

Philosophy 3190 (F'15)

Theory of Knowledge I

Logistics

Course Instructor: Kyle Bromhall
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Lecture Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays
11:30 – 12:50
MINS 106

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays
1:00 – 2:00
MACK 339

Course Description

This course is an advanced introduction to epistemology. Epistemology is the area of philosophy concerned with articulating the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge. In this course, we will study three issues for the traditional analysis of knowledge: Pyrrhonic skepticism, academic skepticism, and the social element of epistemology. We will engage with primary material foundational to epistemology by philosophers such as Plato, Sextus Empiricus, Audi, BonJour, Zagzebski, James, Sosa, Code, and more.

Course Texts

1. Various readings posted on Ares. (Required)
2. Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 4th ed. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2009 (S. Rec.)

Summary of Course Requirements

Requirement	Description	Weight	Date
Midterm	One midterm test on the material covered from weeks one to five (inclusive).	15%	08 Oct
Essay	One essay developed in three stages over the course of the term.	50%	See description
Participation	Assessed on the quality and quantity of participation.	10%	See description
Final Examination	One sit-down cumulative examination.	25%	See WebAdvisor

Summary of Course Policies

1. All work is to be submitted using the dropbox function of CourseLink in one of the formats specified below by the indicated due date.
2. Lectures, readings, and assignments will not be available in paper format; check CourseLink or Ares for these items, as applicable.
3. Be respectful and courteous to your peers and the Instructor. Expect the same in return.
4. Refrain from all behaviour that may distract others. The Instructor will take steps to remedy any situations as they may arise.

Description of Course Requirements

1. Midterm (15%)

The midterm will be held in-class on **08 October** and will cover all of the material from weeks one to five (inclusive). Question types may include multiple choice, short answer, and similar.

2. Essay (50%)

The first phase of the essay, the **proposal**, is worth 20% of your grade for the essay component of the course and is due on **30 September**. In this stage, you will pick a topic and defend why that topic is worth writing about.

The second phase of the essay, the **prospectus**, is worth 30% of your grade for the essay component of the course and is due on **30 October**. In this stage, you will make an outline of your essay, as well as provide details regarding your intended argument.

The third phase of the essay, the final **paper**, is worth 50% of your grade for the essay component of the course and is due on **30 November**. In this stage, you will complete your essay, including all citations and formatting.

3. Participation (10%)

Students will be asked to submit participation self-assessment form three times over the course of the term. The announcement will happen in lecture without warning. Once announced, students will have until the end of that day to submit the completed form through CourseLink. Students who do not submit a form will be assigned the lowest possible grade for that self-assessment, which can only be changed for humanitarian reasons. Each form will contain a set of criteria by which students will assign themselves a grade for participation. This will count for half of the participation component of this course.

The other half of the participation component of this course will be determined at the Instructor's discretion at a class level. The greater the number of students engaged in the discussion and the higher the quality of the discussion, the higher the grade that shall be assigned.

4. Final Examination (25%)

The final examination will be held at a date and time specified on WebAdvisor. It will be cumulative from the beginning of the course with an emphasis on the material covered after the midterm.

Course Policies

1. Submitting Your Work

a. Due dates & late penalties

The due dates for all assignments are found in the tentative schedule. In all cases, you will have at least two weeks—and usually longer—from the time that the assignment is distributed to when the assignment is due.

All deadlines are hard deadlines. Once the deadline passes, you will receive a grade of zero for that assignment. There are no make-up assignments or extra credit. The only exceptions shall be for medical or compassionate reasons, provided that you have the necessary evidence, as per the College of Arts's regulations.

b. Submitting assignments

All assignments are to be submitted using the dropbox function of CourseLink by the time indicated on the assignment or as amended.

You must submit assignments in either *.docx or *.doc format. Microsoft has a free online version of Word that you can use if you do not have access to the full program. I will post the link on CourseLink. Under no circumstances are you to submit work in *.odt format.

