

Syllabus
PHIL 3300 (3 Cr.)
Theory of Knowledge
Fall 2017

Instructor: Dr. Kristopher G. Phillips
Office: 108F General Classrooms
Office Hours: TR 8:30a-11:00a & also by appointment

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Class Meets:
TR 3:00p-4:15p in GC 405

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In our everyday lives we frequently say that we know things. We know, for instance, that two plus two equals four, that we are currently in southwest Utah, or that we prefer burritos to every other food. Each of these claims, however, seems to demand different kinds of evidence. But what counts as evidence? What is knowledge? When do we go from having some reason to believe something to *knowing* something? How do we make evidence based choices? In this class we will discuss the nature of knowledge, the nature and structure of justification, and the nature of rational choice.

Course Learning Outcomes:

- Critical Thinking: The successful student will be able to differentiate between good and bad reasons for holding philosophical beliefs and will be able to seek out and identify the assumptions that lie at the basis of philosophical positions.
- Inquiry and Analysis: The successful student will be able to break complex philosophical problems into their components, and will be able to identify the consequences and implications of philosophical positions.
- Reading Comprehension: The successful student will be able to analyze and interpret abstract and difficult philosophical writing.
- Writing: The successful student will be able to express abstract and complex philosophical ideas in clear, precise, and logical prose.

Evaluation of these learning outcomes will be completed through take-home exams, and a term paper.

TEXTS: *Metaepistemology and Skepticism* by Richard Fumerton (Rowman and Littlefield, 1995) ISBN: 0847681076

And *Transformative Experience* by L. A. Paul (Oxford, 2016) ISBN: 0198777310

These can be found at the College Bookstore, and are *required*.

Materials not available in the required texts will be provided on Canvas.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

This list of readings is tentative, and the pace is brisk. Specific reading assignments will be given on a day-to-day basis, and the schedule is subject to revision.

Week 1

Introduction

Edmund Gettier: *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?* (Canvas)

Linda Zagzebski: *The Inescapability of Gettier Problems* (Canvas)

Richard Fumerton: Chapter 1, *Metaepistemology and Normative Epistemology* (1-27)

Weeks 2-10

Metaepistemology and Skepticism

Richard Fumerton: Chapter 1, continued.

Richard Fumerton: Chapter 2, *The Structure of Skeptical Arguments and Its Metaepistemological Implications* (29-54)

Richard Fumerton: Chapter 3, *Internalist and Externalist Foundationalism* (55-94)

Richard Fumerton: Chapter 4, *Externalist Versions of Foundationalism* (95-130)

Alvin Goldman: *What is Justified Belief?* (Canvas)

Robert Nozick: from *Philosophical Explanations* (Canvas)

Richard Fumerton: Chapter 5, *Coherence Theories of Truth and Justification* (131-158)

Laurence Bonjour: *The Coherence Theory of Empirical Knowledge* (Canvas)

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Richard Fumerton: Chapter 6, *Externalism and Skepticism* (159-182)

Richard Fumerton: Chapter 7, *Internalism and Skepticism* (183-224)

[Mid-Term Exam]

Weeks 10-15 Transformative Experience and Rational Decision Making

L.A. Paul: Chapters 1, 2, *Becoming a Vampire & Transformative Choice* (1- 51)

L.A. Paul: Chapter 3, *Life Choices* (52-104)

L.A. Paul: Chapter 4, *The Shock of the New* (105-123)

L.A. Paul: *Decision Making* (124-178)

[Final Exam]

ASSIGNMENTS and EVALUATION:

Two Exams (60%; 30% for each exam) The exams will be take-home. You will be expected to complete four short-answer questions, and one essay. I expect your short answer questions to be about 2-3 pages in total and your essay should be 3-4 pages typed. You are to work alone; standard exam rules apply. More on this in class.

Ten Weekly Discussion Board Posts (20%; 2% for each) I expect you to keep up on the reading. To facilitate discussion and keep you on track, you should complete 10 weekly discussion board posts (i.e. across 10 different weeks). You may respond to a thread already going, or you may begin a discussion of your own. I expect these to be thoughtful, reflective, substantive posts. A question with no follow-up is not sufficient for your contribution. I would like to see careful engagement with the course material, but I'd also like to see you go beyond the class discussion. These may be critical or clarificatory, but must not be a mere summary of what you've read. Please be sure to post by 7:00p on Sunday. Any posts made after 7:00p on Sunday will be counted for the following week's commentary grade.

