**PHI211**

**Theory of Knowledge**

**LEVEL 2**

**SPRING SEMESTER 2013**

| LECTURES       | Tue. 2-3, Arts Tower, LT 1  
|                | Wed. 10-11, Hicks LT 5      |
| SEMINARS       | Wed. 1-2 Jessop SR 215      |
|                | Fri. 11-12 Jessop SR 215    |
| LECTURE SLIDES AND PODCASTS | Download from MOLE |
| SEMINAR READINGS | From page 11 below     |
| COURSEWORK     | Two Essays from questions on page 5.  
|                | Due dates:                |
|                | 1st: 1600, Wed. 10 April  |
|                | 2nd: 1600, Wed. 15 May    |
| EXAMS          | Part pre-released only: see page 4 |
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|                | T.: 0114 222 0576         |
|                | Office hours: Tue. 10-12  |
Outline of the Course

The aim of the course is to provide an introduction to philosophical issues surrounding the knowledge. We will be concerned with the nature and extent of knowledge. How must a believer be related to the world in order to know that something is the case? Can knowledge be analysed in terms of more basic notions? Must our beliefs be structured in a certain way if they are to be knowledge? In considering these questions we will look at various sceptical arguments that suggest that the extent of knowledge is much less than we suppose. And we will look at the various ways in which we acquire and retain knowledge.

Structure of the Semester

<p>| Week 1 – Feb 4   | Seminars Begin |
| Week 2 – Feb 11 | 6 weeks of teaching |
| Week 3 – Feb 18 |
| Week 4 – Feb 25 |
| Week 5 – Mar 4  |
| Week 6 – Mar 11 |
| Mar 16 – Apr 7 Easter Break |
| Week 7 – Apr 8  |
| Week 8 – Apr 15 |
| Week 9 – Apr 22 |
| Week 10 – Apr 29 | 5 weeks of teaching |
| Week 11 – May 6 |
| Week 12 – May 13 | Reading Week |
| Week 13 – May 27 |
| Week 14 – May 31 |
| Week 15 – Jun 7 |
| Week 16 – Jun 14 |
| Week 17 – Jun 21 |
| Week 18 – Jun 28 |
| Week 19 – Jul 5 |
| Week 20 – Jul 12 |
| Week 21 – Jul 19 |
| Week 22 – Jul 26 |
| Week 23 – Aug 2 |
| Week 24 – Aug 9 |
| Week 25 – Aug 16 | Final Exams |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction: The Idea of a Theory of Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Knowledge and Lotteries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knowledge, Certainty and the Classical Conception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Classical Foundationalism and Grounding Sense Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Myth of the Given and Coherentism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Problem of Detachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fallible Foundationalism and Evidentialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Gettier Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Causal Theories of Knowledge 1: Goldman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Causal Theories of Knowledge 2: Nozick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Knowledge and Clairvoyance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reasons and Causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Traditional Scepticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Modern Scepticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nozick’s Response to Modern Scepticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>A Deeper Sceptical Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Problem of Induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Responses to the Problem of Induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Memory part 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Memory part 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Testimony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>READING WEEK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Handouts

There will be no handouts, however the slides used for each lecture can be downloaded from MOLE. These slides are not designed to be a substitute for the lectures, but instead are the framework that structures each lecture. Merely reading these slides will not work as a substitute for attending lectures. However, a podcast of the lectures will also be made available to download from MOLE.

Seminars

The purpose of the seminars is to provide a forum for you to discuss the material of the course among your peers in a small group. You are required to prepare for each seminar by reading the assigned paper. Links to papers are in the seminar section.

There will be no student presentations. Instead, each seminar will involve small-group discussions of a set of questions about the paper (questions provided by me), followed by large-group discussions of these questions. These questions will be made available through MOLE. If you fail to read the paper, therefore, you will be letting your fellow students down as well as yourself.

Seminars begin in week 2.

Course Assessment

Coursework: You must submit two essays. These can be any two numbered questions below. But you cannot do the same numbered question twice (e.g. if you first essay is 1a, your second cannot be 1b). Essays must be 1500-2000 words long, and printed in pitch 12, double-spaced. Essay must be submitted both electronically and in paper form. Electronic submission is done via MOLE, paper submission is to the department office in Victoria Street.

Exam: The exam is two hours long and will involve answering two questions, one from section A and one from section B. Section A questions will be pre-released after completion of the module evaluation questionnaire, and section B questions will be unseen.

There are penalties for late essays; for details of these penalties see the department website. There are also severe penalties for plagiarism in any of its forms (including possible expulsion from the University).
Coursework Questions

1. “Knowledge implies Certainty.” Why might someone claim this? What follows from this claim?
2. What are the reasons for thinking that the objects of perception are sense data?
3. What is the Gettier problem? Why has it proved so intractable?
4. Is there a problem with allowing the Clairvoyant Knowledge?
5. In what way, if at all, does Nozick’s response to scepticism presuppose the falsity of scepticism?
6. “It makes no more sense asking whether an inductive argument gives a reason for belief that it does asking whether a law is legal.” Discuss.

