

EPISTEMOLOGY SYLLABUS

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General Description

This course investigates the nature of knowledge and justification as well as a number of related topics such as truth, rationality and coherence. Students will study theories that seek to understand the relation between perception and belief. Moreover, they will examine the conditions under which a token belief is justified and the conditions under which a token belief counts as knowledge. They will deliberate on the issue whether justification requires cognitive awareness of the reasons for endorsing a given belief. Additionally, they will consider what, if anything, can be said to defeat the sceptic.

Each and every lecture consists of a main topic and a supplementary, or as it is called below 'special', topic. The latter bridges the main topic to discussions in other areas of philosophy or different fields altogether. The supplementary topic is meant to help place the main topic in a broader context, thereby strengthening the student's understanding and appreciation of the discussion at hand.

Please note that due to copyright restrictions I cannot upload all the required readings on Moodle, though you will find that there is still a fair amount.

Disclaimer: The compulsory readings can be changed at any time in order to respond to the needs of course participants. It is important that students check for updates on Moodle every week.

Main Reading Source:

Sosa, E, J. Kim, J. Fantl and M. McGrath (eds.) (2008) *Epistemology: An Anthology*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Further Reading Sources:

Audi, R. (2010) *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, 3rd edition, Routledge.

Feldman, R. (2003) *Epistemology*, Prentice Hall PTR.

Greco, J. and E. Sosa (eds.) (1999) *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Smith, Q. (ed.) (2008) *Epistemology: New Essays*, Oxford University Press.

Please note that the following abbreviations are used below:

(AU): Audi text

(GS): Greco and Sosa guide

(SK): Sosa, Kim, Fantl and McGrath anthology

(SM): Smith anthology

MT Week 1: FOUNDATIONALISM AND COHERENTISM

Key questions: What is justification? Are there beliefs that justify but are themselves not justified by other beliefs? If so, what, if anything, is capable of justifying them? If not, how can there be any justification whatsoever? Is coherentism a viable way to understand justification?

Essential Reading:

Bonjour, L. (1999) 'The Dialectic of Foundationalism and Coherentism' in (GS).

Further Reading:

Audi, R. (2008) 'The Architecture of Knowledge', ch. 9, pp. 206-217, in (AU).

Bonjour, L. (1978) 'Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?' in (SK).

Dancy, J. (1997) *Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, ch.4.

Klein, P. (1999) 'Human Knowledge and the Infinite Regress of Reasons', in (SK).

Sosa, E. (2000) 'The Raft and the Pyramid' in (SK).

Special Topic (+Reading): The Fundamentals of Conceptual Analysis

Brennan, A. (2012) 'Necessary and Sufficient Conditions', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/necessary-sufficient/>>.

MT Week 2: WAYS OF KNOWING - Perception

Key questions: Can the justificational power of beliefs that are themselves not justified by other beliefs be imputed to the faculty of perception? What are the arguments from illusion, hallucination and perspective meant to establish? Is the idea of the given just a myth?

Essential Reading:

Brewer, B. (2011) 'The Inconsistent Triad' in *Perception and its Objects*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Further Reading:

Alston, W. (1999) 'Perceptual Knowledge', in (GS).

Audi, R. (2008) 'Introduction' (pp. 1-5), 'Theories of Perception' (ch. 2, pp. 38-46) and 'Memory' (ch. 3, pp. 62-66), in (AU).

Bonjour, L. (2007) 'Epistemological Problems of Perception', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Spring 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/perception-episprob/>>.

Breckner, A. (2008) 'Experiential Justification' in (SM).

Byrne, A. (2016) 'The Epistemic Significance of Experience', *Philosophical Studies*, 173(4): 947–67.

Huemer, M. (2008) 'The Problem of Memory Knowledge' in (SK).

Special Topic (+Reading): Non-Conceptualism

Bermúdez, J. and A. Cahen (2015) 'Nonconceptual Mental Content', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/content-nonconceptual/>>.

MT Week 3: WAYS OF KNOWING - Testimony

Key questions: Can testimony be a source of justification and knowledge? Does knowledge acquired through another's testimony depend on evidence that this person is a reliable source of testimony? Must a speaker know that p in order for a hearer to come to know that p ?

