In this course we will focus primarily on four recently published or forthcoming books by important figures in contemporary metaethics:

(2) Kieran Setiya, *Knowing Right from Wrong* (OUP 2012).

We will begin with some attention to the language of morality. Finlay’s *Confusion of Tongues* is an ambitious work that offers reductive analyses of central moral terms such as “good”, “ought” and “reason”; defends those analyses on the grounds that they best account for the practicality of moral judgment, the persistence of moral disagreement and other recalcitrant phenomena; and argues that a better understanding of normative language is the key to dissolving the central problems of metaethics.

We will then turn to the epistemology of morality. In *Knowing Right from Wrong*, Setiya critically examines three popular arguments for moral skepticism—the arguments from disagreement, coincidence, and genetic undermining—and argues that moral knowledge is possible only if morality can be grounded in human nature.

In the second half of the course, the metaphysics of morality will assume center stage. We will examine two recent and influential, yet strikingly dissimilar, forms of moral realism: the “robust realism” of David Enoch and the “normative cognitivism” of Thomas Scanlon. We will be especially concerned with the ways that these two realists respond to the challenges of metaphysical extravagance, epistemic luck and the practicality of moral judgment.

Along the way, we will read related work by Tristram McPherson (including his critiques of the method of reflective equilibrium and Enoch’s “argument from deliberative indispensability”); Michael Huemer (his defense of moral intuitionism); and Sarah McGrath. Enoch, Finlay, McPherson, Setiya and Scanlon will visit the seminar. (Enoch will visit via Skype.)

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All readings listed below will be available on the Princeton blackboard site for the course at https://blackboard.princeton.edu/pucourse/PHI524_S2014 under Course Materials.
1. February 5. Overview. Why it’s so hard to give a reductive analysis of “good.”

   Finlay, *Confusion of Tongues*, Chapter 1, “Introduction.”

2. February 12. A reductive analysis of “good”; the practicality of moral language.


3. February 19. Finlay’s account of categorical imperatives, intrinsic value and moral disagreement. *Stephen Finlay visits the seminar.*

   Finlay, *Confusion of Tongues*, Chapter 7 “Categoricity and Finality.”

   Finlay, *Confusion of Tongues*, Chapter 8: “A Disagreeable Problem.”


   Setiya, *Knowing Right from Wrong*, Chapter 1: “Disagreement.”

   Setiya, *Knowing Right from Wrong*, Chapter 2: “Reliability.”

5. March 5. The argument from genetic undermining and Setiya’s account. *Kieran Setiya visits the seminar.*

   Setiya, *Knowing Right from Wrong*, Chapter 3: “Knowledge.”

   Setiya, *Knowing Right from Wrong*, Chapter 4: “Human Nature.”


**March 19—SPRING BREAK.**

7. March 26. An Argument for “Robust Realism”; the Robust Realist’s response to metaphysical challenges.


8. April 2. Robust Realism and the arguments from reliability, disagreement, and practicality. *David Enoch visits the seminar (via Skype).*


  McGrath, “Should the Moral Realist Believe in Moral Perception?” (manuscript)


10. April 16. Scanlon’s Moral Realism; Scanlon’s response to metaphysical challenges.


12. April 30. TBD.