



Introduction to Epistemology

PHI 4311
T/TH: 2:00-3:15

Professor: Brandon Rickabaugh
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Morrison Hall 218
Office hours: T/TH 11:00-12:00,
and by appointment

4311 Course description: The aim of this course is twofold: 1) to introduce the student to the major questions, topics, and themes in contemporary epistemology; 2) to develop critical thinking skills, including those of identifying and evaluating arguments as well as articulating ideas aloud.

Required Texts: *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology* 2nd ed. Steup, Turri, and Sosa
Electronic Reserve articles (canvas)

Recommended Supplementary Reading:

Richard Feldman, *Epistemology*. Prentice-Hall, 2003.
Sven Bernecker and Fred Dretske, eds. *Knowledge: Readings in Contemporary Epistemology*. Oxford, 2000.

Useful resource: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy www.plato.stanford.edu

405 Course objectives: As a result of participating in this course and completing all required assignments, the students will be able to:

Cognitive objective: Knowledge acquisition:

1. Identify, articulate, and assess central epistemological concepts, debates, and puzzles. (*class lectures, readings, exams*)

Behavior objective: Skill development:

2. Employ reasoning about knowledge, evidence, and rationality; increase ability to read difficult texts and derive arguments from them; articulate and critique ideas aloud and in writing. (*readings, papers, class discussions*)

Affective objective: Impacting Values

3. Become integrated selves through understanding self and reality. (*readings, class lectures*)

Reading and Comprehension: Readings must be completed on time for credit. For each reading, students will hand in responses to the reading questions provided. Reading responses are due each Tuesday, unless otherwise instructed. In addition to the responses, students are to include 1-2 questions or observations of their own about the reading. These questions should thoughtfully engage the main ideas in the reading. Reading reports must be typed. I will not accept reading responses for days you are absent (unexcused) from class.

Assignments are graded using a three-fold rubric: a √- will be given for incomplete or inaccurate work, a √ for satisfactory work, and a √+ for outstanding work. Students are permitted to miss one reading assignment without penalty.

In-class participation: Participation in class discussion is crucial to the development of thinking and communication skills. This class will consist primarily of discussion, thus participation is required. **You must bring the required reading for the day to class** to receive full participation credit. Participation will be assessed as follows:

- 1-5 very little, no, or disruptive contribution to class discussions; irregular attendance
- 6-8 irregular contribution to class discussion
- 9-10 consistent, thoughtful, engaging contribution to class discussion

Students are permitted 2 unexcused absences. After 2 unexcused absences, missed classes will affect one's participation grade. (Please take note that Baylor University's attendance policy is that students who are absent for more than 25% of classes over the course of a semester automatically fail the course.)

One-minute papers: At the end of each class each student will turn in a one-minute paper. A one-minute paper is a half sheet of paper with the student's name and a question or thought on it. Students may use one-minute papers to communicate to the professor a question that was not answered in class, an idea that they had during class, or some other class-related comment.

Papers: There are 2 papers required for this course. The format of the paper is divided into two sections: exposition of a topic followed by critical evaluation of the topic. Students are responsible for selection of paper topics.

Exams: There will be 2 essay exams which will cover the lecture material and class discussions. The questions for the exam will be provided by the professor before the time of the exam and study groups are encouraged but permitted only on the condition that each student has attempted to answer each question in full prior to the meeting of the study group.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism or any form of cheating will not be tolerated. This means that any work submitted under your name is expected to be your own, neither composed by anyone else as a whole or in part. Disciplinary procedures for such violations include a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, and academic probation. Instances of plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Council.

Disability Services: Any student who needs academic accommodations related to a documented disability should contact the Office of Access and Learning Accommodation (OALA) at: 254-710-3605.

TITLE IX OFFICE: Baylor University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities, and it does not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex or gender. For more information on how to report or to learn more about our policy and process, please visit www.baylor.edu/titleix or call the Title IX Office at (254) 710-8454.

* The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at any time.

Grade Breakup:

10% In-class participation

20% Reading responses (5% based on the percentage of the reading completed on time)

20% Papers

25% Mid-Term

25% Final Exam

94-100 A

90-93 A-

88-89 B+

84-87 B

80-83 B-

78-79 C+

74-77 C

70-73 C-

68-69 D+

64-67 D

0-63 F

Reading and Paper Schedule:

	<u>Reading/assignment due:</u>
Week 1: Introduction 1/9-1/11	Feldman, <i>Epistemology</i> , Ch 2
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Week 2: Evidence & Foundationalism 1/16	Kelly, "Evidence" <i>Stanford Ency</i>
1/18	Feldman, Ch 4
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Week 3: JTB Analysis 1/23	Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" Zagzebski "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems"
1/25 Ethics of Belief	W.K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" James, "The Will to Believe"
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Week 4: The Problem of the Criterion 1/30	Chisholm, "The Problem of the Criterion"
2/1	Kelly, "Moorean Facts and Belief Revision"
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Week 5: Can Skepticism Be Refuted? 2/6-2/8	<i>Contemporary Debates</i> Ch 5
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Week 6: Internalism and Externalism
2/13

Contemporary Debates Ch 13

2/15

Goldman "Discrimination & Perceptual Knowledge"

Week 7: Fallibilism & Certainty
2/20

Dougherty, "Fallibilism"

2/22

Paper #1 Due

Week 8: Epistemic Closure
2/27

Contemporary Debates, Ch 2
Vogel, "Are there Counterexamples to the Closure

Principle?"

3/1 **Mid-term**

Midterm Exam 3/1

***** Spring Break 3/5-3/10 *****

Week 9: Can Evidence Be Permissive?
3/13-3/15

Contemporary Debates, Ch 2

Week 10: Contextualism
3/20
3/22

Contemporary Debates, Ch 3
David Lewis, "Elusive Knowledge"

Week 11: Disagreement
3/27-3/29

*Easter Weekend

Matheson, "Disagreement and Epistemic Peers"

Week 12: Interpersonal Knowledge
4/3
4/5

Benton, "Epistemology Personalized?"
Rickabaugh, "Eternal Life as Knowledge of God"

Week 13: Testimony
4/10
4/12 Miracle Reports

Lackey, "Assertion and Isolated Second-hand K"
Anderson & Pruss, "The Case for Miracles"
Recommended: Huma, "Of Miracles"

Week 14: Scientism
4/19

TBD

4/17 *No class 4/4 Diadeloso

Week 15: Divine Hiddenness

4/24

4/26 *Last day of class

Murphy, "Divine Hiddenness"

Paper #2 Due

***Final Exam: Thursday May 3, 9:00-11:00**