Essential Reading:

Lackey, J. (1999) 'Testimonial Knowledge and Transmission', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 49(197): 471-490 [Also in (SK)].

Further Reading:

Audi, R. (2008) 'Testimony', ch. 7, in (AU).

Burge, T. (1993) 'Content Preservation', in (SK).

Lackey, J. (2015) 'Reliability and Knowledge in the Epistemology of Testimony', *Episteme*, vol.12(2): 203-208.

Ross, J. (1975) 'Testimonial Evidence', in K. Lehrer (ed.), *Analysis and Metaphysics: Essays in Honor of R.M. Chisholm*, Dordrecht: Reidel.

Zollman, K. J. S. (2015) 'Modeling the Social Consequences of Testimonial Norms', *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 172(9): 2371-2383.

Special Topic (+Reading): Social Epistemology and Social Choice Theory

Goldman, A. and T. Blanchard (2016) 'Social Epistemology', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/epistemology-social/>>.

MT Week 4: KNOWLEDGE ANALYSIS - Inferences and Defeaters

Key questions: What is knowledge? Can a satisfactory analysis of knowledge be given? If so, what would the analysis look like? Is justified true belief both necessary and sufficient for knowledge? Can the no true defeater account overcome all counterexamples?

Essential Reading:

Gettier, E. (1963) 'Is Knowledge Justified True Belief?', *Analysis*, vol. 23(6):121-123 [Also in (SK)].

Margolis, E. and S. Laurence (2011) 'Concepts' (Section 5 only), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/concepts/>>.

Further Reading:

Harman, G. (1973) 'Thought, Selections' in (SK).

Kaplan, M. (1985) 'It's Not What you Know that Counts', *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 82(7): 350-363.

Sosa, E. (1964) 'The Analysis of "Knowing that p "', *Analysis*, vol. 25(1): 1-8.

Zagzebski, L. (1999) 'What is Knowledge?' in (GS).

Zagzebski, L. (1994) 'The Inescapability of Gettier Problems', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 44(174): 65-73.

Special Topic (+Reading): Experimental Philosophy

Knobe, J. (2007) 'Experimental Philosophy', *Philosophy Compass*, vol. 2(1): 81-92.

MT Week 5: KNOWLEDGE ANALYSIS - Causes and Reliability

Key questions: What relation, if any, does causality have to knowledge? Can we speak of knowledge as being the culmination of reliably-produced beliefs?

Essential Reading:

Feldman, R. (1985) 'Reliability and Justification', *The Monist*, vol. 68(2): 159-174.

Further Reading:

Christensen, David, 2007, "Three questions about Leplin's Reliabilism", *Philosophical Studies*, 134(1): 43–50.

Goldman, A. (1967) 'A Causal Theory of Knowing', *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 64(12): 357-372.

Goldman, A. (1979) 'What is Justified Belief?' in (SK).

Leplin, J. (2007) 'In Defense of Reliabilism', *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 134(1): 31–42.

Vogel, J. (2000) 'Reliabilism Leveled' in (SK).

Special Topic (+Reading): Prototype Theory

Margolis, E. and S. Laurence (2014) 'Concepts', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/concepts/> (section 2.2).

MT Week 6: KNOWLEDGE ANALYSIS - Tracking the Truth

Key questions: Is knowledge closed under entailment? What, if anything, does counter-factual reasoning have to do with knowing? Can Nozick's account help defeat the sceptic?

Essential Reading:

Nozick, R. (1981) 'Knowledge and Skepticism' (Part I only) in *Philosophical Explanations*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [Also in (SK)].

Further Reading:

Adams, F. and M. Clarke (2007) 'Resurrecting the Tracking Theories', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 83: 207-221.

Dancy, J. (1997) *Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, ch.3.

Fumerton, R. (1986) 'Nozick's Epistemology' in S. Luper-Foy (ed.), *The Possibility of Knowledge: Nozick and His Critics*, Totawa: Rowman & Allanheld.

Kripke, S. A. (2011) *Philosophical Troubles*, (Collected Papers, Vol. I), Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch. 7.

Williamson, T. (2000) *Knowledge and its Limits*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch. 7.

