

Call for Abstracts: Workshop on Experience, Meaning, and AI

28-29 May 2026, Paderborn University, Paderborn, Germany

Extended abstracts due by Dec 31, 2025

Acceptances communicated by February 1, 2026

Philosophers are increasingly interested in the issue of *meaning* in relation to Large Language Models (LLMs). This is true both for meaning in a broadly semantic sense (e.g., How should we analyze the meaningfulness of LLM outputs, given that LLMs are not agents and presumably do not themselves mean or understand?), and in the broader normative or ethical sense of their meaning or significance in our lives and practices. In both cases, little attention has thus far been paid to *human experience* as something that both presumably differentiates us from LLMs in meaning contexts, and that is a central component of our meaningful engagement with them.

The goal of this workshop is to bring together scholars for in-depth engagement of work in progress on these issues from a variety of traditions and perspectives in and adjacent to philosophy, including analytic philosophy, phenomenology, history of philosophy, science and technology, and social theory. We are especially interested in work that makes connections between the semantic and ethical aspects of meaning in relation to experience and LLMs, and work that engages more than one of the above-listed traditions and perspectives.

A total of 6-8 participants will be selected on the basis of anonymized extended abstracts (600-1000 words). Participants will be expected to distribute drafts of their work in progress (paper drafts or expanded, structured abstracts; minimum 5pp, maximum 20 pp) to other members of the workshop four weeks in advance. Workshop sessions will take the form of extended, detailed discussions of each draft, rather than formal presentations, with the goal of helping authors to further develop their work. There will also be ample time reserved for informal conversation. The organizers have been in contact with a series editor at a major academic publisher who has expressed initial interest in publishing an edited volume resulting from the workshop.

The workshop will take place on 28-29 May 2026 at Paderborn University (Paderborn, Germany), a small historical German city about midway between Cologne and Hannover, easily reachable from either major city (and either city's airport) by train or car. Paderborn also has an airport that is served by Munich. Two nights of accommodation in Paderborn and all meals will be provided for selected participants; we are unable to cover travel costs.

The workshop is organized in conjunction with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation fellowship of Jacob Rump, guest researcher at Paderborn University for 2025 and 2026, in collaboration with Paderborn philosophers Suzana Alpsancar and Sebastian Luft.

To submit an abstract for consideration, please send an email with the fully anonymized abstract attached as a PDF file, and the title and name of the author in the body of the email, to

Celina Herbrechter at celina.janine@icloud.com. **Submissions deadline: 31 December 2025.** Acceptances communicated by 1 February 2026.

Inquiries (but not submissions) may be directed to at jacobrump@creighton.edu