

# PHIL-UA 76: Epistemology

April 24, 2014

**Instructor** Carlotta Pavese.

**Main Lecture Time** M/W 9:30-10:45.

**Main Lecture Place**

**Time Recitations** Friday 9:30-10:45, 11:00-12:15.

**Place Recitations**

**Teaching Assistant Name** Katrina Przyjemski.

**Email** [kjp273@nyu.edu](mailto:kjp273@nyu.edu)

**Office Hours** Wednesday at 10:45-11:45 and by appointment

**Office Number** 309, 5 Washington Place.

**Website** NYUClasses

<https://newclasses.nyu.edu/portal/site/24449a59-ad0e-443b-8f32-335fd1b86c6d>

**Email** [carlotta.pavese@gmail.com](mailto:carlotta.pavese@gmail.com). [cp101@nyu.edu](mailto:cp101@nyu.edu)

**Office** 5 Washington Place, office 408.

**Office Hours** (where: my office): 11am-12pm on Mondays and 11am-12pm, on Wednesdays.

**Course Description** This course will be a survey of central issues in contemporary epistemology. We will start by considering skeptical arguments to the effect that we can't really know whether the world is the way it appears to us. Then we will look at different strategies to respond to such skeptical arguments. Most of the course will then be devoted to exploring questions concerning the nature of knowledge and the relation between knowledge and other epistemologically significant concepts, such as justification and evidence. Particular emphasis will be given to an assessment of recent approaches to epistemology, such as virtue epistemological approaches and knowledge-first approaches.

You must also enroll in one of the two available recitations.

## Textbook and Readings

*Mandatory:*

Feldman, Richard. *Epistemology*. Pearson College Division, 2003.

Rosenberg, Jay. *Three Conversations about knowing*, Hackett Publishing 2000.

**Other Readings:** Some of the readings aren't in the mandatory textbook. All such readings will be available electronically on NYUClasses site. You should print these out and bring them to class.

**Advice on Reading:** It is more important to reach a basic grasp of the overall point of a reading than to understand any particular detail. Accordingly, I advise you to do each of the readings once quickly in a single sitting and then return to the details you missed. If, on a second reading, you can't sort out some specific detail, write down what you don't understand and bring it to class for discussion. Do your best to raise your question at a point in the class where that detail is relevant to what's being discussed. It is much more likely that you will get a satisfying answer if you ask your question at the appropriate time. In all the readings, it will be helpful to ask yourself 'what is the problem or issue at stake here?' and then 'what solutions or positions is the author arguing for here?'

### **Grading:**

**Exams** 50% 2 Exams (Exam 1: 20%, Exam 2: 30%). See the schedule for the exam days.

All 2 exams will require you to answer 3 short-answer essay questions. Each exam will present you with 3 pairs of questions and you will have to select one from each pair to answer; all the answers will have to be completed in-class. Prior to each exam I will post 12 study-questions on NYUclasses. The 6 exam questions will be among these study questions. The exams will be non-cumulative, but there is a good deal of interdependence in the course material, so it may be necessary to revisit old notes and texts in studying for an exam.

**Essays** 40% 2 essays (Essay 1: 15%, Essay 2: 25%). See the schedule for when the essays are due.

**Attendance, class discussion and quizzes** 10%. There are seven quizzes spread out during the semester. Please, look at the schedule to see when they are scheduled.

**Policy on Absences:** Students are expected to attend all classes. Please note: My policy for missed classes and missed exams is the following. If you miss an exam and want to make it up, you will need an official excuse of your absence. In all but the most extreme cases, you will be required to make up the missed exam within 10 days. You've got up to *two* excused absences during the semester.

### **(Provisional) Schedule**

The following schedule is only provisional and most likely subject to changes as we go on.

**1st week Monday** *When:* 27th January.

*Readings:* None.

*Topic:* Introduction to Epistemology. Belief, Truth and Knowledge.

**Wednesday** *When:* 29th January.

*Readings:*

- Rosenberg's First Conversation.

*Topic:* The Matrix

**2nd week Monday** *When:* 3rd February. **First Quiz**

*Readings:*

- "What is so bad about living in the Matrix?" by Jim Pryor  
<http://www.jimpryor.net/research/papers/matrix/plain.html>

*Topic:* The Matrix

**Wednesday** *When:* 5th February. Class was canceled due to weather.

**3rd week Monday** *When:* 10th February.

*Readings:*

- Descartes, First Meditation, Meditations on First Philosophy, made available.
- Feldman pp. 108-119.

*Topic:* The dreaming argument.

**Wednesday** *When:* 12th February.

*Readings:*

- Selections of Hawthorne[1] made available.
- Rosenberg, Second Conversation, pp. 18-22.

*Topic:* Lottery Paradox, Closure, Multiple-premises Closure.

**4th week Monday** *When:* 17th February. *Readings:* No Class, President's day.

*Topic:* No Class, President's day.

**Wednesday** *When:* 19th February. **Second Quiz**

*Readings:*

- Selections of Hawthorne[1] made available.
- Rosenberg, Second Conversation, pp. 18-22.

*Topic:* Continued: Lottery Paradox, Closure, Multiple-premises Closure.

**5th week Monday** *When:* 24th February.

*Readings:*

- Keith DeRose, "Contextualism: an explanation and defense" in John Greco and Ernest Sosa, eds., *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*. (Blackwell, Malden, Mass., 1999), pp. 187-205.
- Feldman, pp. 152-155

- Selection from Ernest Sosa, "Skepticism and contextualism" *Philosophical Issues* 10 (2000), pp. 1-10.

