Lingnan University 嶺南大學 香港 Hong Kong
Department of Philosophy

Philosophy Departmental Seminar

Why Want a World

The vast world that surrounds us doesn't really need us. But what about us, do we need the world? We of course need the world even just to survive, and for many other things. But that's compatible with seeing the entire external world as only mattering instrumentally, so far as our own good is concerned. On what I call *Prudential Solipsism*, the world is in principle redundant in this way—at least in theory, we could live the best possible lives whether or not there actually is a world out there. Prudential Solipsism is obviously entailed by hedonism. But I will show that most current approaches to well-being are unfortunately at least compatible with it. Yet many people, and at least some philosophers—these include Iris Murdoch, Robert Nozick and perhaps Thomas Hurka—think that there *is* special value to connecting with external reality. In this talk, I will develop and defend the idea that we *need* the (or a) world in this stronger sense—that the world plays an essential role in our personal good—that the self is not enough for itself.

Speaker: Professor Guy KAHANE *(University of Oxford)*

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More Info: https://www.ln.edu.hk/philoso/events
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30 November 2026
(Monday)

4:45 – 6:15 pm
(HKT)

All are welcome!