

Undergraduate Epistemology Course

course number here

John M. DePoe, course instructor
office room number here

office hours here
e-mail here; office phone here

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Grade Scale</u>												
Paper: 40%	F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
Two Exams: 40%	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Participation: 20%													

Required Texts

Louis P. Pojman. *The Theory of Knowledge: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. 3d ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.
Paul Boghossian. *Fear of Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

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. The course will conclude by examining a recent book criticizing relativism in epistemology.

Exams

The course will have two exams, a midterm exam and a final exam. The exams will consist entirely in essays that are based on the course readings and class lectures. More details will be given about the exams in class. Each exam is worth 20% of the student's overall grade.

Paper Requirement

Students will write a 12-15 page paper for the course that focuses on one of the readings or topics for this course. This paper will count for 40% 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.

Attendance & Participation

Given the difficult nature of many of the readings and topics covered in this course, students are expected to attend class regularly. Students will receive 20% of their overall grade based on their attendance and participation in the course.

Minimal Passing Requirement

In order to pass the course students must meet three basic requirements: (1) they must take all exams; (2) they must turn in the paper; and (3) 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: Introductory Issues

Russell, "Appearance and Reality"
Chisholm, "The Problem of the Criterion"

Week 2: The Problem of Skepticism

Fumerton, "The Structure of Skeptical Arguments and Its Metaepistemological Implications"*
G. E. Moore, "A Defense of Common Sense"

Week 3: The Problem of Skepticism

Lehrer, "Why not Skepticism?"

Week 4: Structure of Justification

Chisholm, "Contemporary Classical Foundationalism"
BonJour, "A Critique of Foundationalism"

Week 5: Structure of Justification

McGrew, "A Defense of Classical Foundationalism"
Dancy, "A Defense of Coherentism"

Week 6: Structure of Justification

Fumerton, "Critique of Coherentism"
Haack, "A Foundherentist Theory of Empirical Justification"

Week 7: Internalism/Externalism

Goldman, "What is Justified Belief?"
Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (excerpt)*

Week 8: Internalism/Externalism

Lehrer, "A Critique of Externalism"
Steup, "A Defense of Internalism"
Midterm Exam

Week 9: Contextualism

David Lewis, "Elusive Knowledge"
DeRose, "Solving the Skeptical Problem"*

Week 10: Analysis of Knowledge

Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"
Lehrer & Paxson, "Knowledge: Undefeated Justified True Belief"

Week 11: A Priori Knowledge

Chisholm, "Truths of Reason"
Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism"

Week 12: Induction

Hume, "The Problem of Induction"
Russell, "On Induction"

Week 13: Relativism & Epistemology

Boghossian, chapters 1-3

Week 14: Relativism & Epistemology

Boghossian, chapters 4-6

Week 15: Relativism & Epistemology

Boghossian, chapters 7-9

Final Exam: Time & Date TBA