

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

INSTRUCTOR: SAMUEL A. TAYLOR

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OFFICE HOURS: 2:30-4 TU & TH, 3-4 W, OR BY APPOINTMENT

COURSE: PHIL 3655

SEMESTER: SPRING 2014

MEETING TIME: 12-1:50 TU & TH

LOCATION: ENGR 290

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this course we'll take an in-depth look at philosophical questions concerning knowledge and rationality. We'll begin by considering core issues concerning the nature, value, and extent of knowledge and justified belief. What *is* knowledge? What is *rational* or *justified* belief? What (if anything) can we know or justifiably believe? Is it possible to know something without evidence? Next we'll move to a discussion of testimony and disagreement. When can we rationally trust another person's testimony? Can you rationally believe something knowing that other equally smart people disagree with you? Finally, we'll turn to a discussion of the epistemology of philosophy itself. What is the relation between epistemology, philosophy, and science? Do our *intuitions* about various thought experiments count as evidence for philosophical theories? Does the fact that certain experimental results suggest intuitions about philosophical topics vary across cultures undermine our ability to justify our philosophical theories? Many of the topics we discuss throughout the course are interrelated and will often be discussed in connection with one another.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES: Students will gain a wide range of knowledge and develop various skills whose value extends beyond the classroom. There are five main goals of the course. Two are specific to course material. The last three pertain to general skills necessary for success in any field.

- Achieve an understanding of influential views, arguments, and problems in epistemology.
- Develop a critical perspective on those views, arguments, and problems.
- Improve one's ability to interpret texts and reconstruct arguments.
- Improve one's ability to *evaluate* arguments.
- Improve one's ability to carefully and clearly communicate ideas and arguments both verbally and in writing.

OUTCOMES: The American Philosophical Association, in its official statement on outcomes assessment, observes that: "The basic aim of education in philosophy is not and should not be primarily to impart information. Rather it is to help students learn to understand various kinds of deeply difficult intellectual problems, to interpret texts regarding these problems, to analyze and criticize the arguments found in them, and to express themselves in ways that clarify and carry forward reflection upon them." Originally published in *The Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 69:2, pages 94-99.

TEXTS: The only *required* text is: Goldman and McGrath's *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2014). ISBN: 978199981120. Other readings will be posted on Moodle.

GRADING SCALE:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	66-60	59-0

GRADING: Your final grade will be calculated on the basis of 2 take-home exams, 3 out of 4 pop-quizzes, a paper, and a presentation.

EXAMS: 35% of your final grade comes from two take-home exams (15% for the Midterm and 20% for the Final Exam). You will be tested on information from the readings and lectures.

POP-QUIZZES: 15% of your grade will come from your three best of four pop-quizzes (5% each). These quizzes are designed to be completed in about 10 min. and will consist of true/false, multiple-choice, and a few short answer questions on material from the readings and lectures.

PAPER: 30% of your grade comes from an 8-10 page final paper on a topic of your choice (conditional upon my approval) due at the final exam time.

PRESENTATION: 20% of your grade will come from a short 15-20 minute in-class presentation critically engaging with (rather than merely summarizing) an issue or argument from one of the articles we've read for that day. You can meet with me to discuss your presentation as early and as many times as you would like. However, each of you are *required* to produce an outline for the presentation and to meet to discuss this outline at least two days prior to your presentation.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES: Below you'll find additional policies regarding, attendance, participation, and issues regarding academic integrity.

LATE POLICY: Unexcused late papers will receive a 3% grade penalty for **each** 24-hour period that they are late. Unexcused missed quizzes and exams will receive a 3% grade penalty for **each** 24-hour period that passes prior to the completion of a make-up exam.

ATTENDANCE: I'll allow you 4 *unexcused* absences with no penalty (besides late-penalties for pop-quizzes). Each additional absence will result in a 2% penalty to your final grade.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: I will use turnitin.com. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism and cheating will result in a zero for the assignment and will be reported to the university. I expect that you understand what constitutes plagiarism, but if you are unsure then please see the university's student academic integrity webpage (see link below).

PARTICIPATION: Participation in class and on the Moodle discussion forums can raise your final grade *up to* 1/3rd of a letter grade.

NOTES ABOUT THE SCHEDULE: Readings are to be done *before* the class period for which they are listed. These readings are tentative and may be altered depending on how class discussion develops. Readings with a "GM" can be found in the textbook. Readings with a "*" can be found on Moodle.

[THE SCHEDULE CAN BE FOUND ON THE NEXT PAGE]

