

Hong Kong Catastrophic Risk Centre
Hybrid Research Seminar

Do Present AI Systems Have Moral Status?

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A being has moral status if the way that being is treated matters morally, and it matters for the sake of the being in question, not merely in virtue of its effect on someone else. A small but growing number of researchers and public figures take seriously the possibility that AI systems will have, or perhaps already do have, moral status. Most of these researchers and public figures think that an AI system can have moral status only if it is phenomenally conscious, and that current AI systems lack moral status at least in part because they are not phenomenally conscious. In this paper I argue that for all we know current AI systems have moral status, in virtue of the fact that they will become conscious, or would be conscious in relevant counterfactual scenarios. Whether this is so depends on the ontology and diachronic identity conditions of the AI systems. But the ontology and diachronic identity conditions of AI systems are murky and poorly understood. The upshot is that we cannot take comfort in the widespread assumption that current AI systems lack moral status. We simply don't know whether they have moral status, absent a better understanding of their ontology and diachronic identity conditions.

Venue

LYH317

Meeting ID: 983 1951 5823

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More Info: <https://www.ln.edu.hk/philoso/events>

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Scan to join

zoom



17 Sept 2026

(Thursday)

4:45-6:15 pm

(HKT)