics.* Dr. Thomas Kaiser, Junior Year.
- *Aristotle: Physics, Metaphysics, St. Thomas Aquinas: On Being and Essence.* Dr. John Neumayr, Senior Year.

Theology:

- *The Holy Bible,* Dr. Paul O’Reilly, Freshman Year.
- *St. Augustine, St. Athanasius, Gaunilo, St. Anselm, St. John Damascene.* Dr. Richard Ferrier, Sophomore Year.

- *St. Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theologiae: On Sacred Doctrine, On God, On Law.* Dr. Marc Berquist, Junior Year.
- *St. Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theologiae: On the Trinity, On the Sacraments, On the Passion of Christ.* Dr. John Neumayr, Senior Year.

Mathematics:

- *Euclid: Elements.* Dr. Michael Letteney, Freshman Year.
- *Plato: Timaeus, Ptolemy: Almagest, Copernicus: Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres, Apollonius: On Conic Sections, Kepler: Epitome of Copernican Astronomy, Astronomia Nova, Archimedes: On Conoids and Spheroids.* Dr. Kevin Kolbeck, Sophomore Year.
- *Viète: Standard Enumeration of Geometric Results, Introduction to the Analytic Art, Descartes: Geometry, Archimedes: Quadrature of the Parabola, Hippocrates, Archimedes, Cavalieri, Pascal, Leibniz, Bernoulli, Newton, Berkeley, Balzano.* Dr. John Nieto, Junior Year.
- *Pascal: Generation of Conic Sections, Taylor: Integral Calculus, Dedekind: Essay on the Theory of Numbers, Lobachevski: Geometrical Researches On The Theory Of Parallels.* Dr. Ronald Richard, Senior Year.

Music and Music Theory:

- *Plato: Timaeus, Boethius: On Music, Mozart: Sonatas, Dr. Molly Gustin: Tonality, Kalkavage: On the Measurement of Tones.* Dr. Andrew Seeley, Junior Year.

Language:

- *Latin I.* Dr. Karen Zedlick, Freshman Year.
- *Latin II.* Dr. Marc Berquist, Sophomore Year.

Science:

- *Aristotle, DeKoninck, Fabre, Galen, Harvey, Linnaeus, Pascal, Archimedes, Mendel, Driesch, Gould and Marler, Tinbergen, Goethe, Virchow, von Frisch.* Dr. Karen Zedlick, Freshman Year.
- *Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Lavoisier, Avogadro, Dalton, Gay-Lussac, Pascal, Berthollet, Couper, Lavoisier, Mendeleev, Richter, Wollaston, Cannizzaro.* Dr. Steven Cain, Sophomore Year.
- *Descartes: Principles of Philosophy, Galileo: Two New Sciences, Newton: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy.* Dr. Michael McLean, Junior Year.
- *Einstein: Relativity: The Special and the General Theory, Huygens: Treatise on Light, Newton: Optiks, Maxwell: A Treatise on Electricity and Magnetism, Gilbert: De Magnete, Ampere: Mechanics, Waves, & Optics Manual, Electricity & Magnetism Manual.* Dr. Collins, Senior Year.

Seminar:

- *Homer: Iliad, Odyssey, Plato: Ion, Symposium, Republic, Aeschylus: Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers, Eumenides, Sophocles: Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone, Herodotus: Histories, Plutarch: Lives (Lycurgus, Pericles, Aristides, Alcibiades, Alexander), Aristotle: Poetics, Rhetoric, Euripides: Hippolytus, Thucydides: History of the Peloponnesian War, Aristophanes: The Birds, The Clouds.* Dr. Kevin Kolbeck, Freshman Year.
- *Virgil: Aeneid, Lucretius: On the Nature of Things, Livy: The Rise of Rome, Plutarch: Lives (Marcellus, Caius Marius, Sylla, Tiberius Gracchus, Caius Gracchus, Caesar, Cato the Younger, Marcus Brutus, Comparison of Dion and Brutus), Cicero: On Duties, Tacitus: Annals, Epictetus: Manual, St. Augustine: Confessions, On the Teacher, Boethius: Consolation of Philosophy, Dante: Divine Comedy; Inferno, Purgatory, Paradise, Chaucer: Canterbury Tales, Spenser: Faerie Queen, St. Thomas Aquinas: On the Teacher.* Dr. Richard Ferrier, Sophomore Year.

