



# PHIL\*2240 Knowledge and Belief

Fall 2020

Section(s): 01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - September 08, 2020

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## 1 Course Details

### 1.1 Calendar Description

This course is an introduction to epistemology, which is the study of the nature, scope, and limits of knowledge. This course will examine a number of the central questions in epistemology, such as: what can we know? What is the nature of knowledge? And what is the difference between knowledge and true belief?

**Pre-Requisites:** 2.00 credits or (1 of PHIL\*1000, PHIL\*1010, PHIL\*1030, PHIL\*1050)

**Equates:** PHIL\*2250

### 1.2 Course Description

In this course we will explore a number of fundamental questions in the field of epistemology, or theory of knowledge. In our advanced digital age, it is relatively easy to get information, and as a result we think we know a lot about a lot of different things. But what, precisely, is knowledge? And how is it different from mere opinion? What role does truth play in demarking the difference? And do true beliefs need to be backed up by evidence? These questions have been debated since Ancient times, and we will examine them while also considering some emerging questions in social epistemology, feminist epistemology and the epistemology of ignorance.

### 1.3 Timetable

Unless otherwise noted, we will meet virtually, via Teams, in our regularly scheduled Tuesday and Thursday timeslot, 11:30-12:50. You will receive an email from me, prior to our first class, inviting you to join our PHIL 2240 Team.

### 1.4 Final Exam

This class will have a take-home final exam.

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## 2 Instructional Support

**Instructor:** Karyn Freedman

**Email:** karynf@uoguelph.ca

**Office:** 354 MacKinnon

**Phone:** 519-824-4120 x.53232

**Office Hours:** By appointment only

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## 3 Learning Resources

### 3.1 Required Resources

**Textbook (Textbook)**

**Duncan Pritchard**, *What is this Thing Called Knowledge?* 4th ed. (Routledge, 2018).

**Selected readings** (identified on the syllabus as ARES) will be made available to you online through the library's ARES E-Course Reserve System: <https://ares.lib.uoguelph.ca/ares/>

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## 4 Learning Outcomes

### 4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. *Understand, explain* and assess major conceptual developments in epistemology, including theories of justification, skepticism, and social epistemology.

2. *Identify and critically evaluate* the practical significance of central issues in epistemology.
  3. *Read and comprehend* original source materials in the history and problems of philosophy.
  4. *Write* clearly and cogently on basic problems in philosophy.
  5. *Argue* successfully for your own view and be able to identify and critically evaluate patterns of argumentative reasoning in the work of others.
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

### Remote learning: how it's going to look

If you have taken a class with me before you know that I encourage student participation during my lectures. Philosophical ideas can be challenging, and understanding is often achieved through a combination of reading, writing, and deliberation. So, even though we are not meeting in person, I would still like to see your faces and give you the opportunity to actively participate and learn philosophy by talking through ideas as a group. Also, it is important to me to create an inclusive learning environment, one which allows for all voices to be heard.

To achieve these goals, we need to have some virtual classes, so that's what we are going to do.

I will be holding one virtual class, via Teams, each week throughout the term, alternating between Tuesdays and Thursdays. **Virtual classes are indicated on the course schedule in bold.** At the start of the semester you will receive a link to our Teams group, which you can use to logon to any scheduled class. I will post my lecture notes on CourseLink every Monday, before that week's classes.

I will not be lecturing during these sessions, but I will start the meeting by discussing one or two key concepts from that day's reading, and then I will open up the session to discussion. Again, the goal is to achieve a student-centered and inclusive classroom through remote learning. We'll see how it goes!

