

Knowledge & Reality

Lecture Time: TBA

Lecture Location: TBA

Lecturer: Chris Dragos

Office Hours: TBA

Office Location: TBA

Course Description:

In this course, we will explore core topics in two fundamental areas of philosophy, epistemology and metaphysics. Epistemologists are concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge and justified belief. How are certainty and knowledge related? Are all justified, true beliefs knowledge? Do I depend on others for acquiring knowledge? What's special about scientific reasoning and knowledge? Metaphysicians, on the other hand, are concerned with the fundamental constituents of reality. What are the most fundamental principles and concepts? What is the relationship between the brain and the mind? Do I have free will?

Required Texts:

(1) Course Pack

Evaluation

1. Short Paper	20%	Due Date TBA
2. Term Paper	35%	Due Date TBA
3. Final Exam	35%	Date TBA
4. Participation	10%	

Blackboard: Materials for the course (including the assignments and lecture slides) will be available on Blackboard, and all announcements will take place through Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check the Blackboard page on a regular basis and to keep up-to-date with the course. It is also your responsibility to ensure that you are receiving email that is sent out through Blackboard.

Email Policy: Emails will generally be answered within 48 hours. However, emails might not be answered if (1) the relevant information is available on the course webpage or syllabus, or (2) if the question is best addressed during class or office hours (e.g. a detailed philosophical question).

Turnitin.com: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.

Extensions and Late Assignments: Late submissions will be penalized 5% per day, unless prior arrangements have been made with your TA for an extension or there is a medical or family emergency (in which case documentation may be required). **Plan**

ahead: you may request extensions up until 48 hours before assignments are due; after that, extensions will be granted only for illness or family emergencies.

Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. I will work with you and Accessibility Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from a university is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the university treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The university outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources.

Copyright in Instructional Settings: If a student wishes to reproduce lecture presentations, course notes or other course materials, the student must obtain the instructor's written consent beforehand. Otherwise all such reproduction is an infringement of copyright and is absolutely prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings:

NOTES:

- (1) **This schedule may change.** Any changes will be announced on Blackboard.
- (2) You are expected to have the readings completed **prior** to the lecture.

Week 1: Housekeeping, Overview, & a Critical Reasoning Primer

Readings: None

Week 2: Descartes

Readings: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditations 1-4.

Week 3: Descartes (cont'd) & Hume

Readings: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditations 5-7
& Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (excerpt)

Week 4: Kant

Readings: Kant, *A Critique of Pure Reason* (excerpt)

Week 5: Verificationism & Falsificationism

Readings: Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, ch.1
& Popper, *Conjectures & Refutations*, pp.33-39.

Week 6: Kuhn

Readings: Kuhn, “Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research.”

[Short Paper Due]

Week 7: The Knowledge Problem

Readings: Plato, *Theaetetus* (excerpt) & Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”

Week 8: Free Will & Determinism

Readings: Chisholm, *Human Freedom & the Self* (pp.421-8)
& van Inwagen, *The Powers of Rational Beings* (pp.428-40)
& Frankfurt, *Freedom of the Will* (pp.470-80)

Week 9: Mind/Body Problem

Readings: Ryle, “Descartes’ Myth” (pp.287-94)
& Churchland, “Eliminative Materialism” (pp.321-5)

Week 10: Mind/Body Problem (cont’d)

Readings: Nagel, “What is it Like to be a Bat?” & Jackson, “What Mary didn’t Know”

Week 11: Zeno’s Paradoxes & the Contemporary Conception of Time

Readings: Huggett, *Space from Zeno to Einstein*, ch.3
& Callender & Edney, *Introducing Time* (pp.32-51)

[Term Paper Due]

Week 12: Final Exam Review

[Final Exam Date, Time, & Location TBA]