- *Cervantes: Don Quixote, St. Thomas Aquinas: On Kingship, Summa Theologiae I-II, Machiavelli: The Prince, Discourses, Shakespeare: Julius Caesar, King Richard the Second, King Henry the Fourth: Part One, Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, Macbeth, Twelfth Night, The Tempest, Sonnets, Bacon: The Great Renewal, The New Organon, Descartes: Discourse on Method, Rules for the Direction of the Mind, Meditations, Pascal: Pensées, Hobbes: Leviathan, Spinoza: Theologico-Political Treatise, Milton: Paradise Lost, Corneille: Le Cid, Racine: Phaedre, Locke: Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Second Essay on Civil Government, Berkeley: Treatise Concerning Human Knowledge, Hume: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Swift: Gulliver's Travels, Gibbon: Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Leibniz: Discourse on Metaphysics, Rousseau: Social Contract, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, Kant: Critique of Pure Reason, Hamilton, Madison, Jay: Federalist Papers, Articles of Confederation, Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, Lincoln-Douglas Debates. Dr. Christopher Deacon, Junior Year.*
- *Tolstoy: War and Peace, Adam Smith: Wealth of Nations, Kant: Critique of Pure Reason, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, Goethe: Faust, Hegel: Philosophy of History, Phenomenology of Mind, Feuerbach: Essence of Christianity, Toxqueville: Democracy in America, The Old Regime and the French Revolution, Mark Twain: Huckleberry Finn, Austen: Emma, Conrad: Heart of Darkness, Karl Marx: Capital, Communist Manifesto, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, German Ideology, Engles: Quantity and Quality, Negation of the Negation, Ibsen: A Doll's House, Dostoyevski: Brothers Karamazov, Darwin: Origin of Species, Nietzsche: On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History, Beyond Good & Evil, Kierkegaard: Fear and Trembling, Philosophical Fragments, Flaubert: Three Tales, John Henry Newman: Development Of Christian Doctrine, Melville: Billy Bud, T.S. Elliot: Journey of the Magi, The Waste Land, Freud: General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, Jung: Analytical Psychology, Cather: My Antonia, St. Thomas Aquinas: The Division and Methods of the Sciences, St. Pius X: Pascendi Dominici Gregis, Leo XIII: Aeterni Patris, Rerum Novarum, Pius XII: Humani Generis, Pius XI: Quadragesimo Anno, Second Vatican Council: Lumen Gentium, O'Connor: A Good Man is Hard to Find, The Enduring Chill, Plato: The Laws. Dr. Michael Pietta, Senior Year.*

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Acting Head and Co-founder of Reason Together Philosophical Association (2006 – 2007)

Reason Together is a group that was founded in association with St. John's Lutheran Church and publishes an online philosophical blog (www.reasontogether.org). Weekly meetings consist of academic lectures covering various topics, including science, philosophy, politics, theology, apologetics, art, history, and literature. After returning to Ireland to complete my PhD, Ken Sands (co-founder) assumed the position of acting head.
- Appointed Moderator and Lecturer of Mars Hill Philosophical Association (2004 – 2006)

Mars Hill, in conjunction with Answers in Action, was founded by Bob and Gretchen Passantino in 1974 and has continued to operate for 35 years. Initially this association began as a theology class taught by the Passantinos. It eventually evolved into a philosophical and theological discussion group that included theologians, philosophers, scientists, and academic professors who would meet each week to discuss and debate various intellectual ideas. Many of Mars Hill's members have gone on to become accomplished academics.

REFERENCES:

Dr. Rico Vitz, *Assistant Professor of Philosophy.*

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Dr. Gerard Casey, *Senior Lecturer in Philosophy.*

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University College Dublin
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Dr. James O’Shea, *Senior Lecturer in Philosophy; Ph.D. Supervisor.*

UCD School of Philosophy
Newman Building
University College Dublin
Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland
Email: jim.oshea@ucd.ie

Dr. Brendan Purcell, *Emeritus Faculty and Senior Lecturer at UCD.*

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ADDITIONAL REFERENCE FOR THE RECORDS OF STUDENT EVALUATIONS AND TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS:

Dr. Teri Merrick, *Chair and Professor of Philosophy at Azusa Pacific.*

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Dr. Michael Holden, *Head of Department and Philosophy Professor.*

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