



FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 661 Lec 01 – Topics in Epistemology
Topic 2 – “Knowledge, Belief, and Action”**

Winter Term 2012

Course Outline

Lectures: T/R 12:30-13:45 in MS 319

Instructor: Jeremy Fantl

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30

Course Description

We will discuss recent work on knowledge, belief, and action. We'll start with general skeptical worries about knowledge, and consider various responses to skepticism that emphasize the role that practical factors play in claims about whether a subject has knowledge. We'll move to views about the role that knowledge plays in justifying action, and close with some discussion of the nature of belief.

Required Text

Course packet, available at Bound & Copied.

Evaluation

Writing and the grading thereof is a factor in the evaluation of your work for this course. For further explanation, see the University Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>. No assignment is such that a passing grade on it is required to pass the course.

- ***One term paper:*** due April 23rd, 12-17 pages long and worth 60% of the grade. ***Late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late, up to 4 letter grades. Papers not turned in will receive a zero.***
- ***6 précis:*** worth 40% of the grade. These are detailed analyses of single arguments or passages in the assigned reading of 1 (single-spaced) page max. Précis may be handed in only at the beginning of the class devoted to the relevant reading. Therefore, you may hand in no more than one per class. Missing précis receive a zero. If it's clear you spent two minutes on it, the précis gets a C. Otherwise, all précis get an A.

Grading Method

Letter Grades translate to numerical values according to the following scheme:

A+: 98.33	B+: 88.33	C+: 78.33	D+: 68.33	F: 55
A+/A: 96.67	B+/B: 86.67	C+/C: 76.67	D+/D: 66.67	
A: 95	B: 85	C: 75	D: 65	
A/A-: 93.33	B/B-: 83.33	C/C-: 73.33	D/D-: 63.33	
A-: 91.67	B-: 81.67	C-: 71.67	D-: 61.67	
A-/B+: 90	B-/C+: 80	C-/D+: 70		

Final Grades are computed by rounding to the nearest recognized letter grade.

Policy on Late Assignments

You can get an extension on one and only one take-home assignment. You can take this extension for any reason at all. But you must clear it with me at least a day in advance of the due date and, again, you only get one. So save it for when you really need it. ***All unexcused late assignments will lose the equivalent of 1/3 full letter grade for each day the assignment is late, to a maximum of the equivalent of 4 full letter grades. Missing assignments receive a zero.***

Syllabus

Part I: Skepticism

Date and Topic	Class Activity
1/8, Tues: Intro	
1/10, Thurs: Dreams and Skepticism	Discuss Stroud, <i>Significance of Philosophical Skepticism</i> , Chapter 1
1/15, Tues: Two Candidate Requirements on Knowledge	Discuss Stroud, <i>Significance of Philosophical Skepticism</i> , Chapter 2
1/17, Thurs: Stroud's Weaker Requirement, Reconsidered	Discuss Dretske, "Epistemic Operators"
1/22, Tues: Dretske, reconsidered	Discuss Stine, "Skepticism, Relevant Alternatives, and Deductive Closure"
1/24, Thurs: A More Dramatic Relevant Alternatives Proposal	Discuss Lewis, "Elusive Knowledge"
1/29, Tues: Buffer Class	

Part II: Stakes-Shifting Cases

1/31, Thurs: Contextualism	Discuss DeRose, <i>The Case for Contextualism</i> , selections from Chapters 1 and 2
2/5, Tues: Linguistic Worries About Epistemic Contextualism	Discuss Stanley, <i>Knowledge and Practical Interests</i> , Chapters 2 and 3
2/7, Thurs: From Contextualism to Interest-Relative Invariantism	Discuss Stanley, <i>Knowledge and Practical Interests</i> , Introduction
2/12, Tues: Psychologically-motivated Worries about First Person Cases	Discuss Nagel, "Knowledge Ascriptions and the Psychological Consequences of Changing Stakes"
2/14, Thurs: Buffer Class	

Part III: Practical Conditions on Knowledge

2/26, Tues: A Practical Condition on Knowledge	Discuss Stanley and Hawthorne, "Knowledge and Action"
2/28, Thurs: Developing the Argument for Impurism	Discuss Fantl and McGrath, "Practical Matters can Affect Whether You Know"
3/5, Tues: Problems for Knowledge-Action Links	Discuss Anderson, "On the Intimate Relationship of Knowledge and Action"
3/7, Thurs: Knowledge-Action Links and Isolated Secondhand Knowledge	Discuss Lackey, "Acting on Knowledge"
3/12, Tues: CLASS CANCELLED	
3/14, Thurs: CLASS CANCELLED	
3/19, Tues: A Dilemma for Impurist Views	Discuss Brown, "Impurism, practical reasoning, and the threshold problem"
3/21, Thurs: Buffer Class	

Part IV: Belief

3/26, Tues: From Knowledge to Justification	Discuss Fantl and McGrath, <i>Knowledge in an Uncertain World</i> , Chapter 4, selection
3/28, Thurs: CLASS CANCELLED	
4/2, Tues: False Reasons for Belief?	Discuss Leydon-Hardy, "Justifying Falsehoods"
4/4, Thurs: Is it All About Belief?	Discuss Ganson, "Evidentialism and Pragmatic Constraints on Outright Belief"
4/9, Tues: Puzzles About Belief	Discuss Foley, "The Epistemology of Belief and the Epistemology of Degrees of Belief"
4/11, Thurs: An Application	Discuss Marusic, "Belief and Difficult Action"
4/16, Tues: Wrap-Up	
4/23, Tues:	Final Papers Due

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as **an extremely serious academic offence**, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test;*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY (FOIP) ACT

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial FOIP Act in all aspects of its operations as a publicly funded institution. The Department of Philosophy ensures the student's right to privacy by requiring all graded assignments be returned to the student directly from the instructor.

SAFEWALK

Call 403-220-5333 (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year) for a Safewalk volunteer to accompany you safely to your destination on campus including parking lots, housing, and LRT station. Or use a Campus Help phone.