

**University of Guelph, Department of Philosophy (COA)
PHIL 6220 Epistemology, Winter 2015
Wednesday 3:30 – 6:20, Philosophy Seminar Room**

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Office Hours: Wednesday 10:15-11:15, or by appointment

Brief Description

In this course we will look at the relationship between justification and epistemic duty. 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). In the first half of this course we will examine this deontological conception of justification and the ethics of belief that lies behind it, and contrast it with externalist accounts, which reject the cognitive access requirement on justification. Once we have a handle on this issue, we will spend the second half of the course exploring how it bears on the epistemology of disagreement.

Readings

All readings will be available online through the library's ARES Course Reserve System:

<https://ares.lib.uoguelph.ca/ares/>.

Class 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.

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/>

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 2015 courses, without academic penalty, is Friday, March 6, 2015. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar. (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/08-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.

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](#).

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 the Centre for Students with Disabilities (soon to be re-named Student Accessibility Services) as soon as possible. For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or refer to the [CSD website](#).

Evaluation

1. **10 critical summaries (10%).** Starting the second week of classes, you will be required to hand in a one-page critical summary on one of that week's readings (the choice of which reading is yours). The summary will not be graded, but you will receive 1% for doing the work. There will be 11 opportunities to hand in a summary, so you can come to class empty handed once and still receive full marks.
2. **Pre-Break Seminar Presentation (10%).** You will be required to give a half-hour presentation in the first half of the term. This presentation may form the basis of one of your papers. You should give the class a handout of your presentation to help them follow along, and your handout will count as your 1% for that week's critical summary.

Note: the format for the pre-break and post-break presentations will vary somewhat. We will discuss this variation in our first meeting.

3. **Post-Break Seminar Presentation (15%).** You will be required to give a half-hour presentation in the second half of the term. This presentation may form the basis of one of your papers. You should give the class a handout of your presentation to help them follow along, and your handout will count as your 1% for that week's critical summary.
4. **5-page paper (25%)** on a topic of your choice. I strongly encourage you to discuss your paper topic with me before you start to write.
5. **15-page paper (40%)** on a topic of your choice. I strongly encourage you to discuss your paper topic with me before you start to write.

Schedule of Readings

Note: readings with an * are available for presentations. We will assign presentation dates/readings on the first day of class.

- January 7th Introduction; class mechanics
Edmund Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”
- January 14th Justification & Knowledge
H.H. Price, “The Given”
*Wilfrid Sellars, “Does empirical knowledge have a foundation?”
- January 21st Internalism & Externalism
William P. Alston, “Internalism and Externalism in Epistemology”
*Laurence Bonjour “Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge”
- January 28th Internalism & Externalism
Alvin Goldman, “Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge”
*Robert Brandom, “Insights and Blindspots of Reliabilism”
- February 4th Reliabilism
Richard Foley, “What’s Wrong with Reliabilism?”
*Jennifer Nagel, “Knowledge and Reliability”
- February 11th Ethics of Belief
*William K. Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief”
*William James, “The Will to Believe”
- February 18th **No classes – reading week**
- February 25th Epistemic Duties
Richard Feldman, “Epistemological Puzzles About Disagreement”
*Peter van Inwagen “It is Wrong, Everywhere, Always, and for Anyone, to Believe Anything upon Insufficient Evidence”

***Short Essay Due**

- March 4th Disagreement
*Thomas Kelly, "The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement"
*Katia Vavova, "Confidence, Evidence, and Disagreement"
- March 11th Disagreement
*David Christensen, "Epistemology of Disagreement: the Good News"
*Adam Elga, "Reflection and Disagreement"
- March 18th Disagreement
*Roger White, "Epistemic Permissiveness"
* Jennifer Lackey, "What should we do when we disagree?"
- March 25th Disagreement
*Hilary Kornblith "Belief in the Face of Controversy"
*Catherine Elgin, "Persistent Disagreement"
- April 1st Disagreement
*David Christensen, "Disagreement and Public Controversy"
Richard Foley, "Epistemic Rationality as Invulnerability to Self-Criticism"
- * **Second Essay Due**