

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2016**

**PHIL3501G: Epistemology**

Winter Term 2016  
Tues. 1:30-2:30 p.m. Thursday 1:30-3:30 p.m.  
Location: TBA

Instructor: Jacqueline Sullivan  
4151 Stevenson Hall  
Tues. & Thurs. 12-1 p.m.  
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**DESCRIPTION**

*Epistemology* is the branch of philosophy directed at understanding what knowledge is and how we acquire it. Of central importance is the issue of *epistemic justification*—when, if ever, are we justified in claiming that a belief or proposition counts as *knowledge*? Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, analytic epistemologists have provided different and competing responses to this question. The general approach that they take to this question, namely, to specify necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge, is referred to as “The Standard Analytic Approach”.

However, philosophers critical of standard approaches have sought alternative ways of understanding what knowledge is and how we come to have it. For example, some have turned to those

approaches to understanding what knowledge is and how we acquire it. While we will concern ourselves primarily with assessing the merits and failings of paradigmatic examples of each approach, our ultimate goal is to use the fruits of our analyses to answer for ourselves the questions of what knowledge is and when, if ever, we are justified in claiming that we have it.

## **TEXTS**

- (1) Williams, Michael. *Problems of Knowledge: A Critical Introduction to Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- (2) Additional readings (journal articles) will be made available as pdfs on Owl.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Students who successfully complete this course will have developed a detailed understanding of a subset of traditional and contemporary approaches to epistemology. Students who will

## Tentative Schedule of Classes

Williams, Chapters 11, pp. 138-145 & Chapters 13-14, pp. 146-172

Oct 18 (T) – **Contextualism’s response to Cartesian Skepticism**

Williams, Chapter 15, pp. 173-200

Oct 20 (Th) – **Contextualism & Relativism**

Williams, Chapter 16

Williams, Chapter 19, pp. 220-229

Oct 25 (T) – Review for Exam 1

Oct 27 (Th) – Fall Study Break

Nov 1 (T) - Exam 1 (in-class)

Nov 3 (Th) - **What is Naturalized Epistemology?**

Quine, W.V, “Epistemology Naturalized” (1969).

Jaegwon Kim “What is “Naturalized Epistemology”?”(1988)

## **Part II: Naturalized Epistemology and Its Problems**

Nov 8 (T) – **Reliabilism**

Alvin Goldman, “What is Justified True Belief?”(1976)

Alvin Goldman, “Epistemic Folkways and Scientific Epistemology” (1992)

Nov 10 (Th) – **Warrant & Proper Function**

Alvin Plantinga, “Warrant: A First Approximation” (1992)

Nov 15 (T) – **Cognitive Relativism**

Stich, S. “Reflective Equilibrium, Analytic Epistemology, and the Problem of Cognitive Diversity”, (1988)

Nov 17 (Th) – **Problems with Naturalized Approaches**

J. D. Trout & Michael Bishop (2005). The Pathologies of Standard Analytic Epistemology. *Nous* 39 (4):696-714.

## **Part III: Knowledge in Science**

### **Reliability and Replicability**

Nov 22 (T) – Bogen & Woodward, “Saving the Phenomena”, (1988)

Deborah Mayo (1991) “Novel Evidence and Severe Tests”, *Philosophy of Science* 58: 523-552.

Nov 24 (Th) – Allan Franklin (1994) “The Experimenter’s Re A3 Tc 0.003 Tw [((T)-2f(h, S)( )e)4(bor)3(a)4(h

Library)

Collins, H.M. (1994) "The Experimenter's Regress", *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 493-503. (Available through Sterne

Library)

Nancy Cartwright (1991) "Replicability, Reproducibility, and Robustness: Comments on Harry Collins", *History of Political Economy* 23:1. (Available through