

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Department of Philosophy
Philosophy 363 Lec 01 - “Epistemology”
Winter 2009

Instructor: David Guerrero

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Office hours: Wednesday 3:00-4:00, and by appointment

Lectures: MWF 2:00-2:50

Location: ST 027

Course Description

This course is an introduction to epistemology. We will consider fundamental questions about the nature, source, content, and limits of human knowledge, and our justification for thinking we have it. The questions addressed in the course may include: What can I truly know? What is the relation between knowledge and belief? When is belief justified? Can we defend our claims to knowledge against skeptics? The primary goal of the course is to acquaint you with central aspects of classical and contemporary epistemological inquiry and to equip you with the skills to engage in such inquiry.

Required Texts

Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (translated by Donald Cress), 1993.

Sosa, et al., *Epistemology: An Anthology* (Blackwell, 2nd edition), 2008.

As we move along, which readings we will be discussing will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

Course Requirements, Evaluation and Due Dates

- Two critical analyses, 500 words for each, each worth 10% of the total grade. *Ceteris paribus*, each analysis is due the immediate Monday following class discussion of the relevant material. Exact due dates and details will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.
- In-class exam: March 9, worth 20% of the total grade
- Two papers: The first paper, 1000 words, is due February 23 and worth 20% of the total grade; second paper, 1500 words, is due April 17 and worth 30% of the total grade.
- Class participation will account for 10%.

There will NOT be a Registrar-scheduled final exam. No assignment is such that a passing grade on it is required to pass the course.

The following conversion table will be used to calculate final letter grades:

A+ 96-100	B+ 80-83	C+ 67-69	D+ 56-59
A 90-95	B 74-79	C 64-66	D 50-55
A- 84-89	B- 70-73	C- 60-63	F 0-49

Course Policies

Assignments are due at **3:30 PM** in the course drop box located in the philosophy department (12th floor SS). Alternatively, students may submit assignments in class. *I will not accept email assignments.* Rescheduling missed exams require students to formally provide medical (or other) documentation.

Late Assignments: Fairness to conscientious students who submit their assignments on time demands that due dates be firmly adhered to. As such, assignments submitted later than the 3:30 PM due date will be penalized at the rate of a grade per day beyond that date (e.g. a B+ paper submitted *one* day late, would receive a B) unless a legitimate (read: University approved) reason is provided.

Blackboard: Important class announcements will be made via Blackboard. Also, on occasion, further required and optional readings may be made available on the class's Blackboard site. Sometimes students assume that ignorance of such announcements and/or readings will excuse a number of things. But that assumption is not true. It is your responsibility to connect with Blackboard.

Office Hours: I encourage you to visit during office hours. If this is not possible, I am happy to arrange an alternate time. Please email me to schedule such appointments.

Plagiarism: Failure to clearly acknowledge a source constitutes plagiarism, an extremely serious academic offence. *Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the assignment or in the course and may result in suspension or expulsion.*

A bit of advice: it is better to be safe than sorry. Become familiar with the University policy on plagiarism. If you have questions about documenting sources please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (<http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca/efwr/writingcentre>).