Research Paper (20%; 5% for Proposal, 15% for the final product) You will be expected to complete a term paper on any topic relevant to epistemology, broadly speaking. You are not limited to topics that we discuss explicitly in class, and you are expected to do research beyond the material we cover in class. Your paper should be between 2000-3000 words. I expect you to submit a 1-page proposal to me by the 10th week of the semester. This will include an explicit statement of your (tentative) thesis, and some of the sources you intend to utilize in your research. **Your final paper will be due at the close of week 14.**

The proposal is non-binding, that is, you have some flexibility in terms of changing your thesis or trying out a different argument. I do ask that you not diverge too radically without first talking to me about your paper topic.

We will have a member of the library staff join us one day to explain how to do philosophical research (including what resources are available to you, and how to find relevant articles). More details in class.

POLICY:

Late Work: I will accept late exams, but for each 24-hour period that the paper is late, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a grade.

Grade Disputes: If you feel that your work has been unfairly assessed, you may ask that I reconsider. I am, after all, a human who makes mistakes on occasion. I will do so **only if** you submit to me, on paper, a one-paragraph typewritten explanation of why you believe that your work has been unfairly evaluated. You must indicate the grade you believe yourself to deserve and explain clearly why it is that you deserve that grade. Your dispute must be submitted within **one week** of receiving your grade.

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Plagiarism or academic fraud of any sort will result in an F for the course. Academic dishonesty is a serious matter. Please familiarize yourself with Southern Utah University's *Student Handbook*, which you can find online at <https://www.suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP633Academic.pdf>. I will follow the regulations described in this document for dealing with cheating, plagiarism, etc. If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism or academic fraud after reading through the student handbook, please do not hesitate to ask me for further clarification.

Classroom Conduct: The classroom constitutes a community of which we are each an important part. The very foundation of philosophy as a discipline is the ability to charitably listen, understand and represent the views of ourselves and others. As such, respect for your fellow student, your instructor and the course is of critical importance. We can, should, and will disagree with one another often, but this *MUST* be conducted with respect. As such threatening behavior, offensive language (including "hate speech") will not be tolerated.

Attendance: Excessive absences (6 or more) will hurt you 1 letter grade (as in A- to B-). Philosophy is hard even if you come to class. Skip at your own risk. You are responsible for information that I offer in lecture that is not in the readings. I will not give you notes for unexcused absences because I am a recalcitrant bastard. Participation in class discussion can raise your grade up to 1/3 of a letter grade.

Disabilities: I warmly welcome any of you who have disabilities. Students with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring academic adjustments, accommodations, or auxiliary aids must contact the Office for Students with Disabilities. The Office for Students with Disabilities determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of these services and aids. Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state, and University guidelines. For Southern Utah University's full policy, see: <http://suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP119Disability.pdf>.

SUU Care and Support Team: The SUU Care and Support Team (CAST) is comprised of trained faculty and staff who are committed to creating an environment at SUU that supports students who may be struggling with emotional distress and mental health issues. As a member of CAST, please know that I am here to help. I am not a professional counselor, but I do care, know how and where to find help if you need it, and want to see you succeed. Please do not be afraid to visit me if you're struggling. <http://www.suu.edu/cast/>

SUU Allies on Campus: Allies On Campus is a network comprised of students, staff, and faculty dedicated to creating safe spaces for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer individuals and Allies (LGBTQA) on the campus of Southern Utah University (SUU). As an ally, please know that I am committed to seeing that everyone is afforded the dignity and respect they deserve regardless of their identity. <http://www.suu.edu/allies/>

Link: SUU faculty and staff care about the success of our students. In addition to your professor, numerous services are available to assist you with the achievement of your educational goals. I may use SUU's Link system to notify you and/or your advisors of my concern for your progress and provide references to campus services as appropriate.

Emergency Management: In case of emergency, the University's Emergency Notification System (ENS) will be activated. Students are encouraged to maintain updated contact information using the link on the homepage of the mySUU portal. In addition, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Emergency Response Protocols posted in each classroom. Detailed information about the University's emergency management plan can be found at <http://suu.edu/emergency>.

HEOA Compliance: The sharing of copyrighted material through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, except as

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Disclaimer: Information contained in this syllabus, other than the grading, late assignments, makeup work, and attendance policies are subject to change with advance notice, as I deem appropriate.