*Topic:* Relevant Theories and Contextualist solutions to skepticism.

**Wednesday** *When:* 26th February.

*Readings:*

- Keith DeRose, "Contextualism: an explanation and defense" in John Greco and Ernest Sosa, eds., *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*. (Blackwell, Malden, Mass., 1999), pp. 187-205.
- Feldman, pp. 152-155
- Selection from Ernest Sosa, "Skepticism and contextualism" *Philosophical Issues* 10 (2000), pp. 1-10.

*Topic:* Relevant Theories and Contextualist solutions to skepticism. (Continued)

**6th week Monday** *When:* 3rd March, Monday.

*Readings:*

- Feldman chapter 1 and 2.
- Rosenberg, Second Conversation pp. 22-36.
- Edmund Gettier, "Is justified true belief knowledge?," *Analysis* 23 (1963), pp. 121-23. Reprinted in Paul K. Moser, ed., *Empirical Knowledge: readings in contemporary epistemology* (Rowman Littlefield, Totowa, NJ, 1986), pp. 231-33.

*Topic:* What is knowledge? Traditional analyses of knowledge and Gettier's challenge.

**Wednesday** *When:* 5th March. **Third Quiz**

*Readings:*

- Alvin Goldman, "Discrimination and perceptual knowledge," *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976), pp. 771-791.
- Rosenberg, Third Conversation, especially up to p. 43.

*Topic:* Goldman's response to Gettier. Problems for Goldman.

10th March

- Re-Read Rosenberg, pp. 20-top of 40.
- Read Feldman, Chapter 3

*Topic:* Other responses to Gettier's challenge.

*When:* 12th March.

*Readings:* none.

*Topic:* **First Exam.**

**Monday** *When:* 17th March, Monday.

*Readings:* No Class, Spring Recess.

*Topic:* No Class, Spring Recess.

**Wednesday** *When:* 19th March.

*Reading:* No Class, Spring Recess.

*Topic:* No Class, Spring Recess.

**Monday** *When:* 24th March, Monday.

*Readings:*

- Again: Alvin Goldman, "Discrimination and perceptual knowledge," *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976), pp. 771-791.
- Rosenberg, *Third Conversation*, especially up to p. 43.

*Topic:* Goldman's response to Gettier.

**Wednesday** *When:* 26th March. First paper due.

- Goldman's "What is justified belief?"

*Topic:* Reliabilism.

**Monday** *When:* 31st March, Monday. **Fourth Quiz.**

*Readings:* Fumerton "The Internalism externalism controversy."

[http://cla.calpoly.edu/~rgrazian/docs/courses/412/Fumerton\\_InternalismExternalismControversy.pdf](http://cla.calpoly.edu/~rgrazian/docs/courses/412/Fumerton_InternalismExternalismControversy.pdf)

*Topic:* Problems for reliabilism.

**Wednesday** *When:* 2nd April, Wednesday.

*Readings:* Bonjour's "Externalist theories of empirical knowledge."

*Topic:* Bonjour's objections to reliabilism and externalism.

**Monday** *When:* 7th April.

*Readings:* Bonjour's "Externalist theories of empirical knowledge."

*Topic:* Bonjour's objections to reliabilism and externalism.

*When:* 9th April, Wednesday. **Fifth Quiz.**

*Readings:* Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy, Analysis of knowledge, section 5 (Sensitivity, Safety and relevant alternatives): <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/>

*Topic:* Modal conditions on knowledge: sensitivity and safety.

**Monday** *When:* 14th April, Monday.

*Readings:* Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy, Analysis of knowledge, section 5 (Sensitivity, Safety and relevant alternatives): <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/>

*Topic:* Modal conditions on knowledge: sensitivity and safety. Continued

**Wednesday** *When:* 16th April.

*Readings:* Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy, Analysis of knowledge, section 5 (Sensitivity, Safety and relevant alternatives): <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/>

*Topic:* Modal conditions on knowledge: sensitivity and safety.

**Monday** *When:* 21st April.

Canceled

**Wednesday** *When:* 23rd April.

*Readings:* No additional reading

*Topic:* Safety and skepticism.

**Monday** *When:* 28rd April, Monday.

*Readings:* no additional readings.

*Topic:* KK and objections to KK.

**Wednesday** *When:* 30th April, Wednesday. **Seventh Quiz**

*Readings:* "Pragmatic Encroachment" by Fantl and McGrath.

*Topic:* Pragmatic Encroachment on Knowledge and Justification.

?? Make up class

*Readings:* "Bayesian Epistemology" Hayek & Hartmann.

*Topic:* Introduction to Bayesianism.

**Monday** *When:* 5th May, Monday.

*Readings:* *Readings:* A Virtue Epistemology, selections (Ernie Sosa [2]).

*Topic:* Virtue Epistemology.

**Wednesday** *When:* 7th May.

*Readings:*

- Ryle's selection.

*Topic:* Intellectualism and Anti-Intellectualism about know how.

**Monday** *When:* 12th May.

*Readings:* None. Review.

*Topic:* Review. **Second Essay (5-7 pages) Due.**

## References

- [1] HAWTHORNE, J., AND STANLEY, J. Knowledge and action. *Journal of Philosophy* 105:10 (2008), 571–90.
- [2] Sosa, E. *A Virtue Epistemology*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2007.