



PHIL 3140: Epistemology
Fall 2012
Mondays & Wednesdays 8:35-9:55 a.m.
Southam Hall 501

Instructor information

David Matheson, Department of Philosophy, 3A45 Paterson Hall
 613-520-2600 ext. 1928
 david_matheson@carleton.ca
 Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:35-3:35 p.m.

Objective & description

The objective of this course is to provide you with an advanced introduction to epistemology—the theory of knowledge. After exploring a traditional account of the nature of knowledge and various approaches to justified belief (a central element of knowledge, according to the traditional account), we will turn our attention to skeptical, naturalistic, and relativistic challenges to our pretheoretic commitments about knowledge. Specific topics to be discussed include the sources of knowledge, the Gettier problem, foundationalism, coherentism, causal theory, truth-tracking theory, proper functionalism, reliabilism, contextualism, skepticism about the external world and about inductive reasoning, the relation between science and epistemology, the possibility of *a priori* knowledge, and the significance of disagreement over standards of knowledge.

Text & readings

The following required text will guide the content and structure of our discussions, and is available for purchase at the Carleton University Bookstore:

Feldman, R. 2003. *Epistemology (Prentice-Hall foundations of philosophy series)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

The following supplementary readings are contained in the PHIL 3140 coursepack, also available for purchase at the Carleton University Bookstore:

Annis, D. 1978. A contextualist theory of epistemic justification. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15 – **Ayer**, A.J. 1956. Excerpt from *The problem of knowledge*. Penguin Books. – **Boghossian**, P. 2006. Excerpt from *Fear of knowledge*. Oxford University Press. – **BonJour** [1], L. 1978. Can empirical knowledge have a foundation? *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15. – **BonJour** [2], L. 2000. Excerpt from *In defense of pure reason*. Cambridge University Press. – **Chisholm**, R. 1977. Excerpt from *Theory of knowledge (Prentice-Hall foundations of philosophy series)*. Prentice-Hall. – **Clark**, M. 1963. Knowledge and grounds: A comment on Mr. Gettier’s paper. *Analysis* 24. – **Cohen**, L. J. 1983. Can human irrationality be experimentally demonstrated? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 6. – **Descartes**, R. (1640) 1988. First meditation. Descartes, *Selected philosophical writings*, trans. J. Cottingham et al. Cambridge University Press. – **Gettier**, E. 1963. Is justified true belief knowledge? *Analysis* 23. – **Goldman**, A. 1976. What is justified belief? G.S. Pappas, ed., *Justification and knowledge*. D. Reidel. – **Hume**, D. (1777) 1995. Excerpt from *Enquiries concerning human understanding and concerning the principles of morals*, 3rd ed., P.H. Nidditch, ed. Oxford University Press. – **Lehrer**, K. 1974. Excerpt from *Knowledge*. Oxford University Press. – **Moore**, G.E. 1939. Proof of an external world. *Proceedings of the British Academy* 25. – **Nozick**, R. Excerpt from *Philosophical explanations*. Harvard University Press. – **Plantinga**, A. Excerpt from *Warrant and proper function*. Oxford University Press. – **Plato**. (c. 400 BCE) 1987. Excerpt from *Theaetetus*,

trans. R. Waterfield. Penguin Books. – **Quine**, W.V.O. 1969. Epistemology naturalized. Quine, *Ontological relativity and other essays*. Columbia University Press. – **Stroud**, B. 1984. Excerpt from *The significance of philosophical scepticism*. Oxford University Press.

Evaluation

Reasoning sketches. (20% of overall grade.) During the term, you will be expected to complete two “reasoning sketches” (September 26, October 31), in which you succinctly state a thesis on some aspect of the material discussed in the course to date and a sketch of a line of reasoning in support of that thesis.

Short essays. (40% of overall grade.) You will also be expected to write two short essays during the term (October 10, November 14). Each essay will be approximately two double-spaced, typed pages (600 words) in length, and devoted to the articulation and defense of one of the supporting elements in your previously submitted reasoning sketch.

End-of-term essay. (40% of overall grade.) In lieu of sitting a formally scheduled examination, you will compose an end-of-term essay, about ten double-spaced, typed pages (3,000 words) in length, on one of the assigned topics distributed on the final day of classes. Your reasoning sketches and short essays will have prepared you for this. The essay will be due on the day after the end of the fall term’s examination period, December 20.

Calendar

Sept 10 & 12	Introduction: Epistemology, “the standard view,” & sources of knowledge	Feldman, Chapter 1; Chisholm
Sept 17 & 19	The traditional analysis of knowledge	Feldman, Chapter 2; Plato; Ayer
Sept 24 & 26	The Gettier problem Reasoning sketch 1	Feldman, Chapter 3; Gettier; Clark
Oct 1 & 3	Evidentialism & internalism: Cartesian & modest foundationalism	Feldman, Chapter 4; BonJour [1]
Oct 10	Evidentialism & internalism: Coherentism Short essay 1	Lehrer
Oct 15 & 17	Nonevidentialism & externalism: The causal theory	Feldman, Chapter 5
Oct 22 & 24	Nonevidentialism & externalism: truth-tracking & proper functionalism	Nozick; Plantinga
Oct 29 & 31	Nonevidentialism & externalism: Reliabilism & substantive contextualism Reasoning sketch 2	Goldman; Annis
Nov 5 & 7	Skepticism about the external world	Feldman, Chapter 6; Descartes; Moore; Stroud
Nov 12 & 14	Skepticism about induction Short essay 2	Feldman, Chapter 7; Hume
Nov 19 & 21	Epistemological naturalism & science	Feldman, Chapter 8; Quine; Cohen

Nov 26 & 28	The <i>a priori</i>	BonJour [2]
Dec 3	Relativism & the standard view	Feldman, Chapter 9; Boghossian
Dec 6-19 (examination period)	End-of-term essay (Dec 20)	

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2012-13)

Assignments

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following in the lower right corner of the cover sheet:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- The Philosophy Department does not accept assignments by FAX. You may send them by courier, if necessary.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for term work

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

Plagiarism

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://www4.carleton.ca/calendars/ugrad/current/regulations/acadregsuniv14.html#14.3>)

Academic accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is

due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by Nov. 9, 2012 for the Fall term and March 8, 2013 for the Winter term.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.

Important dates

Sept. 6	Classes start (after Orientation events).
Sept. 19	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 5	University Day – no classes.
Oct. 8	Thanksgiving Day – university closed.
Nov. 19	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 3	Last day of classes, Fall term. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 3	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 4-5	No classes take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Dec. 6-19	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses.
Jan. 7	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 18	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 18	Family Day – university closed
Feb. 18-22	Winter Break, classes suspended.
Mar. 27	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Mar. 29	Good Friday – university closed
Apr. 10	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses. NOTE: On this day all classes follow a Friday schedule.
Apr. 10	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 11-12	No classes take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Apr. 13-27	Final Examinations.

Addresses

Department of Philosophy:	3A46 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Paul Menton Centre:	500 University Centre www.carleton.ca/pmc 520-6608
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library www.carleton.ca/wts 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735