Special Topic (+Reading): Counterfactual Reasoning

Woodward, J. (2011) 'Psychological Studies of Causal and Counterfactual Reasoning', in C. Hoerl et al. (eds.), *Understanding Counterfactuals, Understanding Causation: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, Oxford: OUP.

MT Week 7: READING WEEK

MT Week 8: INTERNALISM VS. EXTERNALISM

Key questions: Do we need to know that we know in order to justifiably claim that we know something?

Essential Reading:

BonJour, L. (1980) 'Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge' in (SK).

Further Reading:

Audi, R. (2008) 'Knowledge, Justification, and Truth', ch. 11 in (AU).

Bonjour, L. (2002) 'Internalism and Externalism', in Paul K. Moser (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, chapter 7.

Fumerton, R. (2000) 'Externalism and Skepticism', in (SK).

Kornblith, H. (1989) 'Introspection and Misdirection', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 67: 410-422.

Williamson, T. (2000) *Knowledge and its Limits*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch. 2.

Special Topic (+Reading): Self-Knowledge

Gertler, Brie, "Self-Knowledge", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/self-knowledge/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/self-knowledge/).

MT Week 9: SCEPTICISM

Key questions: Could we ever know that we're not merely brains-in-a-vat? If not, can we claim to know anything at all?

Essential Reading:

Klein, P. (2002) 'Skepticism', in Paul K. Moser (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*, chapter 11.

Further Reading:

Audi, R. (2008) 'Skepticism I: The Quest for Certainty', ch. 13, in (AU).

Klein, P. (2015) 'Skepticism', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/skepticism/>](http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/skepticism/).

Moore, G.E. (1939) 'Proof of an External World' in (SK).

Putnam, H. (1981) *Reason, Truth and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 1.

Stroud, B. (1984) 'The Problem of the External World' in (SK).

Unger, P. (1974) 'An Argument for Scepticism', in (SK).

Special Topic (+Reading): Scepticism about Logic

Franks, C. (unpublished) 'Logical Nihilism' <http://www3.nd.edu/~cfranks/nihilism.pdf>

MT Week 10: NATURALISM

Key questions: Can the naturalist answer the sceptical challenge? Should the study of knowledge be left to the sciences and not philosophy? If yes, are there no useful contributions philosophy can still make towards this study?

Essential Reading:

Kornblith, H. (2002) *Knowledge and its Place in Nature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, ch. 1.

Further Reading:

Kim, J. (1988) 'What is "Naturalized Epistemology"?' in (SK).

Nagel, J. (2013) 'Defending the Evidential Value of Epistemic Intuitions: A Reply to Stich', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 86(1): 179–199.

Papineau, D. (1993) *Philosophical Naturalism*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Quine, W.V.O (1969) 'Epistemology Naturalized' in (SK).

Rysiew, P. (2016) 'Naturalism in Epistemology', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/epistemology-naturalized/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/epistemology-naturalized/).

Special Topic (+Reading): Evolutionary Epistemology

Bradie, M. and W. Harms (2016) 'Evolutionary Epistemology', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/epistemology-evolutionary/>](http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/epistemology-evolutionary/).

MT Week 11: CONTEXTUALISM

Key questions: Are standards of justification invariant across different contexts? If not, should they be?

Essential Reading:

Cohen, S. (1998) 'Contextualist Solutions to Epistemological Problems: Scepticism, Gettier, and the Lottery' in (SK).

Further Reading:

Cohen, S. (2000) 'Contextualism and Skepticism', *Philosophical Issues*, vol. 10: 94–107.

DeRose, K. (1995) 'Solving the Sceptical Problem' in (SK).

Lewis, D. (1996) 'Elusive Knowledge' in (SK)

Rysiew, P. (2011) 'Epistemic Contextualism', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/contextualism-epistemology/>](http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/contextualism-epistemology/).

Sosa, E. (2000) 'Skepticism and Contextualism', *Noûs*, vol. 34, Supplement: Philosophical Issues, 10, Skepticism, pp. 1-18.

Special Topic (+Reading): Perspectivism

Votsis, I. (2012) 'Putting Realism in Perspectivism', *Philosophica*, vol. 84: 85–122.

MT Week 12: COLLECTIONS
