Workshop on Skepticism | Princeton University
Saturday 26 May 2018 | Talks in Marx Hall, Room 201

10:00-10:30  Coffee & Light Breakfast,  Tower Room

10:30-12:15  Genia Schönbaumsfeld (Southampton): “Epistemic Angst, Intellectual Courage, and Radical Scepticism”

In this talk I’m going to examine the question of what motivates the radical sceptical scenario and how one might resist both the philosophical and the psychological moves that appear to make it compulsory. The talk has three parts. In part I I will give a brief outline of considerations that do not force radical sceptical scenarios upon us; in part II, by contrast, I will offer a diagnosis of the underlying picture which does; and in part III, by drawing, among other things, on some ideas of Kierkegaard’s, I will show how we can find the intellectual courage to escape the radical sceptic’s clutches.

12:15-1:15  Lunch in the Tower Room

1:15-3:00  Grace Helton (Princeton): “Skepticism & Solipsism”

I argue that if you are the only sentient being in the universe, i.e., if metaphysical solipsism obtains, then a vast range of your beliefs will turn out to be false, including many of your beliefs about: political affairs, cultural traditions, religious practices, aesthetic objects and events, and social structures. Thus, solipsism can be used to argue for external world skepticism, the view that we don’t know much of anything about the world outside of our minds. Moreover, some of the strategies which philosophers have used to argue against skepticism do not obviously succeed against solipsism, such as Chalmers’ structuralist approach. So, there is at least some reason to think that the best route to skepticism might proceed via metaphysical solipsism.

3:00-3:30  Break,  Tower Room

3:30-5:15  Annalisa Coliva (UC Irvine): “What Anti-Realism About Hinges Could Possibly Be”

The paper explores the connections between epistemology and metaphysics, with special attention to the status of so-called "hinge propositions". While paying attention to Wittgenstein's own ideas in On Certainty, the paper marks a significant departure from them by restricting the number of hinges to heavy-weight assumptions, and by considering hinges as truth-apt. It explores the problems of conceiving of their truth either in a correspondentist or in evidence-dependent way and proposes to think of them as minimally true. It then explores the compatibility of minimalism about hinges with pluralism about truth and concludes with some general remarks concerning the sense in which the proposal qualifies as anti-realist, and concerning its relevance with respect to skepticism about the external world.

6pm  Dinner for Speakers at Agricola, 11 Witherspoon St.