Course Guide (2017/18)

PHIL10072: Themes in Epistemology

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Contents
1. Course Aims and Objectives
2. Intended Learning Outcomes
3. Seminar Times and Locations
4. Seminar Content
5. Readings
6. Academic Support
7. Assessment
8. Feedback
9. Learning Resources
10. Personal Development
11. Organisation and Management
12. Marking Criteria

Department of Philosophy
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1. Course Aims and Objectives

This course introduces students to a number of major ideas and themes in contemporary epistemology. We will examine debates about the nature of knowledge and of justified belief, and cover topics including scepticism, contextualism, pragmatic encroachment, knowledge-first epistemology, reliabilism and evidence in the law.

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

To further develop the philosophical skills, and to extend and deepen the philosophical knowledge, acquired in previous philosophy courses.

3. Seminar Times

Wednesdays 11:10am – 1pm

Please note that in addition to the seminars themselves, there are lots of opportunities to speak with the course organiser. In particular, you can drop in during his pre-arranged weekly office hours, or else contact him directly to ask a question or arrange a meeting.

4. Seminar Content

Week 1: Uncertainty

Core Reading:


Further Reading:

Week 2: The Gettier Problem

Core Reading:


Further Reading:

- Gettier, E. (1963) ‘Is justified true belief knowledge?’ Analysis v23(6) [available through JSTOR] [included in the Bernecker and Dretske volume].
- Clark, M. (1963) ‘Knowledge and grounds: A comment on Mr. Gettier’s paper’ Analysis v24(2) [available through JSTOR].

Week 3: Putting Knowledge First

Core Reading:

- McGlynn, A. Knowledge First?, chapter 1 [E-book available through the library].

Further Reading:


Week 4: Relevant Alternatives and Closure

Core Reading:

Further Reading:


**Week 5: Contextualism**

Core Reading:

- Rysiew, P. ‘Epistemic contextualism’ entry in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* URL = [http://www.seop.leeds.ac.uk/entries/contextualism-epistemology](http://www.seop.leeds.ac.uk/entries/contextualism-epistemology)

Further Reading:


**Week 6: Pragmatic Encroachment**

Core Reading:


Further Reading:


**Week 7: Assertion**

Core Reading:

- McGlynn, A. *Knowledge First?*, chapter 5, pages 82-124. [E-book available through the library].

Further Reading:


**Week 8: Justification, Knowledge and Probability**

Core Reading:


Further Reading:

Week 9: The Regress Problem

Core Reading:


Further Reading:


Week 10: Internalism and Externalism

Core Reading:


Further Reading:

- Cohen, S. ‘Justification and truth’ *Philosophical Studies* v46 [available through JSTOR]

Week 11: Revision

No Readings
5. Readings

Course Textbooks

The following books provide a good introduction to many of the topics we will cover:


Both of these are available as E-books through the library. Other useful texts, also available as E-books, include:


Two other books which are very useful background reading:


Some of the classic papers listed as readings can be found in this volume, which is available on short loan through the library:


Apart from these texts, the readings for this course are drawn from a range of places. In most cases, listed readings will be either freely available online or accessible online through the library.


The PhilPapers website ([http://philpapers.org/](http://philpapers.org/)) provides a comprehensive directory of philosophical books and articles that are available online, organised by topic. A lot of papers, on topics germane to this course, can be found here: [https://philpapers.org/browse/evidence-and-proof-in-law](https://philpapers.org/browse/evidence-and-proof-in-law)

Google scholar, ([http://scholar.google.com/](http://scholar.google.com/)) is also worth a look.

If you have any problems getting hold of readings, then please let the coarse organiser know asap. If you would like recommendations for additional readings for a particular topic, then please don’t hesitate to get in touch.