READINGS

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION & DEFINING KNOWLEDGE	1/20: Syllabus & Introduction to Epistemology 1/22: Gettier: Is Justified True Belief Knowledge*; Descartes: 1 st Meditation*; GM: 1.1, Chapter 3 (SKIP: 3.4.2, 3.4.3, 3.7.1)
WEEK 2 CARTESIAN SKEPTICISM	1/27: Descartes – 2 nd Meditation* Vogel: Cartesian Skepticism and Inference to the Best Explanation* GM: 4.1, 4.3-4.5 1/29: Moore: Proof of an External World* Huemer: Selections from <i>Skepticism and the Veil of Perception</i> * GM: 4.6, 4.7
WEEK 3 CARTESIAN SKEPTICISM	2/3: <i>Continued</i> GM: Chapter 6 (SKIP: 6.2, 6.5.2) 2/5: Nozick: Knowledge and Skepticism* GM: 3.4.2, 3.4.3, 4.2
WEEK 4 CONTEXTUALISM & PRAGMATIC ENCROACHMENT	2/10: DeRose: Contextualism and Knowledge Attributions*; GM: 5.1 <i>(Optional)</i> Feldman: Skeptical Problems, Contextualist Solutions* 2/12: Fantl & McGrath: On Pragmatic Encroachment in Epistemology; GM: 5.2, 7.3.3
WEEK 5 THE STRUCTURE OF JUSTIFICATION	2/17: Chisholm: The Myth of the Given*; GM: 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.6 2/19: Bonjour: The Coherence Theory of Empirical Knowledge*; GM: 1.4, 1.7, 1.8
WEEK 6 THE STRUCTURE OF JUSTIFICATION	2/24: Bonjour: Back to Foundationalism; Fumerton: Selections from <i>Epistemology</i> * 2/26: Haack: A Foundherentist Theory of Empirical Knowledge* (TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE)
WEEK 7 INTERNALISM & EXTERNALISM	3/3: Klein: Infinitism is the Solution to the Regress Problem*; GM: 1.3 3/5: Fumerton: Selections from <i>Epistemology</i> *; Goldman: Internalism Exposed GM: 2.1, 2.2.1, 2.6
WEEK 8 INTERNALISM & EXTERNALISM	3/10: Conee & Feldman: Internalism Defended* 3/12: Goldman: What is Justified Belief*; GM: 2.2.2, 2.3, 2.4
SPRING BREAK	
WEEK 9 INTERNALISM & EXTERNALISM	3/24: Bonjour: Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge*; Vogel: Reliabilism Leveled* GM: 2.5 3/26: Bergmann: Externalist Responses to Skepticism*
WEEK 10 TESTIMONY	3/31: Hume: On Miracles*; Reid: Selections from <i>An Enquiry Into the Human Mind and Principles of Common Sense</i> *; GM: 9.1, 9.2 4/2: Root: Hume on the Virtues of Testimony*
WEEK 11 TESTIMONY	4/7: Lackey: Testimony: Acquiring Knowledge From Others*; GM: 9.3 4/9: Goldman: Experts: Which One's Should You Trust?*; GM: 9.5
WEEK 12 DISAGREEMENT	4/14: Feldman: Epistemological Problems of Disagreement*; GM: 9.6 4/16: Kelly: The Epistemological Significance of Disagreement*; GM: 9.8, 9.9
WEEK 13 DISAGREEMENT	4/21: Elga: Reflection and Disagreement* 4/23: Lackey: A Justificationist View of Disagreement's Epistemic Significance*
WEEK 14 EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY	4/28: Alexander & Weinberg: Analytic Epistemology and Experimental Philosophy* GM: 8.1, 7.3.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.7 4/30: Ludwig: The Epistemology of Thought Experiments: First Person Versus Third-Person Approaches*
WEEK 15 EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY	5/5: Sosa: Experimental Philosophy and Philosophical Intuition* 5/7: Nagel: Intuitions and Experiments*

FINAL EXAM: 2:00PM, FRIDAY, MAY 15TH

Academic Policies

Student Conduct Code: Appropriate classroom conduct promotes an environment of academic achievement and integrity. Disruptive classroom behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach, or student learning, is prohibited. Student are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

Teaching & Learning: Instructor and Student Responsibilities: UMD is committed to providing a positive, safe, and inclusive place for all who study and work here. Instructors and students have mutual responsibility to insure that the environment in all of these settings supports teaching and learning, is respectful of the rights and freedoms of all members, and promotes a civil and open exchange of ideas. To reference the full policy please see: <http://www.d.umn.edu/vcaa/TeachingLearning.html>

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty tarnishes UMD's reputation and discredits the accomplishments of students. Academic dishonesty is regarded as a serious offense by all members of the academic community. UMD's Student Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <http://www.d.umn.edu/conduct/academic>

Final Exams: All 1xxx-5xxx courses offered for undergraduate credit should include a final graded component or end of term evaluation that assesses the level of student achievement of one or more course objectives. All final graded components are to be administered or due at the time and place according to the final exam schedule and not during the last week of class. To reference the full policy please see: <http://www.d.umn.edu/vcaa/FinalExams.html>

Excused Absences: Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. It is the responsibility of students to plan their schedules to avoid excessive conflict with course requirements. However, there are legitimate and verifiable circumstances that lead to excused student absence from the classroom. These are subpoenas, jury duty, military duty, religious observances, illness, bereavement for immediate family, and NCAA varsity intercollegiate athletics. For complete information, please see: <http://www.d.umn.edu/vcaa/ExcusedAbsence.html>

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials: Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. For additional information, please see: <http://www.d.umn.edu/vcaa/ClassNotesAppropriateUseof.html>

Students with disabilities: It is the policy and practice of the University of Minnesota Duluth to create inclusive learning environments for all students, including students with disabilities. If there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or your ability to meet course requirements such as time limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Resources to discuss and arrange reasonable accommodations. Call 218-726-6130 or visit the DR web site at www.d.umn.edu/access for more information.