5AANA009 Epistemology II
Syllabus – Academic year 2012/3

Basic information

Credits: 15
Module Tutor: Clayton Littlejohn
Office: 603
Consultation time: TBD
Semester: Spring
Lecture time and venue: S-1.06

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

Teaching arrangements: One one-hour weekly lecture and one one-hour weekly seminar over ten weeks.

Epistemology II studies some central issues in contemporary theory of knowledge, concentrating on problems of scepticism and epistemic justification. We shall discuss the regress argument, perceptual knowledge, the internalism/externalism debate, epistemic luck, skepticism, testimony, and disagreement.

Module aims

To impart a deeper grasp of the parts of contemporary epistemology most relevant to contemporary philosophy in general.
To encourage and enable reflection on the relation between philosophical and other kinds of inquiry.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, the students will be able to demonstrate intellectual, transferable and practicable skills appropriate to a Level 5 module and in particular will be able to demonstrate:

Understanding of skeptical arguments and contemporary responses to them.
Understanding of inquiry considered as a purposive activity regulated by epistemic norms (evidence, reasons, etc.)
Understanding of the prospects and limitations of so-called externalist theories of justification in our understanding of epistemic normativity.
Understanding the nature of testimonial justification.
Assessment methods and deadlines

* Summative assessment: one two-hour exam (100%)

* Formative assessment: two 1,500-word essays. Formative essays must be completed by the deadline in order to receive feedback. This feedback is crucial for your summative assessment.

Semester two (Spring term) modules
First essay due: 16.00 on Friday 22 February 2013
Second essay due: 16.00 on Friday 29 March 2013 (NB this is the last day of term!)

NB Please note that for semester I-only Study Abroad students, assessment requirements may vary. In particular, May exams will be replaced by summative essays to be submitted by the end of term (date TBC)

Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)
Check KEATS for readings and notes. If you are looking for a good introductory level text, you should look at Duncan Pritchard’s Knowledge, Laurence BonJour’s Epistemology, or Noah Lemos’ An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge.

**Week 1 – The Regress Argument**
BonJour, “Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?”
Pryor, “There is Immediate Justification”
Sosa, “The Raft and the Pyramid” [Optional]

**Week 2 – Perceptual Foundations (I)**
Brewer, “Perceptual Experience Has Conceptual Content”
Byrne, “Perception and Conceptual Content”
Byrne, “Experience and Content” [Optional]
Ginsborg, “Reasons for Belief” [Optional]

**Week 3 – Perceptual Foundations (II)**
McDowell, “Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge”
Conee, “Disjunctivism and Anti-Skepticism”
Goldman, “Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge”

**Week 4 – Knowledge and Epistemic Luck**
Dretske – Epistemic Operators
Sosa – How to Defeat Opposition to Moore
Nozick – Philosophical Explorations [Optional]

**Week 5 – Internalism vs. Externalism (I)**
Goldman, “What is Justified Belief?”
Cohen, “Justification and Truth”

**Week 6 – Internalism vs. Externalism (II)**
Wedgwood, “Internalism Explained”
Goldman, “Internalism Exposed”
Williamson, “Knowledge and Evidence”
Week 7 – Contextualism and Skepticism
DeRose, “Solving the Skeptical Puzzle”
Lewis, “Elusive Knowledge”
Schiffer, “Contextualist Solutions to Skepticism” [Optional]

Week 8 – Neo-Moorean Responses to Skepticism
Pryor, “The Skeptic and the Dogmatist”
Pryor, “What is Wrong with Moore’s Proof?” [Optional]
Wright, “The Perils of Dogmatism”

Week 9 – Testimony
Coady, “Testimony and Observation”
Fricker, “Against Gullibility”
Foley, “Universal Intellectual Trust” [Optional]

Week 10 – Disagreement
Feldman, “Epistemological Puzzles about Disagreement”
Elga, “How to Disagree about How to Disagree”
Kelly, “Disagreement and the Burdens of Judgment” [Optional]
Enoch, “Not Just a Truthometer” [Optional]