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Suggestions for Further Research by Topic:

For all topics, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is an outstanding resource: <http://plato.stanford.edu>

Analysis of Knowledge:

Ayer: *Knowing as Having the Right to be Sure*
Pritchard: *Epistemic Luck*
Engel: *Is Epistemic Luck Compatible with Knowledge?*
Lackey: *What Epistemic Luck is Not*
Stoutenburg: *Epistemic Analysis of Luck*
Nozick: *Knowledge*
Klein: *A Proposed Definition of Propositional Knowledge*
Goldman: *A Causal Theory of Knowing*
Plato: *Theaetetus*
Plato: *Meno*
Chisolm: *Theory of Knowledge* [book]
Feldman: *An Alleged Defect in Gettier Counter-Examples*
Kaplan: *It's Not What You Know That Counts*
Lehrer: *Knowledge Truth and Evidence*
Williamson: *Knowledge and Its Limits* [book] (specifically, Intro and Ch.1)

Skepticism:

Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy*
Berkeley: *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge*
Hume: *Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy*
Putnam: *Brains in a Vat*
Moore: *Proof of an External World*
Moore: *Hume's Theory Examined*
Huemer: *Why Study Skepticism?*
Lewis: *Elusive Knowledge*
Cohen: *Knowledge and Context*
Cohen: *How to be a Fallibilist*
DeRose: *Solving the Skeptical Problem*
Huemer: *Direct Realism and the Brain-in-a-Vat Argument*
Sextus Empiricus: *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*
Stroud: *The Problem of the External World*
Pryor: *The Skeptic and the Dogmatist*
Vogel: *Cartesian Skepticism and Inference to the Best Explanation*
Feldman: *Skeptical Problems, Contextual Solutions*
Unger: *Ignorance*

Structure of Knowledge and Justification:

Carroll: *What the Tortoise Said to Achilles*
Alston: *Has Foundationalism Been Refuted?*
BonJour: *Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?*
BonJour: *Back to Foundationalism*
BonJour: *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* [book]
Sosa: *The Raft and the Pyramid*
Klein: *Human Knowledge and the Infinite Regress of Reasons*
Chisolm: *The Myth of the Given*
Fales: *A Defense of the Given* [book]
Russell: *Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description*
Fumerton: *Metaepistemology and Skepticism* [book]
Haack: *A Foundherentist Theory of Empirical Justification*

Internalism/Externalism:

Goldman: *Strong and Weak Justification*
BonJour: *Externalist Theories of Empirical Justification*
Goldman: *Internalism Exposed*
Connee & Feldman: *Internalism Defended*
Greco: *Virtue, Luck and the Pyrrhonian Problematic*
Bergmann: *Externalist Responses to Skepticism*
Bergmann: *Justification Without Awareness* [book]
Connee and Feldman: *Making Sense of Skepticism*
Kornblith: *Epistemology: Internalism and Externalism* [book]
Steup: *A Defense of Internalism*
Alston: *Internalism and Externalism in Epistemology*
Alston: *An Internalist Externalism*

A Priori

Jenkins: *A Priori Knowledge: The Conceptual Approach*
Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*
Quine: *Two Dogmas of Empiricism*
Butchvarov: *The Concept of Knowledge* [book]
BonJour: *In Defense of Pure Reason*
Devitt: *There is No A Priori*
Gendler: *Empiricism, Rationalism, and the Limits of Justification*
Putnam: *Two Dogmas Revisited*
Quine: *From a Logical Point of View* [book—collected articles]

Epistemology and Science (We did not discuss this, but it's cool)

Quine: *Epistemology Naturalized*
Lemos: *Naturalized Epistemology* (Ch. 10)
BonJour: *Against Naturalized Epistemology*
Fumerton: *Skepticism and Naturalistic Epistemology*
Kim: *What is Naturalized Epistemology?*
Stich and Nisbett: *Justification and the Psychology of Human Reasoning*

Self Knowledge (This is also cool):

Gertler: *Introspection*
Gertler: *Privileged Access: Philosophical Accounts of Self-Knowledge* [book]
Ludlow and Martin: *Externalism and Self-Knowledge* [book]
Tye and McLaughlin: *Externalism, Twin Earth, and Self-Knowledge*
Fumerton: *Speckled Hens and Objects of Acquaintance*
Dretske: *Introspection*
Cunning: *Agency and Consciousness*
Chalmers: *The Content and Epistemology of Phenomenal Belief*
Boghossian: *What the Externalist can Know a priori*
Sellars: *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*

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Testimony:

Hume: *Of Miracles*

Coady: *Testimony and Observation*

Reid: *Inquiry into the Human Mind*

Lackey: *Testimonial Knowledge and Transmission*

Lackey: *Learning from Words*

Problem of Induction:

Hume: *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

Edwards: *Russell's Doubts about Induction*

Carnap: *The Continuum of Inductive Methods*

Goodman: *Fact, Fiction, & Forecast* [book]

Hacking: *Logic of Statistical Inference*

Harman: *Inference to the Best Explanation*

Popper: *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*

Reichenbach: *Theory of Probability*