

Philosophy 4

U.C., Berkeley

Spring 2012

Knowledge and its Limits

In this course we think about knowledge: How do we know we're not in a Matrix? Is our knowledge built on a foundation or are we floating on a raft, or does our knowledge have the structure of a teepee? What are the requirements for knowledge? How much do we need to trust others in order to know? Can we trust ourselves? Do animals have knowledge?

Class meets: T TH 11-12:30 155 Donner Lab

Prerequisites: *none*

Professor: S. Roush

233 Moses Hall

(510) 642-2187

roush@berkeley.edu (best way to reach me)

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Office Hours: T 10-10:45, 1-2:30, and by appt.

Course Requirements: Your work in this course will be evaluated in 9 quizzes and 2 exams (a midterm and a final). You are expected to do the reading for a given week *before* coming to class on Tuesday. Most weeks there will be a quiz on Tuesday on the reading that we are about to discuss. The quizzes test how hard you've worked on your own to understand the arguments. The schedule below shows you which Tuesdays there will be quizzes. If you don't come to class on a quiz-Tuesday, you'll get a zero for the quiz (unless you have an excuse, and have arranged with your GSI ahead of time).

You're advised to read the assigned readings again after the lectures. The readings are short but they require intense concentration. They involve a style of writing you may not be familiar with. You're also expected to attend section meetings to discuss the material. We won't be recording attendance at lectures or sections. It is your responsibility to take advantage of what they provide.

There will be a midterm exam on March 6th, covering all of the material through February 28th, and a final exam covering the whole course on Thursday, May 10th. Both are essay exams.

The best way to prepare for the quizzes is to do the reading and then meet with a group of classmates to discuss what you all think the author is saying.

Grade: Your grade will break down as follows:

Quizzes (8)	24%
Midterm Exam	36%
Final Exam	40%

Note: Although nine quizzes will be given, your lowest score will be dropped.

Disabilities: Any student who has a disability requiring assistance or accommodation, or for whom I should have emergency medical or other information, should please speak to me in the first weeks of class so that this can be arranged.

Readings: All of the readings for the course are available either in the coursepack, or online for free through a Berkeley library connection. You can buy the coursepack online from *University Readers* (but not in the campus bookstore). To buy the reader (\$39.57), go to

www.universityreaders.com/students

When you buy it, you will have immediate access to the first 30% of the reader online, while you are waiting for your paper copy. At the end of this syllabus the full table of contents of the reader is printed. Since some readings are not found in the coursepack don't merely follow its table of contents. **To find the reading for each week consult the *syllabus*.**

GSI:

Katrina Winzeler kwinzeler@berkeley.edu

Daniel Elstein delstein@stanford.edu

Section times: We'll hand out section cards on Thursday, Jan. 19th in class. Your options are the following:

Tues 1-2, Wed 1-2, 2-3
Thurs 2-3, Fri 11-12, 12-1

Plagiarism and Integrity: You will have received so many statements about academic integrity like the one that follows here, that it may seem like junk mail. But even if you already have integrity, academic integrity has a specific set of rules and expectations and its breach has serious consequences, possibly for the rest of your life, so I urge you not to pass over these statements. Below I have also included instructions about how sources should be cited in papers.

Statement on Academic Integrity, Citation, and Plagiarism

Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your professor.

In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. "Proper attribution" means that you have fully identified the original source and extent of your use of the words or ideas of others that you reproduce in your work for this course, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthesis. In this course any style of citation is acceptable as long as it is applied consistently throughout a piece of work. **The bibliographic information for the all of the course readings is listed at the end of this syllabus. For the coursepack readings this information is repeated on the contents page of the coursepack (first page).**

As a general rule, if you are citing from a published source or from a web site and the quotation is short (up to a sentence or two) place it in quotation marks; if you employ a longer passage from a publication or web site, please indent it and use single spacing. In both cases, be sure to cite the original source in a footnote or in parentheses.

If you are not clear about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or examination, be sure to seek clarification from your professor or GSI beforehand.

Finally, you should keep in mind that as a member of the campus community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. So be proud of your academic accomplishments, and of thinking for yourself, and help to protect and promote academic integrity at Berkeley. The consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty – including punishment and a formal discipline file, possible loss of future internship, scholarship, or employment opportunities, and denial of admission to graduate school – are simply not worth it. The whole issue is taken more seriously than you may imagine, in all professional areas.

Schedule

Unit I: Limits and Frustrations

January

17, 19 Descartes

24th – **QUIZ** on Moore reading
24, 26 Moore

Unit II: Foundations, Rafts, and Teepees

31st – **QUIZ** on BonJour reading
31 BonJour

February

2 BonJour

7th – **QUIZ** on Elgin reading
7, 9 Elgin

Unit III: What is Knowledge?

14th – **QUIZ** on Gettier
14, 16 Gettier

21st – **QUIZ** on all Goldman
21, 23 Goldman

28th -- **QUIZ** on BonJour 36-40

March

1 BonJour 36-40

6th **Midterm exam**

Unit IV: Whom do you Trust?

8, 13 Hardwig

14th 4pm. slide due to Professor Roush
15, 20, 22 Nisbett and Wilson

April

3rd – **QUIZ** on Kornblith
3, 5 Kornblith

10,12 Keeley Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2564659> (cut and paste)
Copernicus

Unit V: Knowledge of Animals

17th – **QUIZ** on Descartes
17 Descartes
19 Brittan

24th – **QUIZ** on Kornblith – reading available on bspace – filename:
“Kornblith on Knowledge”

24, 26 Kornblith

May

1, 3 optional review

Thursday May 10th, Final exam

Course readings with references

“Meditations on First Philosophy, First Meditation,” René Descartes, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Volume II, trans. John Cottingham et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 12-15.

“Proof of an External World”, G.E. Moore, in E. Sosa and J. Kim eds. *Epistemology: An Anthology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000, 24-26.

“Foundationalism: The Main Conception,” in *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, Laurence Bonjour. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985, 16-30.

“Can Beliefs be Justified through Coherence Alone?” Catherine Z. Elgin, M. Steup and E. Sosa eds. *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.

“Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” Edmund Gettier, in E. Sosa and J. Kim eds. *Epistemology: An Anthology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000, 58-59.

“What is Justified Belief?” Alvin Goldman, in E. Sosa and J. Kim eds. *Epistemology: An Anthology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000, 340-353.

“Externalist Versions of Foundationalism,” (Bonjour above), 36-40.

“Epistemic Dependence,” John Hardwig, *Journal of Philosophy* 82 (1985): 335-349.

“Telling More Than We Can Know,” Richard E. Nisbett and Timothy DeCamp Wilson, *Psychological Review* 84 (1977): 231-259.

“Distrusting Reason,” Hilary Kornblith, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 23 (1999): 181-196.

“Of Conspiracy Theories,” Brian Keeley, *Journal of Philosophy* **96**:109-126.

Note: You will find this article online: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2564659>

(Cut and paste; clicking won't work.)

Does the Earth have a Circular Movement? And of Its Place,” from *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, I, 514-515, Nicholas Copernicus, in *Great Books of the Western World*, Volume 16, *Ptolemy, Copernicus, Kepler*. Chicago, IL: William Benton Publisher, 1952.

Animals, selections from *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Volume III, trans. J. Cottingham et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 303-304, 365-366.

“The Secrets of Antelope,” Gordon G. Brittan, Jr., *Erkenntnis* 51 (1999): 59-77.

“Knowledge as a Natural Phenomenon,” from *Knowledge and Its Place in Nature*, Hilary Kornblith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Note: You will find this reading on bspace when the time comes.