

Graduate Epistemology Course

course number here

John M. DePoe, course instructor
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<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Grade Scale</u>												
Big Paper: 60%	F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
Presentation: 20%	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Short Papers: 20%													

Required Texts

Matthias Steup and Ernest Sosa (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005).

Other texts listed in the reading schedule will be provided through the course website. These texts have been marked with an asterisk (*) on the tentative reading schedule.

Course Description

In this course, we will study some of the fundamental issues in contemporary philosophical studies of epistemology. Some of these topics include investigating the concepts of knowledge and justification, the internalism/externalism debate, the structure of justification, the possibility of *a priori* knowledge/justification, and the whether we can have any knowledge/justified beliefs about the external world.

Big Paper Requirement

Students will write a 15-20 page paper for the course that focuses on one of the readings or topics for this course. This paper will count for 60% of the student's overall grade. More specific instructions about the paper will be given in class. Students are strongly encouraged to consult the instructor for advice and help in writing their papers.

Participation & Presentation & Short Papers

Given the difficult nature of many of the readings and topics covered in this course, students are expected to attend class regularly. Each student will give a class presentation (about 15 minutes) that focuses on critical questions for the assigned reading that day, which will count as 20% of their overall grade in the course. Additionally students will be required to write four short papers that critically respond to one aspect of the reading (for example, one argument from the reading). These papers will be around 2-3 double-spaced pages. More information will be provided in class about the due date and expectations for these papers. Each short paper is worth 5% of the student's overall grade.

Minimal Passing Requirement

In order to pass the course students must meet three basic requirements: (1) they must turn in the big paper; and (2) they must attend at least three-fourths of classes. *Those who do not meet these conditions are subject to fail the course regardless of their overall average.*

Tentative Reading Schedule

Week 1: The Problem of Skepticism

Fumerton, "The Structure of Skeptical Arguments and its Metaphilosophical Implications"*
Conee & Feldman, "Making Sense of Skepticism"*

Week 2: Skeptic Stoppers?

G. E. Moore, "Proof of an External World"*
Putnam, *Reason, Truth, and History* (excerpt)*

Week 3: Closure

Hawthorne and Dretske's debate in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*

Week 4: The Analysis of Knowledge

Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"*
McGrew & McGrew, "Internalism and the Collapse of the Gettier Problem"*
Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* (excerpt)*

Week 5: Internalism/Externalism

Greco and Feldman debate in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*

Week 6: Internalism/Externalism

Goldman, "What is Justified True Belief?"*
Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (excerpt)*
Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (excerpt)*

Week 7: Internalism/Externalism

BonJour, *Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (excerpt)*
Bergmann, *Justification without Awareness* (excerpt)*

Week 8: Internalism/Externalism

Goldman, "Internalism Exposed"*
Conee & Feldman, "The Generality Problem for Reliabilism"*

Week 9: Contextualism

Conee and Cohen debate in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*

Week 10: Foundationalism

Fumerton, "Epistemic Rationality and its Structure"*
BonJour, *Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (excerpt)*

Week 11: Foundationalism

McGrew, "A Defense of Strong Foundationalism"*
Williams, "Doing Without Immediate Justification"

Week 12: Coherentism

Elgin and van Cleve debate in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*

Week 13: Infinitism

Klein and Ginet debate in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*

Week 14: A Priori Knowledge

BonJour and Devitt debate in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*

Week 15: Realism and IBE

Vogel and Fumerton debate in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*