

KNOWLEDGE IN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

Overview

In this course we will examine the core questions of epistemology: What is knowledge? What, if anything, do we know? How do we know it? We will start by examining the philosophical and contextual background of these questions (skepticism) and four important approaches to answering them (foundationalism, coherentism, contextualism and reliabilism). In the second part of the course, we will focus on scientific knowledge. Topics will include: how do scientists acquire knowledge? Can we compare knowledge acquired from different methods? What counts as scientific evidence? Can scientific knowledge be objective? Should we value objectivity?

Information & Policies

I. Seminars

- Seminars will be held once a week, on Thursdays from 14.15 to 15.45.
- The first class is on November 5th.
- All seminars will be held on Zoom
- The Zoom link will be open from 14pm
- The seminars will start with 20-30 mins lecture, followed by discussion. Students are required to participate in the discussion.

II. Attendance

- Students are required to attend all seminars.
- Please be on time! Link will be open 15 mins before the start of the seminar

III. Reading

- The syllabus has ‘required’ and ‘recommended’ readings.
- Students are *required* to read the required readings *before* the seminar
- Discussion will be based on the readings, so if you don’t do the reading you won’t have anything to contribute!
- You do not have to read the recommended readings, but it is a good idea to do so, especially if you choose that topic for your final essay.
- Many of the readings are from
 - Michael Williams (2001) *Problems of Knowledge: A critical introduction to Epistemology*
- You can purchase the books if you wish, but **all readings will be posted on the course website.**

IV. Participation

- Attending the seminar on zoom is required.
- Active participation is also required. This means participating in the discussion.

V. Short Assignments

- The course has two types of short assignments
 - **Study questions:** these are questions to help structure your reading. Write a short paragraph or two answering the question after you have completed a reading. Have your paragraph near you so that you can refer to it during discussion. The study questions will be posted each week on Lernraum.
 - **Short papers:** These are 3 short papers (1-2 pages), answering a particular question. It is especially important to complete them if you are going to take the exam, so that you receive feedback before you embark on the longer essay.

VI. Exam

- The exam will take the form of a longer essay (6000-8000 words)
- Topic. Students can either pick one of the set topics or write about a topic of their choosing. **If you choose the second option, you must have the question and title approved by me!**
- The provisional deadline for the exam is March 21st

VII. Office Hours

- By appointment over zoom. Please email me if you would like to meet.

Syllabus

Date	Part	Topic	Readings
5/11	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Epistemology? 	Required: 1. Steup & Neta – <i>Epistemology</i> (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)
12/11	Part 1. Knowledge in Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skepticism 	Required: 1. Descartes – <i>Meditations</i> (excerpts) 2. Moore – <i>Proof of an External World</i> Recommended: MW chs 5, 6
19/11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gettier Problem 	Required 1. Gettier – <i>Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?</i> 2. Clark – <i>Knowledge and Grounds: A comment on Mr. Gettier's Paper</i> Recommended: 1. Zagzebski – <i>The Inescapability of Gettier Problems</i> 2. MW chs 3, 4
26/11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundationalism 	Required: 1. Chisholm “The Myth of the Given” Recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MW chs 7, 8, 9

3/12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherentism 	<u>Required:</u> 1. Donald Davidson – <i>A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge</i> <u>Recommended:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MW chs 10, 11, 12
10/12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualism 	<u>Required:</u> 1. MW chs 14 <u>Recommended:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MW chs 15, 16
16/12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliabilism 	<u>Required:</u> 1. Alvin Goldman - <i>What is Justified True Belief</i> 2. Feldman & Conee - <i>The Generality Problem for Reliabilism</i> <u>Recommended:</u> 1. Bonjour - <i>Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge</i> 2. J. D. Trout & Michael Bishop - <i>The Pathologies of Standard Analytic Epistemology</i>
23/12-3/01	Winter Break		
7/1	Part 2. Knowledge in Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectivity 	<u>Required:</u> 1. Longino – <i>Values and Objectivity</i>
14/1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminist approaches to Scientific Knowledge & Objectivity 	<u>Required:</u> 2. Harding – <i>Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology</i> Longino & Lennon – <i>Feminist Epistemology as a Local Epistemology</i>
23/1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data & Evidence 	<u>Required:</u> 1. James Woodward – <i>Data, Phenomena and Reliability</i>
28/1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models vs Experiments 	<u>Required:</u> 1. Morgan – <i>Experiments Versus Models: New Phenomena, Inference and Surprise.</i> 2. Parker – <i>Does Matter really Matter?</i>
4/2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and External Validity 	<u>Required:</u> 1. Guala – <i>Experimental Localism and External Validity</i>
12/2		Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Papers in Philosophy