

Epistemic Justice

Instructor: Sam Director

Course Description: this course will cover a variety of important issues at the intersection of epistemology and justice. We will begin with an overview of some of the foundations of epistemology and will then spend the rest of the class studying issues like epistemic injustice, the epistemology of democracy, the epistemology of the criminal justice system, and more.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this class, my goal is that you will have made significant progress toward achieving the following objectives:

- Develop and improve critical thinking skills.
- Learn to critically assess arguments clearly and carefully.
- Develop the ability to read carefully.
- Learn to engage with ideas that are difficult in a way that is respectful.
- Critically assess important areas of epistemology and justice that will be relevant to our lives.

Course Structure: This class will involve a mix of lecture and discussion. On a typical day in class, you will have done a pre-assigned reading on a topic, and I will begin with a summary of that reading and the crucial issues involved in it. At various points in my lecture, we will pause for discussion and questions. The goal is for lecture to take up about 40% of each class with discussion being the remaining 60% of the class.

Course Materials: All of our assigned readings will be excerpts from books or journal articles. Each reading will be posted online.

Topics Covered: we will have 5 units in our class. They are the following:

- **Unit 1: Foundations of Epistemology**
 - Key Questions:
 - Do we have justification in our belief that the external world exists?
 - How should we respond to the skeptic?
 - What is the nature of knowledge?
 - What is the structure of epistemic justification?
 - What is the content of epistemic justification?
 - Does epistemic justification require reflective access to our evidence?
- **Unit 2: Epistemic Injustice**
 - Key Questions:
 - Are women and minorities harmed in their capacity as knowers in our society?
 - How do we remedy that injustice?
- **Unit 3: Epistemology and Sexual Justice**
 - Key Questions:
 - What epistemic requirements should we have in sexual consent?
 - Are women mistreated and not taken seriously in our sexual culture?

- Under what conditions should we believe an accusation of sexual assault?
- **Unit 4: The Epistemology of Democracy**
 - Key Questions:
 - What are the epistemic needs of a democracy?
 - Is partisanship epistemically rational or useful?
 - Is democracy a system that effectively harnesses knowledge?
 - Does democracy make us irrational?
- **Unit 5: The Epistemology of the Criminal Justice System**
 - Key Questions:
 - What epistemic standard should the criminal justice system use?
 - Should we use eye-witness testimony in criminal trials?
 - Is racial profiling epistemically irrational?

Course Schedule:

Please be aware that this schedule is subject to change. We may find that we cannot cover this amount of material with enough time to have good discussion. If we end up taking longer on any given topics, we may alter the schedule of readings. I will let you know if this happens. Also, this would be a good thing. This would mean that we have so much to say about a given issue that we need to spend even more time talking about it.

Also, please note that the page ranges for each reading may not be the entire reading. You only need to read the specific page range that I list below. We will average about 18-20 pages of reading per class.

Date	Topic	Assigned Reading	Assignment Due
1/15	Introduction to the class.		
Unit 1: The Foundations of Epistemology			
1/18	Skepticism	Barry Stroud. "The Problem of the External World." GE Moore, "Proof of an External World."	
1/20	Defining Knowledge	Edmund Gettier. "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"	
1/25	The Regress Problem	Laurence Bonjour. "Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?"	
1/27	The Structure of Epistemic Justification	Ernest Sosa. "The Raft and the Pyramid."	
2/1	The Content of Epistemic Justification	Richard Feldman and Earl Conee. "Evidentialism."	
2/3	The Content of Epistemic Justification	Alvin Goldman. "Internalism Exposed."	

Unit 2: Epistemic Injustice			
2/8	Epistemic Injustice	Miranda Fricker. <i>Epistemic Injustice</i> .	
2/10	Epistemic Injustice	Miranda Fricker. <i>Epistemic Injustice</i> .	
2/15	Epistemic Injustice	Miranda Fricker. "Replies to Alcoff, Goldberg, and Hookway on Epistemic Injustice."	
Unit 3: Epistemology and Sexual Justice			
2/22	The Epistemology of Consent	Tom Dougherty. "Affirmative Consent and Due Diligence."	
2/24	The Epistemology of Consent	Quill Kukla. "A Non-Ideal Theory of Sexual Consent."	
3/1	Rape Culture and Epistemology	Bianca Crewe and Jonathan Jenkins Ichikawa. "Rape Culture and Epistemology."	
3/3	#MeToo and Epistemology	Alexandra Lloyd. "#MeToo & the role of Outright Belief."	
Unit 4: The Epistemology of Democracy			
3/8	The Epistemology of Democracy	Elizabeth Anderson. "The Epistemology of Democracy."	
3/10	The Epistemology of Democracy	Tom Christiano. "Democracy and Social Epistemology."	
3/15	Epistemic Democracy	Helene Landemore. <i>Democratic Reason</i> .	
3/17	Epistemic Democracy	Bryan Caplan. <i>The Myth of the Rational Voter</i> .	
3/22	Epistocracy	Anne Jeffrey. "Limited Epistocracy and Political Inclusion."	
3/24	Epistocracy	María Pía Méndez. "An Epistemic Problem for Epistocracy."	
3/29	The Internet	Richard Heersmink. "A Virtue Epistemology of the Internet."	
Unit 5: Epistemology			

and the Criminal Justice System			
3/31	Legal Standards of Proof	Georgi Gardiner. "The Reasonable and the Relevant: Legal Standards of Proof."	
4/5	Legal Standards of Proof	Larry Laudan. <i>Truth, Error, and Criminal Law: An Essay in Legal Epistemology</i> .	
4/7	Eyewitness Testimony	Jennifer Lackey. "Eyewitness Testimony and Epistemic Agency."	
4/12	Eyewitness Testimony	Katherine Puddifoot. "Re-evaluating the Credibility of Eyewitness Testimony."	
4/14	Implicit Bias	Tamar Szabó Gendler. "The Epistemic Costs of Implicit Bias."	
4/19	Racial Profiling	Alexandra Lloyd. "An Epistemic Objection to Racial Profiling."	
4/21	In class discussion of term papers		
4/26	In class discussion of term papers		
4/28	Review for final exam		
	In-Class Final		

Grading:

I grade on the following scale:

- 100 - 93 (A)
- 92.9 - 90 (A-)
- 89.9 - 87 (B+)
- 86.9 - 83 (B)
- 82.9 - 80 (B-)
- 79.9 - 77 (C+)
- Etc.

Your grade will be determined by the following categories:

- Take-home midterm (25%)
- Final exam (25%)
- Paper (25%)
- Quizzes (15%)
- Attendance (10%)

I realize that there are extenuating circumstances each semester for many people. If you find yourself in an extreme situation that affects your ability to perform well in this class, please talk to me about it. I cannot guarantee that I will be able to accommodate you, but I may be able to.

I do all of my grading anonymously, meaning that I don't know whose exam or paper I'm grading until the very end. When you turn in any assignment, I will give you instructions on how to make it anonymous. My goal is to grade as fairly as I can, and I believe that this policy helps with that.

Assignments:

Exams: there will be a take-home midterm and an in-class final. The goal of these exams is to test how well you understand the material covered in class by seeing if you can summarize back to me what we have covered in class and in readings.

Paper: we will also write a longer paper (5-7 pages) that takes an issue of your choosing from class and that takes a stance on it.

Quizzes: on most days in class, we will have a short reading quiz. I will not tell you in advance which days will have quizzes. We will take the quiz on Canvas. Please bring technology that you can use to complete the quiz. If you don't have a way to do the quiz electronically, I will give you a piece of paper to use. These will be short quizzes that ask questions intended to see if you have done the reading. I will drop your lowest two quiz grades at the end of the semester.

Class Policies:

- *Attendance:*
 - Attendance in class is mandatory. We will have a sign in sheet each class. We learn best in philosophy if we are heavily focused on discussion and debate. You cannot accomplish this if you don't come to class, even if you can understand the material without coming to class.
 - You may have 3 absences **for any reason**. Any absence in addition to these 3 absences will count as unexcused.
 - For each unexcused absence, you will receive a full letter grade deduction from your attendance grade. So, 1 unexcused absence can move your attendance grade from an A to an B, and so on.
 - Of course, if you have some incredibly extenuating circumstance that requires you to miss more than 3 classes, please talk to me. For example, if you are on a university athletics team that travels frequently, have a severe illness, etc. that pushes your attendance past this point, we can figure out a solution.
 - But, this means that any otherwise excused absences that do not rise to the level of extreme extenuating circumstances will have to count as 1 of your 3 absences. So, if you get sick and miss a day, then that counts as 1 of your absences.
 - If you miss a quiz on the day of your absence, it is your responsibility to come to my office hours and take an alternate quiz. Missed quizzes from days that are beyond your 3 absences cannot be made up.
- *Participation:*

- Our goal is to get closer to the truth. We do this is by discussing the issues with each other. So, it's very important that we all actively participate in the discussion.
- *Discussion Etiquette:*
 - We should try to be charitable to our fellow classmates and not jump to harsh conclusions about their views. If a fellow classmate says something that strikes you as false, or even offensive, try to interpret his or her claim in the best possible light. The same goes for the authors that we will be reading.
 - However, even though we should be charitable to our classmates and authors, we should still voice disagreement with each other. In philosophy, it is not rude to disagree with someone; to disagree with someone's reasoning is to acknowledge that person as a peer who is worthy of being debated. Disagreeing with someone does not mean that you are dismissing their views. Rather, it means that you are engaging with their views. This policy extends to me. I heavily encourage you to disagree with me.
- *Technology:*
 - Laptops, cellphones, etc. will not be allowed in class. There is lots of evidence that we (and the people around us) learn better when technology is absent and when we have to write things by hand. If I see you using technology in class, I will ask you to put it away in front of everyone.
 - Also, if you have a disability accommodation that allows you to use technology in class, I am happy to accommodate this. Please follow the normal procedures about giving me the paperwork.
 - Of course, if you receive an urgent phone call, please feel free to step out of class to take it.
 - On test review days, I will allow people to use laptops. Also, we will be taking quizzes on Canvas, and you will be allowed to use your computer for this.
 - For disability accommodation exceptions, please talk to me directly. I am happy to accommodate disabilities that require the use of technology.
- *Office Hours:*
 - My office hours are listed above. If you would like to talk about philosophy, clarify a point from class, get help with an assignment, talk about your grade, etc., feel free to make an appointment with me.
 - Please, please, please come to office hours if you need help with anything. It's part of my job to help you study for the exams.
- *Late Work:*
 - My policy is that for every day that your assignment is late, you will lose a full letter grade on it.