Unless I give you explicit, prior permission, you may not submit assignments through email.

c. Standardized formatting

Formatting plays a subtle but crucial role in the development of your paper. Clean, consistent formatting ensures that your reader's energies are focused where they should be—on your content—instead of being spent overcoming technical inefficiencies. Several academic styles have developed to standardize this process. We will be using a style called 'Turabian'. A style guide will be posted on CourseLink to guide you through the process. At a bare minimum, the body of your work must follow these general guidelines:

Font: 11 pt Calibri*, 11 pt Arial, or 12 pt Times New Roman.

Margins: Normal (1")*

Spacing: Double (except for block quotes)

* Microsoft Office default

Failing to follow all or some of these guidelines will result in a penalty proportionate to the severity of the offence, ranging from a warning up to a maximum of ten percent of the total marks of the assignment. Using *Comic Sans* may result in a harsher penalty.

2. Technology in the Course

a. CourseLink

We will use CourseLink extensively in this course. On CourseLink you will find news items, errata, grades, minor announcements, the course FAQ, assignments, the assignment dropbox, and so on. It is your responsibility to check CourseLink on a regular basis. If you have a question, you should check CourseLink (especially the FAQ) before emailing me.

b. Turnitin

The University of Guelph has adopted Turnitin, integrated with the CourseLink dropbox tool, to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the university.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

c. Electronic distribution policies

All readings are on electronic reserve through *Ares*. The library will determine the format in which they are available and which functions are enabled; I have no control over that.

All lectures will be posted in Portable Document Format (PDF) on CourseLink for online viewing. You will need a program like Adobe Reader, Nitro Reader, or Microsoft Word to open these files. Note that printing has been disabled. Let us save a few trees, shall we?

All assignments will be posted in PDF on CourseLink with printing enabled.

d. Laptop and smartphone use

Laptops are allowed in lecture just as long as they are being used for course-related purposes. If I deem that they are causing a nuisance, I will take measures to reduce their effects through measures such as requiring laptop users to all sit together in the back of the room or banning laptops outright.

Smartphones have no place in the classroom. Refrain from using them. If it is difficult for you to go through the entire class without interacting with your phone, you should seriously reconsider the prominence of electronics in your life. I may ask you to leave the room if I repeatedly catch you using your phone during class, and it will certainly count as disruptive behaviour vis-à-vis the class participation grade.

e. Email

As I do not live in Guelph, email is my preferred method of communication outside of class or office hours. I will try my best to respond to your email within a few hours of receiving it, although please understand that circumstances may not always permit this. I will be as thorough as possible and will keep responding for as long as you keep sending.

f. Recording lectures

As per the standard statements of the College of Arts, you must receive explicit permission of the Instructor (me) before recording—whether video, audio, or both—a lecture.

This is my explicit statement that you, collectively and severally, categorically **do not** have my permission to record lectures.

3. My Expectations of You

a. Don't plagiarize

Plagiarism is very serious and carries serious consequences. See the standard statements of the College of Arts (below) for more information, but, in short: plagiarism—don't do it.

b. Be respectful

Be aware of actions that others may find distracting. Talking, accessing social media, texting and so on all have an effect on not only your ability to concentrate on the course material being presented, but also that of all those around you. It is also disrespectful to other students and to me. Therefore, as a courtesy, please refrain from doing anything that would distract others. If any of these things start to be a problem, I may impose limitations on the class.

c. Be tolerant

More so than in many other disciplines, philosophy asks you to vigorously and precisely defend your own position and to attack those of others. This does not mean that at any time you should ever show any sort of disrespect towards another student. As philosophers, we exhibit significant tolerance for differences of view, and it is expected that you demonstrate this tolerance.

d. Be present and prepared

This course is designed under the assumption that all students will attend most lectures and have completed most readings. It is therefore integral to your success in this course that you do so. Simply reading the PowerPoints is insufficient, as I may spend a significant amount of time on one slide while quickly passing over another. You should get notes from someone in the class. I will not provide any form of notes apart from the lecture PDFs.

e. Give an honest effort

This course is the result of hundreds of hours of preparation, and further hundreds of hours will be required to execute it. Nothing is done without reason or without cause. I expect you to approach the course seriously and to engage honestly with the material. Many elements had to come together to give you this learning opportunity.

