

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Philosophy

PHIL3820 Epistemology

Course Code/Section: PHIL3820	Year: 2023-24	Term 2
Course Title: Epistemology		
Time/Venue: Lecture on Thursday 15:30 – 17:15/ICS L1		
Course website: Blackboard		
Course Teacher: ZHANG Jiji	Email: jijizhang@cuhk.edu.hk	Phone: 39437143
Office Location: FKH419	Office Hours: Monday 14:00 – 16:00 or by appointment	

Course overview (as shown on CUSIS):

This course examines the main issues and theories in the theory of knowledge and cognition, including the structure and elements of knowledge and justification; the role of sensation, perception, and conceptual thinking (empirical and logical); the realm of possible knowledge; and internalism and externalism.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS):

1. Demonstrate familiarity with a range of problems, concepts, and theories in the theory of knowledge and cognition.
2. Enhanced ability to research independently on the issues taught.

Learning Activities:

1. Interactive lectures
2. Tutorial presentations and discussions
3. Reading assignments and in-class quizzes based on reading questions

Topics:

1. The concept of knowing
2. Skepticism
3. The problem of induction
4. A priori knowledge
5. The structure of justification
6. Epistemic internalism vs externalism
7. Epistemic contextualism (vs invariantism)
8. Some alternative approaches (to the mainstream)

Weekly Course Schedule and Reading Assignment:		
Week/Date	Topic	Required readings/other requirements
1. 11 January	Overview	Bonjour (2010), chapter 1 Descartes (1641), Meditations I-III
2. 18 January	The analysis of knowing and the Gettier problem	Bonjour (2010), chapter 3 Gettier (1963) Klein (1971)
3. 25 January	Skepticism and perceptual knowledge	Russell (1912), chapter 2 Chalmers (2005) Excerpts from Berkeley (1710)
4. 1 February	Skepticism regarding memory and testimony	Bonjour (2010), chapter 8 Russell (1921), lecture 9
5. 8 February	Inductive skepticism	Hume (1748), section 4 Excerpts from Salmon (1966)
6. 15 February	No class	
7. 22 February	A priori knowledge	Bonjour (2010), chapter 5 Devitt (2005) Jenkins (2014)
8. 29 February	The structure of justification: foundationalism vs coherentism	Bonjour (2010), chapter 9 Haack (1999)
9. 7 March	Epistemic externalism (vs internalist evidentialism)	Bonjour (2010), chapter 10 Feldman and Conee (1985)
10. 14 March	Contextualism (vs invariantism)	Cohen (1986) Williamson (2005)
11. 21 March	Partial beliefs and Dutch book	Hacking (2001), chapters 13-14
12. 28 March	Samples of formal epistemology	Excerpts from Weisberg (2021)
13. 4 April	No class	
14. 11 April	A sample of social epistemology	Goldman (1991) Jackson (2021)
15. 18 April	A sample of feminist epistemology	Bergin (2002) Seller (1988)

Required readings and other recommended readings:

Main textbook:

Laurence Bonjour (2010) *Epistemology: Classic Problems and Contemporary Responses*, 2nd ed., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC.

Other readings:

Lisa A. Bergin (2002) 'Testimony, Epistemic Difference, and Privilege: How Feminist Epistemology Can Improve Our Understanding of the Communication of Knowledge', *Social Epistemology* 16(3): 197-213.

George Berkeley (1710) *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (rendering by Jonathan Bennett at <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/>)

David Chalmers (2005) 'The Matrix as Metaphysics', in C. Grau (ed) *Philosophers Explore the Matrix*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (<https://consc.net/papers/matrix.html>)

Stewart Cohen (1986) 'Knowledge and Context', *The Journal of Philosophy* 83: 574-83.

René Descartes (1641) *Meditations on First Philosophy* (translation by Jonathan Bennett at <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/>)

Michael Devitt (2005) 'There Is No A Priori', in M. Steup and E. Sosa (eds) *Contemporary*

Debates in Epistemology, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 105-15.

Richard Feldman and Earl Conee (1985) 'Evidentialism', *Philosophical Studies* 48: 15-34.

Edmund Gettier (1963) 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?', *Analysis* 23(6): 121-3.

Alvin Goldman (1991) 'Epistemic Paternalism: Communication Control in Law and Society', *The Journal of Philosophy*, LXXXVIII(3): 113-31.

Susan Haack (1999) 'A Foundherentist Theory of Empirical Justification', in L. Pojman (ed.) *The Theory of Knowledge: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, pp. 283-93.

Ian Hacking (2001) *An Introduction to Probability and Inductive Logic*, Cambridge University Press.

David Hume (1748) *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (rendering by Jonathan Bennett at <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/>)

Elizabeth Jackson (2021) 'What's Epistemic about Epistemic Paternalism', in J. Matheson and K. Lougheed (eds.) *Epistemic Autonomy*, Routledge, pp. 132-50.

Carrie Jenkins (2014) 'What Can We Know A Priori?', in R. Neta (ed.) *Current Controversies in Epistemology*, New York: Routledge.

Peter Klein (1971) 'A Proposed Definition of Propositional Knowledge', *The Journal of Philosophy* 68(16): 471-82.

Bertrand Russell (1912) *The Problems of Philosophy* (<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5827/5827-h/5827-h.htm>)

Bertrand Russell (1921) *The Analysis of Mind* (<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2529/2529-h/2529-h.htm>)

Wesley Salmon (1966) *The Foundations of Scientific Inference*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Anne Seller (1988) 'Realism versus Relativism: Towards a Politically Adequate Epistemology', in M. Griffiths and M. Whitford (eds), *Feminist Perspectives in Philosophy*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Jonathan Weisberg (2021) 'Formal Epistemology', in E. N. Zalta (ed) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/formal-epistemology/>.

Timothy Williamson (2005) 'Contextualism, Subject-Sensitive Invariantism and Knowledge of Knowledge', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 55(219): 213-35.

Assessment scheme:

Assessment component	Description	Weight (%)
Tutorial participation	Presentation and discussion	20%
In-class quizzes	Simple quizzes will be thrown in lectures from time to time.	15%
Midterm essay	1000-word essay on a selected topic	25%
Final essay	2500-word essay on a selected topic	40%

Academic honesty and plagiarism:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students are required to submit a **signed declaration** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via **VeriGuide**, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

Feedback for evaluation

- a. Course and teaching evaluation survey will be conducted in the second last week of the course. Students are reminded of their responsibility and right to give feedback to facilitate enhancement of the course.
- b. Students are welcome to give feedbacks to the course teacher at any time in person or through emails.

Grade Descriptors:

http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf