

Epistemology Tutorials (Hilary 2021)

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General Instructions: Essays should not exceed 2500 words and must be emailed to me in .doc format to no later than 24 hours before the tutorial. Weekly essay questions are included. Where there are multiple questions, choose *one*. Your essays do not necessarily need to discuss of all the readings for that week. Nevertheless, please come to tutorials with all readings mastered. If you would like further readings, email me.

Materials: Here is a dropbox link with almost all of the readings:

- <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/0a8t41jxnkwyb38/AADrv8brIpQ3eiPjHUEKv4QTa?dl=0>

If there's something on the reading list that isn't here, and which you can't find online, let me know. I strongly advise you to read the papers each week *in the order that they are listed below*.

Tip: Articles in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy provide overviews of topics that are often useful. The SEP tends to focus on surveying the literature. The IEP is often less comprehensive but better at explaining views and arguments. For every topic we will cover, it will be useful to read the relevant SEP and IEP entries, where they exist.

Other Stuff: Here are some very useful links about writing philosophy essays:

1. <https://tinyurl.com/retc4>
2. <https://tinyurl.com/y2p7qrq7>
3. <https://tinyurl.com/y45bmf4b>
4. <https://tinyurl.com/y3h3h5ha>

Here's an example of a first-class exam answer (according to examiners at Cambridge, anyway):

- <https://tinyurl.com/y6rwpl36>

Note: This syllabus is provisional; we may decide to modify it as the term progresses.

WEEK 1: SCEPTICISM

Essay Question: Can we know anything about the external world?

Readings:

- Rene Descartes: First Meditation
- Jennifer Nagel: Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction (Chapter 2)
- Christopher Hill: Process Reliabilism and Cartesian Scepticism

WEEK 2: THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

Essay Questions:

- Is knowledge just safe belief?
- In what way is knowledge incompatible with luck?

Readings:

- Edmund Gettier: Is Knowledge Justified True Belief?
- Duncan Pritchard: Anti-Luck Virtue Epistemology
- Maria Lasonen-Aarnio: Unreasonable Knowledge
- Julien Dutant: The Legend of the Justified True Belief Analysis
- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: The Safety Condition For Knowledge

WEEK 3: CONTEXTUALISM & PRAGMATIC ENCROACHMENT

Essay Questions:

- Is the contextualist theory of “knows” correct?
- Is there pragmatic encroachment on knowledge?

Readings:

- David Lewis: Elusive Knowledge
- Contemporary Debates in Epistemology, Chapter 3 (Is Knowledge Contextual?)
- Jennifer Nagel: Knowledge Ascriptions and the Psychological Consequences of Thinking About Error
- Contemporary Debates in Epistemology, Chapter 4 (Do Practical Matters Affect Whether You Know?)
- Jeremy Fantl & Matthew McGrath: Evidence, Pragmatics, and Justification
- Timothy Williamson: Contextualism, SSI, and Knowledge of Knowledge

WEEK 4: KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

Essay Question: Are there any interesting links between knowing and acting? What does the answer tell us about the value of knowledge?

Readings:

- John Hawthorne & Jason Stanley: Knowledge and Action
- Jessica Brown: Knowledge and Practical Reasoning
- John Hyman: How Knowledge Works
- Nick Hughes: Is Knowledge the Ability to x For the Reason That p ?

WEEK 5: EVIDENCE

Essay Question: Does $E=K$?

Readings:

- Timothy Williamson: Knowledge As Evidence
- Aidan McGlynn: Knowledge First? Chapter 4

WEEK 6: INTERNALISM & EXTERNALISM

Essay Questions:

- What's the best solution to the New Evil Demon Problem?
- Does Errol Lord give a convincing account of epistemic rationality?

Readings:

- Stewart Cohen: Justification and Truth
- Contemporary Debates in Epistemology, Chapter 13 (Is Justification Internal?)
- Errol Lord: Defeating The Externalist's Demons
- Clayton Littlejohn: Being More Realistic About Reasons
- Timothy Williamson: Knowledge and Its Limits, Chapter 4 (Luminosity)
- Maria Lasonen-Aarnio: Virtuous Failures and Victims of Deceit
- Amia Srinivasan: Normativity Without Cartesian Privilege

WEEK 7: COGNITIVE BIAS

Essay Question: Are we irrational?

Readings:

- Hugo Mercier: Confirmation Bias – Myside Bias
- Thomas Kelly: Disagreement, Dogmatism, and Belief Polarization
- Kevin Dorst: Why Rational People Polarize
- Katherine Puddifoot: Accessibilism and the Challenge From Implicit Bias
- Nick Hughes: Evidence and Bias

WEEK 8: EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE

Essay Question: Are women subject to epistemic injustice? If so, how?

Readings:

- Miranda Fricker: Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing (selections)