4. What You Should Expect of Me

a. Respect

I will treat you with respect at all times. Any concerns or problems that may arise will be handled in a professional and compassionate manner. Note that this does not mean that you will always get your way.

b. Timeliness

I will return all work to you in a reasonable timeframe. If circumstances make this impossible, I shall communicate it to you early and often.

c. Impartiality

I will approach all written work impartially and will be fair in awarding grades proportionate to achievement.

d. Transparency

This course is not a democracy, but that does not mean that I am inscrutable. If you have an issue with something in the course, I will provide you with a full explanation of the process. I will honestly reconsider my position should the situation call for it.

College of Arts Standard Statements

1. Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their mail.uoguelph.ca email account regularly: email is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

2. When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and email contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

3. Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday, 6 November 2015**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar.

4. Copies of Out-of-Class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable backup copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

5. Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email sas@uoguelph.ca, or see the website: <http://www.csd.uoguelph.ca/csd/>

6. Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities that involve, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

7. Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

8. Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

9. Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

Tentative Course Schedule

All topics, reading selections, and due dates are subject to change with notice.

Week	Topic	Readings	
1	“Welcome”	Tues	No class; no readings.
		Thurs	Syllabus
2	“The Traditional Analysis and the Regress Argument”	Tues	Plato, <i>Meno & Thaetetus</i> (selections)
		Thurs	Sextus Empiricus, <i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i> (selections)
3	“Foundationalism”	Tues	Audi, R. “Psychological Foundationalism”
		Thurs	
4	“Coherentism”	Tues	BonJour, L. “The Coherence Theory of Justification”
	Proposal due on 30 Sept	Thurs	
5	“Summary and Midterm”	Tues	Sosa, E. “The Raft and the Pyramid”
	Midterm on 08 Oct	Thurs	Midterm; no readings.
6	“Hyperbolic Doubt”	Tues	Fall Study Day; no class or readings.
		Thurs	Descartes, R. <i>Meditations I & II</i>
7	“Reliabilism”	Tues	Goldman, A. “What is Justified Belief?”
		Thurs	Alston, W. “How to Think about Reliability”
8	“Virtue Epistemology”	Tues	Greco, J. “Agent reliabilism”
	Prospectus due on 30 Oct	Thurs	Zagzebski, L. <i>Virtues of the Mind</i> (selections)
9	“Contextualism”	Tues	Dretske, F. “The Pragmatic Dimension of Knowledge”
		Thurs	Williams, M. “Why (Wittgensteinian) Contextualism Is Not Relativism”

Tentative Course Schedule

All topics, reading selections, and due dates are subject to change with notice.

Week	Topic	Readings	
10	“Ethical Belief”	Tues	Clifford, W. “The Ethics of Belief”
		Thurs	James, W. “The Will to Believe”
11	“Evidence”	Tues	Code, L. “Taking Subjectivity Into Account”
		Thurs	Goodman, N. “The New Riddle of Induction”
12	“Reasonable Disagreement”	Tues	Feldman, R. “Reasonable Religious Disagreements”
		Thurs	Elga, A. “Reflection and Disagreement”
13	“Truth and Bullshit”	Tues	Elgin, C. “True Enough”
	Paper due on 30 Nov	Thurs	Frankfurt, H. “On Bullshit”

Last updated: 04 September 2015

Legend		
Unit One: Pyrrhonic skepticism	Unit Two: Academic skepticism	Unit Three: Social epistemology