

5AANA009 EPISTEMOLOGY II

Syllabus – Academic year 2013/14

Basic information

Credits: 15

Module Tutor: Clayton Littlejohn

Office: 603

Consultation time: TBD

Semester: 1

Lecture time and venue:*

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/philosophy/study/handbook/teaching/timetables.aspx>

**Please note that tutorial times and venues will be organised independently with your teaching tutor*

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

The Epistemology module aims to bring students to a critical understanding of some of the central problems in the theory of knowledge, via a close reading and discussion of some of the key recent texts in this area. Students taking this course will acquire a good sense of the nature and range of the subject-matter of epistemology itself, and its relation to other philosophical areas. Students will acquire an appreciation of how the problems under discussion are motivated and generated, by examining particular claims concerning the nature, source and extent of human knowledge.

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 that they have:

- An ability to read closely and gain an understanding of relevant texts
- An ability to summarize arguments and positions
- An ability to support and to challenge views and positions, by constructing arguments and citing relevant considerations
- The formation of philosophical views of their own, which they are prepared to defend or amend in the light of criticism

Assessment methods and deadlines

Summative – one x two-hour exam (100%)

Formative – two x 1500 word essays (Sem 1 - Essay 1, Fri Nov 8 2013; Sem 1 - Essay 2, Fri Dec 20 2013)

Schedule

Readings will either come from readings linked from KEATS or Pritchard's book *Knowledge* (Palgrave Philosophy Today, ISBN 0230019447—Not to be confused with Pritchard's book *What is This Thing Called Knowledge!!!*).

- **Week 1 – Sensitivity vs. Safety**

Pritchard, Chp. 1 and 2; Dretske, 'Conclusive Reasons'; Greco, 'Better Safe than Sensitive', (Optional, but recommended); Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Optional, but recommended)

- **Week 2 – Safety and Anti-Luminosity**

Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits*, Chp. 4 and 5.1-5.3; Gertler, *Self-Knowledge*, pp. 121-23; Brueckner and Fiocco, 'Williamson's Anti-Luminosity Argument' (Optional, but recommended); Conee, 'The Comforts of Home' (Optional, but recommended).

- **Week 3 – Virtue Theory**

Pritchard, Chp. 3 and 4; Greco, 'Knowledge and Success from Ability'; Lackey, 'Why You Don't Deserve Credit for Everything You Know' (Optional, but recommended).

- **Week 4 – Internalism, Externalism, and Disjunctivism**

Pritchard, Chp. 5; Cohen, 'Justification and Truth'; McDowell, 'Knowledge and the Internal' (Optional, but recommended).

- **Week 5 – Reasons, Causes, Knowledge**

Davidson, 'Actions, Reasons, and Causes'; Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits*, Chp. 9; Conee and Feldman, 'Evidence'; Hyman, 'Knowledge and Evidence' (Optional, but recommended); Alvarez, *Kinds of Reasons*, Chp. 5 (Optional, but recommended).

- **Week 6 – Closure, Transmission, and Skepticism**

Pritchard, Chp. 6 (skip the contextualism material); Wright, 'Some Reflection on the Acquisition of Warrant by Inference'; Hawthorne, 'A Defense of Closure' (Optional, but recommended), Pryor, 'What's Wrong with Moore's Argument' (Optional, but recommended); Coliva, 'The Paradox of Moore's Proof of the External World' (Optional, but recommended)

- **Week 7 – Contextualism**

Pritchard, Chp. 6 (just the material on contextualism); Lewis, 'Elusive Knowledge'; Williamson, 'Contextualism, Subject-Sensitive Invariantism, and Knowledge of Knowledge' (Optional, but recommended); Unger, *Ignorance*, Chp. 4 (Optional, but recommended).

- **Week 8 – Disagreement**

Feldman, 'Reasonable Religious Disagreements'; Elga, 'How to Disagree'; Kelly, 'The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement'; Christensen, 'Disagreement'.

- **Week 9 – Know How and Know That**

Ryle, 'Knowing How and Knowing That'; Hornsby, 'Ryle's Knowing How and Knowing How to Act'; Stanley and Williamson, 'Know How'

- **Week 10 – Epistemic Responsibility**

Alston, 'The Deontological Conception of Justification'; Hieronymi, 'Responsibility for Believing'; Chuard and Southwood, 'Epistemic Norms without Voluntary Control' (Optional, but recommended); McHugh, 'Epistemic Deontology and Voluntariness' (Optional, but recommended).

Suggested essay questions

- Will the sensitivity condition or the safety condition serve as a suitable anti-luck condition?
- Are there any non-trivial luminous conditions?
- Are all cognitive achievements knowledge?
- What's the right response to the new evil demon objection?
- Are reasons causes?
- Is justification closed under known entailment?
- If we suppose that justification is closed under known entailment, should we think that it can be transmitted by means of competent deduction?
- Evaluate the contextualist response to the sceptical argument from ignorance.
- Evaluate Ryle's regress argument.
- Assess Alston's critique of epistemic deontologism.