**Note: I will be available for virtual meetings (one-on-one or group), by appointment, on the**



November 3	<b>Scientific Knowledge</b>	Pritchard Chapter 11
November 5	Moral Knowledge	Pritchard Chapter 13
November 10	Moral Knowledge (cont'd) * <i>Essay due</i>	Pritchard Chapter 13 (cont'd)
November 12	<b>Technology QUIZ #4</b>	Pritchard Chapter 14
November 17	<b>Scepticism About Other Minds</b>	Pritchard Chapter 18
November 19	Radical Scepticism	Pritchard Chapter 19
November 24	Truth and objectivity	Pritchard Chapter 20
November 26	<b>White Ignorance QUIZ #5</b>	C. Mills ARES
December 1	<b>White Ignorance and Culpability</b>	(no reading)
December 3	<b>Take-Home Final Exam Handout</b>	

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## 6 Assessments

### Evaluation: Summary of Course Requirements\*

\*if a student is ill, or cannot attend class or complete an assignment for reasons connected to COVID (or to any aspect of their health), they will be accommodated; in these cases, please contact me directly.

1. **Midterm test: 30%.** This test may include some short and long answer questions.

The midterm is scheduled for October 20; I will post the test on CourseLink at 9am on

October 20, and it will be due by 5pm that day.

This will be an 'open-book' test, which means you can consult your class notes as well as the text, but students are required to work *independently*.

**1. 5 'in-class' Quizzes (5 x 2%): 10%.**

Each quiz will have one question, which you'll be required to answer in a long-answer (or essay-style) format. So long as you follow the instructions and answer the question, and do so within the time-frame allotted, then you'll pass the quiz and receive full marks (2/2). There are no assigned grades for quizzes; it is a pass/fail assignment. If you do it, you get full marks (and there are no part marks). These quizzes are designed to test your understanding of the material and to help you learn how to write and argue like a philosopher.

On the days that we have a quiz, we'll start class with a brief discussion on the quiz topic, and then I will assign the quiz question. You will have until the end of the day to submit it via Dropbox.

1. **One 5-page essay: 25%.** Topics for the essay will be handed out 3 weeks prior to the due date.

The essays will be submitted via Dropbox

1. **Final Take-Home Exam: 35%.** The exam may include some short and long answer questions.

The final exam will be a take-home 'open-book' test, which means you can consult your class notes as well as the text, but students are required to work *independently*.

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## 7 Course Statements

### 7.1 Netiquette

## **Online Behaviour**

**Inappropriate online behaviour will not be tolerated. Examples of inappropriate online behaviour include:**

- Posting inflammatory messages about your instructor or fellow students
- Using obscene or offensive language online
- Copying or presenting someone else's work as your own
- Adapting information from the Internet without using proper citations or references
- Buying or selling term papers or assignments
- Posting or selling course materials to course notes websites
- Having someone else complete your quiz or completing a quiz for/with another student
- Stating false claims about lost quiz answers or other assignment submissions
- Threatening or harassing a student or instructor online
- Discriminating against fellow students, instructors and/or TAs
- Using the course website to promote profit-driven products or services

- Attempting to compromise the security or functionality of the learning management system
- Sharing your user name and password
- Recording lectures without the permission of the instructor

## 7.2 Recording Lectures

By enrolling in a course, unless explicitly stated and brought forward to their instructor, it is assumed that students agree to the possibility of being recorded during lecture, seminar or other “live” course activities, whether delivery is in-class or online/remote.

If a student prefers not to be distinguishable during a recording, they may:

1. turn off their camera
2. mute their microphone
3. edit their name (e.g., initials only) upon entry to each session
4. use the chat function to pose questions.

Students who express to their instructor that they, or a reference to their name or person, do not wish to be recorded may discuss possible alternatives or accommodations with their instructor.

## 7.3 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

# 8 University Statements

## 8.1 Email Communication

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

## 8.2 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 e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

### 8.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### 8.4 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.

### 8.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be

noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website  
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website  
<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

## 8.6 Academic Integrity

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 encourages academic integrity. 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.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct  
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct  
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## 8.7 Recording of Materials

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

## 8.8 Resources

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

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

## **8.9 Disclaimer**

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

## **8.10 Illness**

The University will not normally require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for fall 2020 or winter 2021 semester courses. However, requests for Academic Consideration may still require medical documentation as appropriate.

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