



PHILOSOPHY
department

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“Can Bayesianism Accommodate Higher Order Defeat?”

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021

4:00 – 6:00 PM

VIRTUAL TALK.

Abstract:

Sometimes we get evidence which suggests that our beliefs aren't rational. This might come from learning that people with the same evidence reach different conclusions, that we're under the influence of mind-distorting drugs, fatigued, subject to implicit biases, or that our beliefs have been impacted in potentially problematic ways by social or evolutionary forces. In this paper I'll consider whether reducing confidence substantially in response to such evidence can be accommodated in a Bayesian framework. I'll show that thinking of such revisions as Bayesian, while possible, brings with it a set of substantial and controversial commitments. For those who find these commitments unattractive, I'll sketch two non-Bayesian alternatives in the second part of the paper.

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