

**Phil 542 – Topics in Epistemology**  
**Spring 2017**  
**M 12:20-2:50pm**  
**South College E301**

**Epistemology: Who Cares?**

**Instructor**

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South College E325

Office hours: Wednesday 2-3pm or by appointment

This class will focus on questions about the purpose or function of knowledge and rationality. We care about these things, but why? And how do “who cares?” questions interact with other questions in epistemology?

**Assignment for everyone:**

(1) Reading responses: For each class meeting, please write up 2-3 reactions/questions in response one of the assigned papers. These can be short – maybe ½ a page total for each response. These will be turned in, but not graded. If you do not turn in at least 8 this will negatively affect your grade for the class. Please turn these in on Moodle; this will help both me and you keep track of how many you have completed.

**Assignments for those not taking the class for seminar credit:**

(2) One short paper (approx. 4-5 pages, or 1000 words) due mid-semester.

(3) One final paper (approx. 10 pages, or 2500 words) due on the last day of classes.

**Assignments for those taking the class for seminar credit:**

(2) One longer final term paper (approx. 20 pages, or 5000 words) due the last day of classes. Meet with me no later than the week of 4/3 to discuss your topic.

(3) Present three of the readings (approx. 30 mins, in class).

(4) Present your final paper the last day of classes (time/format TBD).

**Grading:**

*If you are not taking the class for seminar credit*

Short paper                    30%

Long paper                    70%

*If you are taking the class for seminar credit*

Long paper                    100%

The following things can lower your final grade by 1/3 (e.g. from a B+ to a B):

\* Not turning in at least 8 reading responses

\* Regularly skipping class, coming in substantially late, always looking at your phone

\* For seminar credit students: totally slacking off on one or more of your presentations.

I do not expect to enforce any of these!

**Week 1, 1/23: Intro & Gettier**

No reading

**Week 2, 1/30: New approaches after Gettier**

BonJour, Laurence. "The Myth of Knowledge"

Gardner, Georgi. "Teleologies and the Methodology of Epistemology"

**Week 3, 2/6: A social role for knowledge attributions**

Craig, Edward. "The Practical Explication of Knowledge"

Williams, Michael. "Knowledge in practice"

Kornblith, Hilary. "Why should we care about the concept of knowledge?"

**Week 4, 2/13: Social roles, continued**

Haslanger, Sally. "What knowledge is and what it ought to be"

Fricker, Miranda. "Epistemic injustice and a role for virtue in the politics of knowing"

**Week 5, 2/20: Knowledge as evidence**

Williamson, Timothy. "Evidence". Chapter 9 of *Knowledge and its Limits*.

Comesana, Juan and Holly Kantin. "Is Evidence Knowledge?"

Joyce, James. "Williamson on Evidence and Knowledge"

**Week 6, 2/27: Knowledge as the norm of assertion**

Williamson, Timothy. "Knowing and Asserting."

Lackey, Jennifer. "Norms of Assertion."

**Week 7, 3/6: What is epistemic rationality? Is it special?**

Pascal, Blaise. *Pensées*, Section 233.

Rinard, Susanna. "Equal Treatment for belief"

Arpaly, Nomy. TBA

**\*\*\* If you are *not* taking the class for seminar credit: short papers due Fri., 3/10\*\*\***

**Spring Break 3/11-3/19**

**Week 8, 3/20: Epistemic rationality and truth**

Cohen, Stewart. "Justification and truth."

Madison, Brent. "Epistemic value and the new evil demon problem."

Weiner, Matthew. "Why does justification matter?"

**Week 9, 3/27: Epistemic rationality and truth, cont.**

Berker, Selim. "Epistemic teleology and the separateness of propositions"

Goldman, Alvin. "Reliabilism, veritism, and epistemic consequentialism."

**Week 9, 4/3: Teleology & formal epistemology**

**\*\*\* Students taking the class for seminar credit, please meet with me to discuss paper topics this week \*\*\***

Carr, Jennifer. "Accuracy and the aim of belief"  
Schoenfield, Miriam. "Bridging rationality and accuracy"

**Week 11, 4/10: Application: giving reasons**

Weinberg, Jonathan. "Regress-stopping and disagreement for epistemic neopragmatists."  
Smithies, Declan. "Why justification matters"

**Week 12, 4/18: A social explanation for rationality ascriptions; permissivism**

Dogramaci, Sinan. "Reverse Engineering Epistemic Evaluations."  
Hedden, Brian & Daniel Greco. "Uniqueness and Metaepistemology"

**Week 13, 4/24: Application: permissivism**

Horowitz, Sophie. "Immoderately Rational"  
Schoenfield, Miriam. "Permissivism and the Value of Rationality"

**Week 14, 5/1: Graduate student paper presentations**