

# PHIL 4360 Theory of Knowledge II

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Winter Term 2014  
Wednesday 11:30-2:20  
MacKinnon 305

## **Brief Description**

In this course we will look at the relationship between justification and epistemic duty, with a focus on how these concepts relate to the epistemology of disagreement. The traditional view is that justification involves having reasons and having reasons that one has access to. On this internalist view, to be justified is to be epistemically blameless. As such, a justified belief is one that can stand up to critical scrutiny (self-imposed or otherwise). We will start off by examining this view as it plays out in the ethics of belief, following which we will turn our attention to the debates in the epistemology of disagreement and spend the rest of the semester figuring out what is at stake there. We will end by exploring the case wherein a person disagrees with herself.

## **Readings**

All readings will be made available to you on-line through the library's Ares E-Course Reserve System: <https://ares.lib.uoguelph.ca/ares/>

## **E-mail Communication**

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

## **Drop Date**

The last date to drop one-semester Winter 2013 courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday, March 7, 2014**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

## **When You Can't 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 e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

### **Copies of Out-Of-Class Assignments**

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

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

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

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c14/c14-strightsrespon.shtml>

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins 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. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

### **Recording of Materials**

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

### **Resources**

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>.

*If you find yourself in difficulty*, contact the undergraduate advisor in your program, or the BA Counseling Office: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>

### **Course Format**

We will meet once a week during the winter term on Wednesdays. Class time will be divided between lectures, student presentations and class discussion.

## Evaluation

1. **10 critical summaries (10%).** At the start of class each week you will be required to hand in a one-page critical summary on (any) one of that week's readings. The summary will not be graded, but you will receive 1% for doing the work.

**Note:** there will be 11 opportunities to hand in a summary, so you can come to class empty handed once and still receive full marks. I will not accept critical summaries that are handed in late, nor will I accept emailed summaries.

2. **Seminar Presentation (20%).** You will be required to give a half-hour presentation on a reading of your choice. Your presentation may form the basis for one of your papers. As part of your presentation you must prepare a handout to give the class. Your handout will count as your 1% for that week's critical summary.

Because of the number of students in the class, we will have 2 students presenting on the same article. One student will do an exegetical summary of a paper, and the other will give a critical analysis of the same paper and lead us into a discussion.

3. **5-page paper (30%)** on a topic of your choice. I strongly encourage you to discuss your paper topic with me *before* you start to write.

**Note:** I will not accept emailed essays. Also, due to fairness considerations, late essays will be penalized 2% per day unless accompanied by a medical certificate.

4. **10-page paper (40%)** on a topic of your choice. Again, I strongly encourage you to discuss your paper topic with me *before* you start to write.

**Note:** same as above.

## Schedule of Readings

Note: readings marked with an \* are available for presentations.

- January 8<sup>th</sup> Introduction; class mechanics; knowledge as JTB
- January 15<sup>th</sup> The Ethics of Belief  
William K. Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief”  
\* William James, “The Will to Believe”
- January 22<sup>nd</sup> The Ethics of Belief & Evidentialism  
Richard Feldman, “Epistemological Duties”  
\* Nishi Shah, “A New Argument for Evidentialism”
- January 29<sup>th</sup> Disagreement  
Thomas Kelly, “The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement”  
\* Peter van Inwagen, “It is Wrong, Everywhere, Always, and for Anyone, to Believe Anything upon Insufficient Evidence”
- February 5<sup>th</sup> Disagreement  
David Christensen, “Epistemology of Disagreement: the Good News”  
\* Richard Feldman, “Epistemological Puzzles About Disagreement”
- February 12<sup>th</sup> Disagreement  
Roger White, “Epistemic Permissiveness”  
\* Adam Elga, “Reflection and Disagreement”
- February 19<sup>th</sup> **No class – reading week**
- February 26<sup>th</sup> Disagreement  
Katia Vavova, “Confidence, Evidence, and Disagreement”  
\* Hilary Kornblith “Belief in the Face of Controversy”
- \* First Essay Due**

- March 5<sup>th</sup> Disagreement  
Jennifer Lackey, “What should we do when we disagree?”  
\*Catherine Elgin, “Persistent Disagreement”
- March 12<sup>th</sup> Epistemic Akrasia  
John Heil, “Doxastic Agency”  
\* Amelie Rorty, “Akratic Believers”
- March 19<sup>th</sup> Epistemic Akrasia  
Jonathan Adler, “Akratic Believing?”  
\* John Heil, “Doxastic Incontinence”
- March 26<sup>th</sup> Epistemic Akrasia & Aim of Belief  
David Owens, “Does Belief Have an Aim?”  
\* David Owens, “Epistemic Akrasia”
- April 2nd Aim of Belief  
Asbjorn Steglich-Petersen, “No Norm Needed: On The Aim of Belief”
- \* Second Essay Due**