

# Introduction to Epistemology

Dale Tuggy

This course is a rigorous and comprehensive introduction to contemporary theories of knowledge. We'll begin with a careful examination of various skeptical challenges which force us to clarify our concept of knowledge. What is it, exactly, to *know* something? Similarly, some beliefs are justified and some are not. Can we specify what the difference is? Does the skeptic show that none, or a disturbingly large number of our beliefs have no rational support? How do we have perceptual knowledge of our surroundings? Also, do we have knowledge which is *not* sensory? If so, how can this be? What is the relation between science and epistemology? Is there a distinctively scientific theory of knowledge, and does science supply us with decisive answers to the skeptic? Finally, we will survey four alternative approaches to the problems of epistemology: contextualism, the social approach, feminist theories of knowledge, and the hermeneutical approach of the continental tradition in philosophy.

## Texts:

Audi, Robert. *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*  
Chisholm, Roderick. *Theory of Knowledge*, 3rd. Ed.  
Greco, John. & Sosa, Ernest. (eds.) *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*

## Abbreviations:

A  
C  
B

## Class #, Topic

## Required Reading

1. Introduction

### Unit One: The Skeptical Challenge

2. possibility of error, the problem of the criterion	C ch. 1
3. skeptical arguments, fallibility & uncertainty	A 281-306
4. refutation, rebuttal, and common sense	A 306-17
5. theoretical responses to skepticism	Williams in B, 35-69
6. realism, objectivity, and skepticism	Moser in B, 70-91

## **Unit Two: What is knowledge?**

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|--|------------------------|
| 7. <i>paper 1 due</i> ; the justified true belief approach | A 211-221, C ch. 10    |
| 8. Gettier problems & reliability theories                 | A 221-47               |
| 9. a virtue approach to epistemology                       | Zagzebski in B, 92-116 |
| 10. the dialectic of foundationalism & coherentism         | C ch 9; A 177-210      |
| 11. cont.  | Bonjour in B, 117-42   |

## **Unit Three: Internalism & Externalism, the *a priori***

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|---|---------------------|
| 12. Chisholm on the irreducibility of internal justification, the evident | C ch. 2-4,          |
| 13. cont.   | C ch. 5-8           |
| 14. Sosa on internalism, externalism & skepticism                         | Sosa in B 145-57    |
| 15. approaches to <i>a priori</i> knowledge                               | C ch. 4, A ch. 4    |
| 16. cont., <i>paper 2 due</i>   | Bealer in B, 243-70 |

## **Unit Four: Perception, Science, and Naturalized Epistemology**

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|---|------------------------|
| 17. Audi on perception                        | A ch. 1                |
| 18. perceptual knowledge                      | Alston in B, 223-42    |
| 19. scientific knowledge: basic issues        | A 250-9                |
| 20. the case for “naturalized epistemology”   | Kornblith in B, 158-69 |
| 21. methodological naturalism in epistemology | Feldman in B, 170-86   |

## **Unit Five: Alternate Approaches to Epistemology**

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|--|------------------------|
| 22. Contextualism  | DeRose in B, 187-205   |
| 23. Social epistemology                                    | Schmitt in B, 354-82   |
| 24. Feminist epistemology                                  | Longino in B, 327-53   |
| 25. cont.; Hermeneutics as Epistemology: Rorty & Heidegger | Westphal in B, 415-26. |
| 26. Gadamer & Derrida                                      | Westphal in B, 426-35. |

26. last class *paper 3 due*

*Final Exam*

### **Requirements and Grading**

There are 400 possible points for the course, which break down as follows:

Required Reading	40
Discussion Section	30
Paper 1 (3 pgs)	50
Paper 2 (5 pgs)	80
Paper 3 (8-10 pgs)	100
<u>Final exam</u>	<u>100</u>
Total	400

#### *Reading 10%*

It is important that you keep up with the reading. Lectures will presuppose that you have read the material beforehand. You will be asked at the start of each class to sign a sheet indicating that you have done the required reading for that day. Everyone will be granted three free absences/failures to read without any grade penalty. If you come in late it is your responsibility to find the sheet and sign it. Skipping class equals losing reading points.

#### *Discussion Section 8%*

Required discussion sections will meet weekly eleven times, starting the second week of class. The discussion group grade covers attendance only, and everyone gets one free skip.

#### *Exam 25%*

There will be a comprehensive final exam. We will observe the reading period, during which there will be an optional review session.

#### *Papers 58%*

There will be three papers - 3 pages, 5 pages, 8-10 pages.