

Theory of Knowledge

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we examine eight major topics in contemporary epistemology :

- (1) Skepticism
- (2) The analysis of knowledge
- (3) Evidentialism vs. reliabilism
- (4) The value of knowledge
- (5) Testimony
- (6) Disagreement
- (7) Epistemic virtues and vices
- (8) Epistemic injustice

By examining these philosophical problems and the concepts involved, students will have a better understanding of the nature of human knowledge — what exactly is knowledge, whether we really have any knowledge of the external world, the value of knowledge over mere true belief, how knowledge and justification are related, why beliefs should be justified, how knowledge can be transmitted, what we should do when we disagree, and the moral aspects of knowledge.

TEXTS

23 articles by different authors. Will be posted on Blackboard Learn.

GRADING

Your course grade is based on the score you get out of a total of 200 points:

- (i) 30 points for attendance: you may miss 3 classes with no penalty; after that, you lose 1 point for each class you miss unless you have very good reason for missing that class.
- (ii) 40 points for 2 article-summaries [20 points each].
- (iii) 80 points for 8 in-class quizzes [10 points each]. A quiz consists only of multiple-choice questions on an article or book chapter assigned for reading.
- (iv) 50 points for a final paper of about 1,500 words.

** This class has no final exam.*

Grade conversion:

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| 181-200 points : A | 171-180 points : A- | 161-170 points : B+ |
| 151-160 points : B | 141-150 points : B- | 131-140 points : C+ |
| 121-130 points : C | 111-120 points : C- | 101-110 points : D |
| 100 and below : F | | |

LECTURE SCHEDULE

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| 1 st week | Skepticism: Barry Stroud, "The Problem of the External World" (Chapter I of <i>The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism</i>) Anthony Brueckner, "The Structure of the Skeptical Argument" |
| 2 nd week | Skepticism: Anthony Brueckner, "The Structure of the Skeptical Argument" (continued) Fred Dretske, "Epistemic Operators" |
| 3 rd week | The Analysis of Knowledge: Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" Robert Fogelin, "Gettier Problems" |
| 4 th week | Reliabilism vs Evidentialism: Alvin Goldman, "What Is Justified Belief?" |
| 5 th week | Reliabilism vs Evidentialism: Earl Conee & Richard Feldman, "Evidentialism" Jason Baehr, "Evidentialism, Vice, and Virtue" |
| 6 th week | The Value of Knowledge: Duncan Pritchard, "What Is the Swamping Problem?" Ward E. Jones, "Why Do We Value Knowledge?" |
| 7 th week | The Value of Knowledge: Ward E. Jones, "Why Do We Value Knowledge?" (continued) Miranda Fricker, "The Value of Knowledge and the Test of Time" |
| 8 th week | Testimony: Jennifer Lackey, "Testimony: Acquiring Knowledge from Others" Keith Lehrer, "Testimony and Trustworthiness" |

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| 9 th week | Testimony: Keith Lehrer, "Testimony and Trustworthiness" (continued) Alvin Goldman, "Experts: Which Ones Should You Trust" |
| 10 th week | Disagreement: David Christensen, "Disagreement as Evidence: The Epistemology of Controversy" Thomas Kelly, "The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement" |
| 11 th week | Disagreement: Thomas Kelly, "The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement" (continued) Peter van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong" |
| 12 th week | Epistemic Virtues and Vices: Nancy Sherman & Heath White, "Intellectual Virtue: Emotions, Luck, and the Ancients" Christopher Hookway, "How to Be a Virtue Epistemologist" |
| 13 th week | Epistemic Virtues and Vices: Christopher Hookway, "How to Be a Virtue Epistemologist" (continued) Julia Driver, "Moral and Epistemic Virtue" |
| 14 th week | Epistemic Injustice: Miranda Fricker, "Epistemic Injustice and a Role for Virtue in the Politics of Knowing" David Coady, "Two Concepts of Epistemic Injustice" |
| 15 th week | Epistemic Injustice: David Coady, "Two Concepts of Epistemic Injustice" (continued) Katherine Hawley, "Trust, Mistrust, and Epistemic Injustice" |