

# Conceptual Ethics & Engineering

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## Description

Are there reasons for changing our concepts? If so, what reasons? And how can we respond to them appropriately? Conceptual ethics and engineering is an emerging area (though one with old roots) which addresses these and related questions. In this seminar we will work through several topics in conceptual ethics and engineering and its intersections with meta-philosophy, philosophy of language, feminist philosophy, philosophy of race, epistemology, philosophy of logic, metaphysics, metaethics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of science.

## Assignments

1. *Seminar participation*
2. *Two-page abstract of term paper*
3. *Reviews of abstracts*
4. *Presentations at mini-conference*
5. *Term paper*

## Schedule

We may change some of the later readings depending on student interests.

Week 1    Burgess and Plunkett, "Conceptual Ethics I & II"

### Engineering What? How?

Week 2    Peirce: "The Ethics of Terminology"  
Plunkett: "Which Concepts Should We Use? Metalinguistic Negotiations and the Methodology of Philosophy"

Week 3    Cappelen: selections from *Fixing Language*

Week 4    Simion and Kelp: "Function First"  
Margolis and Laurence: Concepts SEP page

### Practical Defects

Week 4    Haslanger: selections from *Resisting Reality*  
Manne: selection from *Down Girl*

Dembroff: "Oppressive Categories"

- Week 5 Reisner: "Pragmatic Reasons for Belief"  
Thomasson: "A Pragmatic Method for Conceptual Ethics"

### **Semantic and Epistemic Defects**

- Week 6 Prior: "The Runabout Inference-Ticket"  
Scharp: selection from *Replacing Truth*  
Hempel: selection from "Vagueness and Logic"  
Kripke: selection from *Reference and Existence*
- Week 7 Williamson: selection from *Philosophy of Philosophy*  
Cappelen: selection from *Fixing Language*
- Week 8 Dorr and Hawthorne: selection from "Naturalness"  
Pérez Carballo: "Conceptual Evaluation: Epistemic"
- Week 9 Dasgupta: "Realism and the Problem of Value"  
Eklund: selections from *Choosing Normative Concepts*
- Week 10 Egre and Ó Madagáin: "Concept Utility"

### **Conceptual innovation**

- Week 11 Fodor: selections from *LOT2*  
Carey: "Why Theories of Concepts Should Not Ignore the Problem of Acquisition" and selections from *The Origins of Concepts*  
Strevens: "Theoretical terms without analytic truths"

***Abstracts due***

- Week 12 Wilson: selections from *Wandering Significance, Physics Avoidance*  
Chang: selections from *Inventing Temperature*

***Reviews of abstracts due***

- Week 13 Mini-conference, Day 1

***Draft of term paper due***

- Week 14 Mini-conference, Day 2