All meetings run on Wednesdays from 5.30-7.15 pm. Sessions are followed by a drink and further discussion in the Students’ Union for those who wish to attend. All are welcome.

9 January: Jason Eyre (De Montfort University) Room 828
Dramatising learning development: towards an understanding without definition
‘Learning Development’ is a field of practice in UK higher education that has emerged over the past 20 years in response to the massification and widening participation agendas. Learning Developers are increasingly seeking recognition of their practices, and this can lead practitioners to attempt to clarify their role as a distinctive offer within UK Higher Education. Drawing on the philosophical work of Gilles Deleuze this paper problematises the idea of there being a ‘clear and distinct’ understanding of learning development, arguing instead for a ‘distinct and obscure’ concept of learning development that remains open to creative evolution.

Jason Eyre is a Senior Lecturer in Learning Development and an Institutional Teacher Fellow at De Montfort University, Leicester. He is completing his doctoral thesis (The Idea of Learning Development in UK Higher Education) at the UCL Institute of Education under the supervision of Paul Standish.

16 January: Edward Harcourt (Oxford University) Room 828
Enactivism and Environmental Interventions for Mental Health
Where should we intervene to address mental health problems - on the person (specifically, on their brain), or on their environment? Enactivists have championed the view that we are not our brains, seeing mindedness instead as constituted by a whole human being’s relations with its environment. Some have also relied on this view to champion environmental as opposed to brain-focused interventions for mental health. The paper asks to what extent enactivism is sufficient, and indeed necessary, as a foundation for environmental mental health interventions.

Edward Harcourt, a Fellow of Keble College, Oxford, since 2005, works in ethics and moral psychology. His publications cover (among other things) neo-Aristotelianism and child development, ethical dimensions of psychoanalysis, the moral emotions, love and virtue, Nietzsche’s ethics, and the philosophy of mental health and mental illness. He convened the Meaning and Mindedness seminars (Tavistock Clinic 2010-15), was PI on the AHRC network ‘The Development of Character: Attachment Theory and the
Moral Psychology of Vice and Virtue’ and on the Wellcome/ISSF project ‘Therapeutic Conflicts: Co-Producing Meaning in Mental Health’, and is a Director of the Oxford Summer Schools in Philosophy and Psychiatry. He is currently on secondment as Director of Research at the AHRC.

23 January: Sacha Golob (KCL) Room 828

Discomfort, Anxiety, Humiliation: ‘Negative’ Affects in Modern Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Pedagogy

Modern philosophical accounts of moral development often emphasise one of the following: (i) a sudden inflection point, (ii) a feeling of disorientation, and (iii) a central role for ‘negative’ emotions such as humiliation or anxiety. These characteristics are pronounced in theories where developmental mechanisms (dialogue, socialisation) are regarded as inadequate: early Heidegger is a prime example. I examine connections and divergences between these trends and contemporary work by Boler, Harbin and others on disorientation and discomfort in teaching. Having juxtaposed these authors with Heidegger, I contrast them with the moral role allotted to humbling or humiliation by Immanuel Kant.

Sacha Golob is a Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at King’s College London and the Co-Director of the Centre for Philosophy and the Visual Arts (CPVA). Before joining King’s, he was a Fellow at Peterhouse, Cambridge. He has published extensively on modern French and German Philosophy and the Philosophy of Art. His current research looks at contemporary conceptions of transformation, virtue and degeneration.

30 January: Graham Parkes (University of Vienna) Room 828

Being-Here: There’s No App for That

The purpose of many computer products in the area of information and communications technology is to capture the user’s attention, distract it from the actual place where the user is situated, and export it to some virtual space where advertisers practise their persuasion. The enterprise has been enormously successful, though the effects on users aren’t always benign (anxiety, depression, etc). Philosophically, the more insidious effects are on how we think and who we think we are, encouraging calculative thinking and a post-Cartesian self-image of ourselves as disembodied minds only contingently situated in physical places. The implications for education deserve careful consideration.

Graham Parkes is a Professorial Research Fellow in the Institute of Philosophy at the University of Vienna, where he does research and occasional teaching in intercultural philosophy (European and East-Asian) and philosophies of nature and culture. Among his publications are: Heidegger and Asian Thought (ed. 1987), Nietzsche and Asian Thought (ed. 1991), Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche’s Psychology (1994), and some 120 journal articles and book chapters. He has just completed a book with the working title, Coping with Global Warming: A Philosophical Approach to Ousting the Obstructors, Reforming Democracy, Cooperating with China, and Enjoying Better Lives.
6 February: David Turner (Beijing Normal University) Room 822  
*Causation in Education*

This presentation is a preliminary examination of the concept of causation, and how it shapes the way that we think about education and educational research. We engage in education with the intention of producing specific outcomes, confident that we understand the connection between our goals and the means that we select. In this presentation I examine how the ideas of cause and effect have changed over time, suggest certain problems with our common sense notion of causation, and explain why this is important for how we think about education and educational research.

**David Turner** obtained his PhD in Comparative Education at the Institute of Education in 1981, since when he has taught in education departments in a number of universities in the UK and abroad. He is currently Professor of Education in the Institute for International and Comparative Education, Beijing Normal University. He is the author of a number of books, including *Theory and Practice of Education* (Continuum, 2009), and numerous articles.

