

Epistemology

We seem to know a lot of things—that New Jersey is in the United States, that the chemical composition of water is H₂O, that the earth revolves around the sun, etc. But what is it to *know* something? I know the earth revolves around the sun, but I've never gone into space to check it out myself—I just trust what the scientific community tells me. I'd also say other people are conscious and have minds (because I interact with them), but I don't have any special access to their thoughts. After all, isn't my experience with other people's minds compatible with them being very sophisticated, unconscious robots? So we can ask: is knowing something just believing something, where your belief is true? Or is knowledge a more robust concept than mere (true) belief?

The study of epistemology is broadly the study of knowledge, justification, and belief. In this course, we'll learn about how these concepts have been understood in both historical and contemporary contexts. In the first unit, we'll consider influential research programs in epistemology, which have defined epistemic concepts in terms of causal relationships, reliable belief-forming processes, and cognitive virtues. In unit 2, we'll discuss popular contemporary frameworks for modeling epistemic behaviors, including formal epistemology, naturalized epistemology, ethical epistemology, and feminist epistemology. Finally, moving beyond thinking about beliefs and knowledge of *individuals*, we'll survey key topics in social epistemology, including testimony, group belief, and epistemic injustice.

Unit 1: What is Knowledge?

Week 1: External-World Skepticism

Descartes: Meditations 1 & 2

G.E. Moore: "Proof of an External World"

Juan Comesaña and Peter Klein: "Skepticism"

Week 2: Value of Knowledge

Excerpts from Plato's *Meno*

Jonathan Kvanig: "The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding"

Duncan Prichard: "The Value of Knowledge"

Week 3: Knowledge as Justified True Belief?

Edmund Gettier: "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"

Alvin Goldman: "The Causal Theory of Knowledge"

John Turri: "Is Knowledge Justified True Belief?"

Week 4: Reliabilism

Alvin Goldman: "What is Justified Belief"

Earl Conee & Richard Feldman: "The Generality Problem for Reliabilism"

Jack Lyons: "*Should Reliabilists Be Worried About Demon Worlds?*"

Week 5: Virtue Epistemology

Ernest Sosa: Chapter 4 of *Epistemology*

Linda Zagzebski: Chapter 1 of *Virtues of the Mind*

Duncan Prichard: "*Anti-Luck Virtue Epistemology*"

Unit 2: Approaches to Epistemology

Week 6: Knowledge-First

J. Adam Carter: "Knowledge-first: An Introduction"

Clayton Littlejohn: "How and Why Knowledge-First"

Dan Greco: "*Could KK be OK?*"

Week 7: Bayesian Approaches to Epistemology

Eliot Sober: "Introduction to Bayesian Epistemology"

Mike Titlebaum: "Fundamental of Bayesian Epistemology 1: Introducing Credences"

Brandon Fitelson: "*Likelihoodism, Bayesianism, and Relational Confirmation*"

Week 8 Naturalized Epistemology

Hilary Kornblith: "The Phenomenon of Knowledge"

Louise Antony: "Naturalized Epistemology, Morality, and the Real World"

W. V. Quine: "Epistemology Naturalized"

Hilary Kornblith: Naturalistic Epistemology and Its Critics

Week 9: Ethical Issues in Epistemology

Rima Basu: "What We Epistemologically Owe to Eachother"

Cat Saint-Croix: "Rumination and Wronging: The Role of Attention in Epistemic Morality"

Mark Schroeder: "*Can Beliefs Be Wrong?*"

Unit 3: Epistemology and the Social World

Week 10: Testimony

Jennifer Lackey: "Testimonial Knowledge and Transmission"

Sanford Goldberg: "What Epistemologists of Testimony Should Learn from Philosophers of Science"

Joey Pollock: "*Linguistic Understanding and Testimonial Want*"

Week 11: Group Belief

Jennifer Lackey: "What is Justified Group Belief"

Jessica Brown: "Group Motivation"

Week 12: Epistemic Injustice

Miranda Fricker: "Epistemic Injustice"

Kristie Dotson: "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression"

Katherine Hawley: "Knowing How and Epistemic Injustice"

Week 13: Feminist Epistemology

Alison Wiley "Why Standpoint Matters"

Linda Alcoff: "Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types"

Helen Longino: "Can there be a Feminist Science?"

Week 14: Epistemology of the Internet

Jessie Munton: "How to (Epistemically) Evaluate a Search Engine"

Thi Nguyen: "Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles"

Joshua Habgood-Coote: "Search Engines, White Ignorance, and the Social Epistemology of Technology"