Discussion Norms

We are writing this document to describe the discussion norms we would like people to use throughout the Fellowship with the aim of ensuring respectful and productive conversations that everyone feels welcome to participate in.

These are largely based on the David Chalmers guidelines: http://consc.net/guidelines/

Respect

We of course expect everyone to show respect to one another. This includes most common sense norms, but for clarity we encourage: being nice, not interrupting others, not starting side conversations to the main discussion, objections to theses not people, not rolling eyes, laughing etc at others. Be nice!

Constructiveness

In order to encourage constructive discussion we encourage people to not present objections as flat dismissals, leave open the possibility there is a response.
In the discussions, we'll be clarifying our understanding of the reading, and talking through our perspectives. Naturally, some of us are therefore going to disagree with each other.
Unconstructive responses to disagreement:
- Trying to convince everyone that you're right
- Flatly dismissing objections or other points of view

Constructive responses to disagreement:
- Trying to figure out what the other person thinks, and why
  - A different worldview? Which part of this caused the disagreement?
  - A difference in model? Can we find the crux of disagreement?
- Leaving open the possibility that you are wrong
- Leaving open the possibility that there is nuance

Inclusiveness

To make sure discussions are inclusive for everyone we encourage people to:
- Be mindful of dominating the discussion
- Explain any technical terms or acronyms used that have not been explained
- Feel like it's okay to ask for clarification on points or unfamiliar terms used
- Acknowledge and listen to points made by others

Zoom norms

We will also set out some procedural norms for how the discussions will run in the online format. Feel free to add any suggestions for other ways to moderate online video discussions:

- Using a hand/finger/fist system: type the following into the chat box:
  - "Hand" or 🖐️ to mean "I want to discuss a new point"
    - The facilitator of the discussion can collate these and then indicate the next person to speak.
  - "finger" or ✌️ to mean "I want to comment on the existing point"
    - Should be directly relevant to the existing discussion
  - "fist" or ✊ to mean "I am confused/jargon/clarification required"
  - We can trial this system - very open to adjustments
- The facilitator of the discussion can raise a hand (in the chat) if they want to speak next and the current speaker has some time to wrap up their points.
  - This is mainly to make sure we have enough time to discuss everything on the agenda