Speakers' Lecture Titles and Abstracts (arranged in order of presentation):

Speaker: Jonathan Dancy
Title: What Was Prichard's Problem?
Abstract:

In addition to now familiar debates about the left-hand side of the reasons relation, in which the question is what sorts of things can be good reasons, there is also an unnoticed difficulty about the right-hand side: do reasons favour particular actions or some less familiar object such as 'acting in a certain way'. In this talk I attempt to bring out this difficulty in the hope that a resolution will present itself.

Speaker: Ryo Chonayabashi
Title: Can Moral Particularists Be Robust Realists?
Abstract:

Some writers recently suggested that robust realism concerning the normative (in this paper, I shall focus on the moral) is committed to the thesis that the complete/full explanation of a particular normative fact requires a general principle (Enoch 2019, Berker 2019). According to one version of moral particularism, particular moral facts are not brutal, but their explanations do not require any general moral principles. This version of moral particularism is in tension with the recent suggestion that explaining a particular moral fact requires a general moral principle. In the first part of the paper, I shall present a particularist picture of the complete/full explanation of particular moral facts, appealing to Jonathan Dancy's discussions on the grounds/enablers distinction (2004, Chapter 3) and normative facts as "metafacts" (2007). On this picture, a particular meta-normative fact explains why certain natural grounding fact together with relevant enablers makes it the case that the target object has an evaluative/normative valence. Such a particularist picture will rebut the claim that robust realism requires general moral principles, contra Enoch and Berker. In the latter part of the paper, I shall consider whether this version of particularism is actually motivated. Through discussing the roles played by grounding natural facts, relevant enablers, and normative metafacts, especially their justificatory roles (cf., Väyrynen 2021), I shall argue that particular normative metafacts do not play any significant role in the grounding explanation of particular moral facts. The paper's overall conclusion will be that particularist robust realism is a possibility, but not well motivated.

Speaker: Kaoru Ando

Title: Moorean Axiology Still Not Dead: Dancy on Organic Unities

Abstract:

Jonathan Dancy has greatly widened the conceptual space of axiology by uncovering the possibility that intrinsic value of one and the same thing may vary depending on the context. He strengthened his context sensitive holism by refuting a rival view, that is, the Moorean doctrine of organic unities. Nevertheless, his argument against Moore is not conclusive and Moorean view is still not dead. Moereover, even if his rejection of Moorean invariabilism is correct, Dancy has reason to endorse the doctrine of organic unities, or so I will argue.

Speaker: Alan Thomas

Title: The Role of the Imagination in Particularist Moral Judgement

Abstract:

This paper argues that our capacity to imagine plays an important role in explaining several aspects of a particularist account of moral judgement. John McDowell has argued both that there is moral perception and that perceptual states always "have the world in view". The paper develops this claim. It further identifies the role of the imagination in the recognition of the evaluative shape of situations and argues that the imagination is involved in singular judgements. It concludes that a distinctively particularist account of moral judgement will draw extensively on the use of the productive imagination.

Speaker: Peter Shiu-Hwa Tsu

Title: Particularism, Underdetermination of Reason, and Embeddedness

Abstract:

Suppose that rationality consists essentially in responding correctly to reasons, then to be rational, it is of utmost importance to figure out how reasons behave so that we could make the correct response. This paper aims to promote what I call 'the embeddedness thesis' (ET) as a general constraint on how moral reasons behave. In support, intuitive and isomorphic theoretical examples would be provided. Raz's discussions of the underdetermination of reason in relation to Dancy's particularism would serve as a background. It will be argued against Raz that the underdetermination of reason (UR) does not disclose the truth in Dancy's particularism but rather exposes its weakness. This is essentially because UR shows that the purported truth in Dancy's particularism is actually predicated on an assumption, which, I will argue, violates ET.

Speaker: Shunsuke Sugimoto
Title: Particularism and AI
Abstract:

Currently, we are experiencing the third wave of artificial intelligence (AI) and ethical AI has become a significant focus within this wave. Discussions on the possibility of implementing ethics into AI and various proposals have emerged regarding how ethics can be incorporated into AI if it is indeed possible. Attempts have been made to implement ethics in AI based on different theories within normative ethics, including consequentialism (Cloos 2005), deontology (Anderson & Anderson 2011; Powers 2011), virtue ethics (Gamez et al. 2020), and hybrid pluralism (Kim 2021; Song & Yeung 2022). These proposals are grounded on the assumption that moral principles are necessary for moral judgments. However, if we consider the possibility where moral principles are deemed unnecessary, can we still implement ethics in AI? If so, how can we achieve this? In this paper, we aim to explore the implementation of ethics in AI based on moral particularism. We begin by providing an overview of the background surrounding ethical AI (Section 1). Subsequently, we raise the question of whether it is possible to implement ethics in AI without relying on moral principles, and if so, how this can be accomplished. We propose that moral particularism can provide an answer to this question. Therefore, we demonstrate how moral judgments can be made without moral principles through moral particularism (Section 2). Furthermore, we examine whether AI can enable such implementation (Section 3).

Speaker: Nicholas Shackel
Title: Norms and Normative Focus
Abstract:

In this chapter I address a debate about the nature of norms, a debate that has been conducted in terms of the scope of a modal operator. Here I argue that the features of what I call Normative Focus are more fundamental than scope. We shall see limitations of scope contrasted with better analysis in terms of Normative Focus. Some authors address such limitations by extending what they mean by scope. I show that scope is still not doing the work: what does it is their elicitation of our tacit knowledge of Normative Focus. Finally, I show that scope cannot capture Normative Focus because scope allows us to make only one distinction where we need to make three. So we should leave scope to the philosophers of language and turn instead to the ontology of Normative Focus.