13 February: Andrea Kern (University of Leipzig) Room 822  
*On the Role of Education in Human Life*

In my talk I will explore the relation between human life and education by focusing on a recent debate about the old Aristotelian idea that the difference between rational life and non-rational life is one in “form”. According to Second-Nature-Positions this idea suggests that the distinctive rational character of human life is largely a result of education, and hence a matter of second nature. According to First-Nature-Positions, it suggests that human life has a distinctive first nature that already entails rationality. I will argue that both positions are dissatisfying. They are unable to fully embrace the idea that the difference between human and animal life is a difference in “form”. To endorse this idea, we must think of the human as a form of life whose very concept contains the concept of education and therefore does not only entail the distinction between first and second nature, but gives it a distinctive meaning that cannot be applied to any other form of life.

**Andrea Kern** is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Leipzig and Co-director of the Forschungskolleg Analytic German Idealism (FAGI). Her research interests are epistemology, skepticism, philosophy of mind, philosophical anthropology and aesthetics. The philosophers who most interest her are Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Wittgenstein. Her publications include *Schöne Lust. Eine Theorie der ästhetischen Erfahrung nach Kant* (2000) and *Sources of Knowledge. On the Concept of a Rational Capacity for Knowledge* (2017).

20 February: Matteo Falomi (Essex University) Room 828  
*Cavell and McDowell on Education and Self-Determination*

John McDowell describes *Bildung* as the achievement of self-determination through communal initiation. Through this, the newcomer gains capacity to think for themselves, and specific normative status. While McDowell’s picture seems to capture a natural intuition (McDowell presents it as a Wittgensteinian “reminder”), the picture cannot make a sense of certain moral predicaments, where one’s demand for normative status is based on
lack of capacity for self-determination. Take Nora’s personal transformation in Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*. Here one needs to adapt an idea from Stanley Cavell: self-determination requires conceiving of the self as divided between a “present” and a “further” state.

**Matteo Falomi** currently holds a lectureship at the School of Philosophy and Art History at Essex University. He gained his PhD from the University of Naples’ “l’Orientale”, and has held post-doctoral appointments at Oxford University and at Essex. He has published on Wittgensteinian ethics and on Cavell’s moral and political philosophy. He is presently working on a book on Cavell’s notion of moral perfectionism and developing a set of related projects, including a paper on Rousseau’s discussion of suicide, a paper on the concept of moralism, and a paper on the problem of radical change in contemporary democratic theory.

**27 February: Anne Pirrie (University of the West of Scotland) Room 828**

*Virtue and the Quiet Art of Scholarship: Reclaiming the University*

I discuss themes addressed in my *Virtue and the Quiet Art of Scholarship: Reclaiming the University*, concerning how to do good work in a climate of constraint. The book provides scope for dimensions of life that are frequently suppressed in the quest for a convincing, consistent and comprehensive ‘grand narrative’ rooted in a particular disciplinary tradition or professional practice. It calls for an alternative aesthetic of academic practice, foregrounding lived experience and the contingent nature of scholarly inquiry. The book celebrates an alternative ‘epistemic virtues’, those that Italo Calvino considered the qualities of literature: *lightness; quickness; exactitude; visibility and multiplicity*.

**Anne Pirrie** is Reader in Education at the University of the West of Scotland. She studied German at the University of Edinburgh. She then had a brief and inglorious career as a teacher of modern languages in two secondary schools. After a short spell in Italy, she spent many years as a contract researcher at the Scottish Council for Research in Education and at the universities of Edinburgh, Stirling and Glasgow before taking up her current appointment.

**6 March: John Tillson (Liverpool Hope University) Room 828**

*The use of punishment in schools*

In many schools, when a pupil breaks a school rule or fails to follow a reasonable instruction, teachers can impose a punishment on that pupil. While some prefer not to use the word ‘punishment’, others object to punishment in substance as well as name. Recent research casts doubt on the efficacy of punishments with restorative justice generating interest. While such practices retain punitive elements, defenders may say that such features are excusable by the doctrine of double effect rather than being positively desirable. However, such endeavours are perhaps too costly in time and resources to replace punishments completely.

**John Tillson** is Lecturer in philosophy of education at Liverpool Hope University, Department of Education Studies. He is the author of *Children, Religion and the Ethics of Influence* (Bloomsbury). His publications to date have addressed a cluster of questions about curricula contents and aims, and due and undue influence in teaching, especially over pupils’ religious, political
and ethical beliefs and attitudes. His research interests can be captured under the expression ‘the ethics of influence’. He is Principal Investigator on the Centre for Ethics and Education funded project, ‘Pedagogies of Punishment: How and Why Should Schools Punish Students (If At All)?’

**13 March: Beth Lord (University of Aberdeen) Room 828**

“Equal by Design”: Using film to connect philosophical concepts to housing

In this session we will watch a screening of “Equal by Design”, a 25-minute documentary that links the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza to equality and wellbeing in housing design. Beth Lord, co-author of the film and Reader in Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen, will introduce the film and discuss how she and collaborator Peg Rawes use Spinoza to think about architecture and the UK housing crisis, and how they used the film to communicate to non-academic audiences.

**Beth Lord** is Reader in Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen, where she works largely on history of philosophy. She is the author of many articles and book chapters on Spinoza and of two books: *Kant and Spinozism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) and *Spinoza’s Ethics: an Edinburgh Philosophical Guide* (Edinburgh UP, 2011). She has edited two collections of interdisciplinary essays on Spinoza and recently led the AHRC-funded project *Equalities of Wellbeing in Philosophy and Architecture.*