

PHILOSOPHY OF KNOWLEDGE - PHL 319-001

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10:30-11:20 - Feinstein Academic Center, Room 116

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12-2pm and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

How do you know that you're not dreaming as you're reading this syllabus? What is the difference between *guessing*, *believing*, and *knowing* something? Are our beliefs under our voluntary control? Can we know anything independently of sense experience? Do you trust what is written in your chemistry textbook in the same way as what pops up on your Twitter or Facebook newsfeed? In this course we will explore these and many other questions that are central in the theory of knowledge. We will look at both historical and contemporary sources, including the latest debates in social and applied epistemology. The course assumes no prerequisite philosophical knowledge.

READINGS:

The required textbook is J. Nagel: *Knowledge, A Very Short Introduction* (OUP 2014). In addition, you will find further readings for each week in electronic format on Sakai (check the schedule below). All readings are required.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Midterm Paper	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Paper	20%
Final Exam	20%
Reading Assessments	10%
Participation	10%

MIDTERM PAPER (20 points):

Approximately 1200 words focused on one of the topics we covered during the first part of the semester, to be submitted on Sakai by 10am on October 12th. A draft of the paper is due a week before, on October 5th. Bring two printed copies of your draft to class. Although you won't receive a grade on your draft, failure to turn it in will result in a 10% deduction from the mark you receive on the final version of the paper.

MIDTERM EXAM (20 points):

A combination of short answers and multiple-choice questions on the topics covered during the first part of the semester. It will take place on October 17th.

FINAL PAPER (20 points):

Approximately 1200 words focused on one of the topics we covered during the second part of the semester, to be submitted on Sakai by 10am on December 5th. A draft of the paper is due a week before, on November 28th. Bring two printed copies of your draft to class.

Although you won't receive a grade on your draft, failure to turn it in will result in a 10% deduction from the mark you receive on the final version of the paper.

FINAL EXAM (20 points):

A combination of short answers and multiple-choice questions on the topics covered during the second part of the semester. It will take place on December 7th.

READING ASSESSEMENTS (10 points):

Reading assessments are short questions based on the assigned readings. They will be given randomly at the beginning of class and you will have about 5' to respond in paragraph form. You will not receive a letter grade for the free writes, but *minus (-) check (✓)*, or *plus (+)*. These assignments will ensure that everyone is on time and has done the readings, and they will be a springboard for discussion.

CLASS PARTICIPATION (10 points):

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Unjustified absences are not allowed: your final grade will drop a whole letter if you are absent after two unexcused absences. Readings must be completed before the class indicated on the course schedule. I strongly encourage you to participate in the class discussion, as it can boost your final grade up to 10%.

EXTRA CREDIT:

No extra credit! You will have enough opportunities to improve your grade through assignments and class participation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

As part of the College Core Curriculum, this course will

- Focus primarily on the analysis of philosophical questions, arguments, and/or perspectives
- Provide students with the opportunity to explain, analyze, and evaluate philosophical questions, arguments, and/or perspectives

- Demonstrate how understanding philosophical concepts helps to illuminate contemporary issues

GRADING SCHEME:

93-100% = A, 90-92% = A-, 87-89% = B+, 83-86% = B, 80-82% = B-, 77-79% = C+, 73-76% = C, 70-72% = C-, 67-69% = D+, 60-67% = D, 0-59% = F

RESOURCES:

If you need clarification on the readings always make sure to ask in class, or during office hours, or to email me at amalloz1@providence.edu

I also recommend looking at the following sites as a resource on philosophical topics and authors:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not tolerated and will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity. All papers will be submitted to Turnitin on Sakai. Make sure you understand what plagiarism is and the consequences it might have. You can find the most recent policy here:

http://catalog.providence.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=856#Academic_Honesty

A broader listing of Providence College Academic policies is located here:

<http://catalog.providence.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=856>

Students with documented disabilities (learning, physical, medical, temporary) will be provided reasonable academic accommodations in this course, coordinated by the Office of Academic Services (OAS). Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the assistant director for disability services to discuss their needs and arrange individualized services. You are also encouraged to contact me at the beginning of the course to make me aware of your needs.

Syllabus CNR 1836 - PHL 319-001 Fall 2018

Date	Topic	Readings
8/28	Intro, Syllabus, & Policies	No Reading
8/29	Knowledge vs. Opinion	Nagel ch. 1 Russell, Selections from <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i>
8/31	Relativism	Baghramian & Carter, Selections from "Relativism"
9/4	Skepticism	Nagel ch. 2 Williams, "Agrippa's Trilemma"
9/5		Descartes, <i>Meditation I</i> Pryor, "The Dreaming Argument"
9/7		Descartes, <i>Meditation II</i>
9/11		Pryor, "What's So Bad About Living in the Matrix?"
9/12		Moore, "Proof of an External World"
9/14	<i>Writing Workshop</i>	Pryor, "Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper" (distributed in class)
9/18	Rationalism vs. Empiricism	Nagel ch. 3 Descartes, <i>Meditation III</i>
9/19		Locke, Selections from <i>An Essay Concerning Human understanding</i>
9/21		Review Session (PC seminarian retreat)
9/25		BonJour, "In Defense of The A Priori" Devitt, "There is No A Priori"
9/26	The Analysis of Knowledge	Lehrer, "The Analysis of Knowledge", Introduction
9/28		Nagel ch. 4 Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"
10/2		Zagzebski, "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems"
10/3		Nagel ch. 5 Ichikawa, "The Analysis of Knowledge" (SEP)
10/5	<i>Writing Workshop</i>	Draft of paper 1 due. Bring two copies
10/9		NO CLASS (Monday schedule)
10/10	Internalism vs. Externalism	Feldman, Selections from <i>Epistemology</i> (Evidentialism)
10/12		Feldman, Selections from <i>Epistemology</i> (Causal Theory and Truth-Tracking Theory) PAPER 1 DUE
10/16		NO CLASS (midterm review)
10/17		MIDTERM EXAM

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10/19	Pragmatism	Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"
10/23		James, "The Will to Believe"
10/24	Psychology & Epistemology	Nagel ch. 8
10/26		Nichols, Stich, and Weinberg, "Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions"
10/30		Sosa, "A Defense of the Use of Intuitions in Philosophy"
10/31	Testimony, Injustice, & Social Media	Nagel ch. 6
11/2		Fricker, Selections from <i>Epistemic Injustice</i> – "Testimonial Injustice"
11/6		Fricker, Selections from <i>Epistemic Injustice</i> – "Hermeneutical Injustice"
11/7		Rini, "Fake News and Partisan Epistemology"
11/9	Induction	Hume, Selections from <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i>
11/13		Hume (<i>continued</i>)
11/14		Harman, "Inference to the Best Explanation"
11/16		Popper, "The Problem of Induction"
11/20	God & the Problem of Evil	Hume, Selections from the <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i>
11/27		Paley, Selections from <i>Natural Theology</i> Leibniz, Selections from <i>Theodicy</i>
11/28	<i>Writing workshop</i>	<i>Draft of paper 2 due. Bring two copies</i>
11/30		Rowe, "The Problem of Evil"
12/4		Dostoevsky, Selections from <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
12/5		Final review PAPER 2 DUE
12/7		FINAL EXAM