

PHIL 3190 Theory of Knowledge I, Fall 2013
T/TH 2:30 – 3:50, MacKinnon 224

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Office Hours: Tuesday 4 – 5:30 & Thursday 10:30 – 11, or by appointment

**** Final Exam:** Wednesday, December 4, 8:30am – 10:30am

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an advanced survey of the central issues in contemporary epistemology. In it we will look at the standard analysis of knowledge as justified true belief, and we will consider skeptical and other challenges to this traditional view. We will look at a variety of theories of justification and knowledge including foundationalism, coherentism and reliabilism. Throughout our discussions we will try to answer some basic questions concerning human knowledge, such as: What is knowledge and how is it different from mere belief? What counts as good evidence for the beliefs that we hold? And what are the sources of knowledge?

TEXTS

Knowledge: Readings in Contemporary Epistemology (K), edited by Sven Bernecker and Fred Dretske, Oxford University Press, 2000.

Epistemology (F), Richard Feldman, Prentice Hall, 2003.

Electronic Reserve (ER), available through Ares course reserve (password: PHIL3190)

COURSE FORMAT

We will meet twice a week during the fall term in MacKinnon 224. Class time will be divided between lectures and discussion. In order to be able to contribute to classroom discussion it is imperative that you do the day's reading prior to coming to class.

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 Fall 2013 courses, without academic penalty, is Thursday, October 31. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar. (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/c08/c08_drop.shtml)

WHEN YOU CAN'T MEET A COURSE REQUIREMENT*

When you find yourself unable to meet any course requirements due to illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing with name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration. (http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/08-ac.shtml)

* See below for specific details on late assignments and missed tests

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 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/undergrad_calendar/08-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 Counselling Office: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>

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

EVALUATION

1. **Critical summaries (5 x 2% each = 10%).** Every second Thursday students will come to class with a 1-page critical summary of one of that day's readings (the reading which is in **bold** is the one on which your critical summary is to be based). A critical summary requires a precise formulation of some claim or argument from the readings, and a presentation of an objection to this point. These Thursday sessions will include a student-led discussion on the issues debated in the critical summaries, and students will be encouraged to participate in the discussion period. This assignment will NOT be graded. You will receive the 2% so long as it is clear that you have done the reading and given thought to the argument in question.
 - This mark is akin to a participation mark: you will receive 2% if you hand in a critical summary *in class*, and as such there will be no opportunity to make up this mark – *if you miss class, you lose the marks.*
 - I will not be returning the summaries; I will be keeping them in my office, and I will review them with students on a one-on-one basis, during my office hours.
 - There will be 6 opportunities to hand in a summary, so you can come to class empty handed once and still receive full marks.

2. **Midterm (30%).** This will likely consist of a number of long answer questions.
 - *Students unable to write the mid-term for medical reasons must submit a medical certificate.* Students who miss the test for medical or religious reasons will be given an opportunity to do a rewrite.

3. **One 5-page essay (25%).** I will hand out essay topics three weeks before the essay is due. If you would like to pick your own topic, you can do so on the condition that I approve the topic beforehand.
 - Late essays will be penalized 2% per day unless accompanied by a medical certificate.
 - **Note:** The philosophy department does not accept late essays at the front office, and I do not accept emailed essays. Essays must be handed in to me, in person, either in class or during my office hours.

4. **Final exam (35%).** This will likely consist of a number of long answer questions.
 - Students who are unable to write the final exam due to medical or religious reasons must follow the guidelines set out in Undergraduate Calendar.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
September 5	Class Mechanics; Introduction	F, Ch. 1
September 10 September 12	Logic primer; The Standard Analysis Gettier *Critical summary #1	F, Ch. 2; K, Ayer p. 7-12 F, Ch. 3; K, Gettier, p. 13-15
September 17 September 19	Evidentialism Foundationalism	F, Ch. 4, p. 31-52 F, Ch. 4, p. 52-60, 70-78
September 24 September 26	Foundationalism Coherentism *Critical summary #2	K, Price, p. 235-245; K, Sellars, p. 260-266 F, Ch. 4, p. 60-70; K, Bonjour, p. 128-148
October 1 October 3	Causal Theories Reliabilism	F, Ch. 5 p. 81-86 K, Goldman, p. 86-103
October 8 October 10	Reliabilism *Essay topics handout Internalism *Critical summary #3	F, Ch. 5 p. 90-99; K, Foley, p. 166-178 K, Bonjour, p. 178-199
October 15 October 17	Midterm Skepticism	F, Ch. 6, p. 108-115; ER, Descartes' First Meditation
October 22 October 24	Skepticism Skepticism *Critical summary #4	F, Ch. 6, p. 115-128 K, Stroud, p. 307-323
October 29 October 31	Skepticism; Induction *Essay due New Riddle of Induction	F, Ch. 7, p. 130-141; K, Russell, p. 547-552, K, Goodman, p. 556-561
November 5 November 7	Relevant Alternatives Semantic Approaches *Critical summary #5	K, Lewis, p. 366-386 K, Putnam, p. 385-399
November 12 November 14	Testimony Testimony	K, Coady, p. 537-546 ER, Foley
November 19 November 21	Testimony & feminist epistemology Feminist epistemology *Critical summary #6	ER, Fricker ER, Daukus
November 26	Final exam review	No reading