

## Phil 15: Knowledge and its Limits

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TAs: Stringer and Argetsinger

12:30-1, CSB 002  
Office: HSS 8073  
Office Hours: Mon 1-2pm

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### Course Description:

This course will focus on a series of related philosophical issues in the theory of knowledge (epistemology). Topics will include knowledge, justification, perception, testimony, science, skepticism, Non-Western, and social approaches to knowledge. We will consider in particular the nature of knowledge—what knowledge is and what it means to have knowledge. In addition, we will survey those philosophical and scientific methods which purport to secure knowledge.

### Required Texts:

All readings will be made available through the TritonEd site for the course, except for week 1 readings, which are available online (links below).

### Course Mechanics:

**TritonEd:** There is a TritonEd site for the course. All handouts, slides, homework assignments, and supplementary readings (if any) will be made available through this site. It is your responsibility to check this site regularly.

**Lectures and Discussion:** I lecture with slides. The slides will be used to focus discussion and organize complex material; they are not a substitute for the readings. The slides will be made available on TritonEd a few days *after* lecture. Students are expected to take careful notes and will be held responsible for the material discussed in class not found on the slides or in the readings.

**Reading Assignments:** Students are expected to read each selection prior to class (preferably more than once). You should take notes while reading, keeping track of questions or issues that arise. You should bring both the reading and the notes/questions to class. We are not reading a lot of material this quarter, so those things we do read we will make sure to understand completely.

## Grading:

There are two short essays, a comprehensive final exam, and a discussion section grade:

Assignments	Value	Due Date
Essay 1 (4-6 pgs)	20%	Jan 24th
Essay 2 (4-6 pgs)	30%	March 7th
Section	10%	n/a
Late Midterm Quiz	20%	<b>2/21/19</b> , In Class
Final Exam	20%	3/19/19, 11:30-2:30

For the essays you will write 1200-1500 words in response to a prompt. More details will be provided later in the course.

The final exam, to be completed during the assigned final exam period, will involve a mix of

## Course Policies:

To avoid penalties for late assignments, students must provide official documentation explaining why the assignment could not be handed in on time. Late homework without documentation will not be accepted. Late papers without documentation will receive a late penalty of 1/3 letter grade for each day a paper is late, including weekend days (no exceptions).

**Turnitin:** Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism (via the TritonEd interface). All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

**Academic Integrity:** All suspicions of academic misconduct will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office according to university policy. Academic misconduct is not just blatant cheating (e.g., copying off another student during an exam), but includes copying other students' essays; copying or using old essays; forgetting to cite material you took from an outside resource; turning in work completed in total or in part by another. This is an incomplete list; if you have questions concerning academic misconduct it is your responsibility to ask me for advice.

## Tentative Reading Schedule (subject to change):

- **Week 1: Skeptical Worries**  
Tues (8th): Introduction, course mechanics, outline, intro to Russell  
Thurs (10th): Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy, Chapters 1* (available here: <http://www.ditext.com/russell/russell.html>); Descartes, *Meditations* I and II
- **Week 2: The Problem of Induction**  
Tues (15th): Hume, Excerpts from *Enquiry*, Goodman, “The New Riddle of Induction”  
Thurs (17th): Norton, “A material dissolution of the problem of induction”
- **Week 3: Replies to Skepticism**  
Tues (22nd): Russell, PoP, Ch. 2 (available here: <http://www.ditext.com/russell/russell.html>); Wilson, “The regress argument against Cartesian skepticism”  
Thurs (24th): **E1 Due**, Rinard, “Reasoning One’s Way out of Skepticism”
- **Week 4: The Structure of Knowledge?**  
Tues (29th): Roderick Chisholm, “The Problem of the Criterion”  
Thurs (31st): Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”; BonJour, “The Structure of Empirical Knowledge”
- **Week 5: Testimony**  
Tues (5th): Hume, “On Miracles;” Coady, “Testimony and Observation”  
Thurs (7th): Jennifer Lackey, “The Nature of Testimony”
- **Week 6: Self-Knowledge**  
Tues (12th): Zimmerman, “Self-Knowledge: Rationalism vs. Empiricism”  
Thurs (14th): Burge, “Individualism and Self-Knowledge”
- **Week 7: Indian Epistemology**  
Tues (19th): Pramana Theory: Vatsyayana’s preface to his commentary on the first verse of Nyaya-sutra, Nagarjuna; selections from *The Dispeller of Disputes*  
Thurs (21st): **LATE MIDTERM QUIZ**
- **Week 8: Epistemology and Decision Making**    Tues (26th): L.A. Paul, “What you can’t expect when you’re expecting”; Barnes, “What you can expect when you don’t want to be expecting”  
Thurs (28th): Bishop, “Fast and Frugal Heuristics”
- **Week 9: Epistemology of Perception**  
Tues (5th): James Pryor, “The Skeptic and the Dogmatist”  
Thurs (7th): **Second Essay Due**, Susanna Siegel, “Cognitive Penetrability and Perceptual Justification”
- **Week 10: Epistemology Naturalized**  
Tues (12th): Quine, “Epistemology Naturalized”  
Thurs (14th): Kim, “What is Naturalized Epistemology?”