Conceptual Engineering Online Seminar

SPRING 2022 PROGRAMME

The **Conceptual Engineering Online Seminar** is co-organized by the Department of Philosophy at the University of Zurich and the Arché Research Centre at the University of St Andrews. The meetings take place every Tuesday at 3-5pm BST/4-6pm CEST from March 29 to June 28, for a total of 14 sessions.

SESSION #06 | MAY 03, 2022

PETER RAILTON (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) | "Scaffolding Normative Concepts: Social Change, Personal Development, and Reverse Engineering"

Our normative concepts—theoretical and practical—often seem to function as ways of presenting potential solutions to problems that are characteristic of our shared lives: What to think? What to do? What to feel? How to live and work together? This fits a number of the features of normative concepts, such as their putative thought- and action-guidingness, their projectability into novel situations, their openness with respect to change, and the supervenience of the normative properties they identify upon non-normative properties. Perhaps solutions developed in practice have been a scaffold for the development of normative concepts, which in turn have afforded a framework for prospective responses to one another and to our world. ("Solutions" here should not be read as ultimately successful solutions, or as something we'd endorse—solutions to problems of social stability, for example, have taken many forms through pre-history and history, only some of which any of us might now advocate.) Looking at the history of some central normative concepts, and also their appearance in psychological development, we can see patterns that resemble what we would expect if some such picture of the distinctive role and character of normative concepts held. If so, then reverse-engineering of our normative concepts could be a worthwhile research program in philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science—indeed, it has begun in earnest in cognitive science. Reverse-engineering can also be a basis for criticism, and can afford resources for constructive approach to conceptual change.

ZOOM DETAILS
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www.youtube/c/ConceptualEngineering

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