READING LIST

GENERAL TEXTS:

The following books are either general discussions of epistemology or collections of articles, and so are referred to throughout the reading list by number. I’ve included their library reference.

[1] Audi, R.: Epistemology. – 121(A)
[8] Pollock, J.: Contemporary Theories of Knowledge. – 121(P)

READINGS BY TOPIC

What follows are lists of suggested reading for each lecture topic. Of course, a coursework or exam essay need not be restricted to discussing the material listed under the relevant topic heading – so long as everything discussed is relevant to the question!

1. The Idea of a Theory of Knowledge
2. Knowledge and Lotteries
Hawthorne, J. *Knowledge and Lotteries*, ch.1.

3. Knowledge, Certainty and the Classical Conception
Plato, *Meno*
Burnyeat, M.: “Introduction” trans *The Theatetus of Plato*
Moore, G.E. “Certainty”, in [9].

4. Classical Foundationalism & Grounding Sense Data
Dretske, F, “Perceptual Knowledge”. In [5].
Price, H.P.: “The Given”. In [2].

5. The Myth of the Given and Coherentism

6. The Problem of Detachment
Sosa, E. “The Raft and the Pyramid”, in [9].
Sellars, W.: “Does Empirical Knowledge have a Foundation?”, in [2].
BonJour, L., “Can Empirical Knowledge have a Foundation?”, in [9].
Moore, G.E.: “Certainty”, in [9].

7. Fallible Foundationalism and Evidentialism
Sosa, E. “The Raft and the Pyramid”, in [9].

8. The Gettier Problem
Gettier, E.: “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”

9. Causal Theories of Knowledge 1: Goldman
10. Causal Theories of Knowledge 2: Nozick
Goldman, A. “A Causal Theory of Knowing”
Nozick, R., “Knowledge and Scepticism”. Abridged from ch.3 *Philosophical Explanations*. Differently abridged in [2] and [9].
Garrett, B. “Nozick on Knowledge”, *Analysis* 1983.
Goldman, A., “What is Justified Belief?”, in [9].

11. Knowledge and Clairvoyance
[3] ch.10

12. Reasons and Causes
Foley, R. “What’s Wrong with Reliabilism?”, in [2].
Bonjour, L. “Externalism / Internalism” in [5].
Alston, W.: “An Internalist Externalism”

13. Traditional Scepticism
[10] ch.5.
Fogelin, F. *Pyrrhonian Reflections on Knowledge and Justification*
Burnyeat, M. *The Original Sceptics*

14. Modern Scepticism
Stroud, B., “Understanding Human Knowledge in General”, in [2].
Williams, B. *Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry*, ch. 2.
Hookway, C., *Scepticism*

15. Nozick’s Response to Modern Scepticism
Nozick, R., “Knowledge and Scepticism”. Abridged from ch.3 *Philosophical Explanations*. Differently abridged in [2] and [9].

16. A Deeper Sceptical Anxiety
Nagel, T. *The View from Nowhere*, ch. 5.

17. The Problem of Induction
Hume, D, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, bk.1 pt.3 (§6,12)
Hume, D, *Enquiries*, §6,7

18. Responses to The Problem of Induction
Strawson, P.F, *Introduction to Logical Theory*, ch.9 §2

**19. 20. Memory**
Russell, B. *Problems of Philosophy*, chs. 5 & 11.
Malcolm, N, “Three Lectures on Memory”, in his *Knowledge & Certainty*

**21. Testimony**
Dummett, M.: “Testimony and Memory”, in his *Seas of Language*.
McDowell, J.: “Knowledge by Hearsay”, in his *Meaning Knowledge and Reality*.
Faulkner, P.: *Knowledge on Trust*. 
SEMINARS

Each seminar centres on discussion of a paper. It is essential that you read the paper before the seminar. The seminar papers are all available online.

The papers for seminar discussion are:

- **Week 3**
  - “Classical Foundationalism & Speckled Hens”

- **Week 4**
  - Elgin, “Non-Foundationalist Epistemology” (will add link later)

- **Week 5**
  - “Keeping Track of the Gettier Problem”

- **Week 6**
  - Feldman, “Justification is Internal” (will add link later)

- **Week 7**
  - “Taking Scepticism Seriously”

- **Week 8**
  - “The Paradox of Moore’s Proof of an External World”

- **Week 9**
  - “On Induction”, *The Problems of Philosophy*

- **Week 10**
  - “Memory and Externalism”

- **Week 11**
  - “Lying and Deceit”

**Advice on Reading the Paper:**

★ Set aside a block of at least three hours for reading the paper.
★ Read it through once to get a sense of the aim and structure of the piece – do not worry about understanding everything that is said at this point, or about taking notes.
★ Then read it again more slowly; take notes; try to understand why each point is made.
★ If there is something you cannot fathom, note it down and ask about it in the seminar.
★ Seminar discussions will centre on a few basic questions. You should bear these in mind when reading the article.
★ What is the author trying to establish?
★ What arguments are used to establish that point?
★ Are arguments against that point presented?
★ If so, what are they, and what does the author say about them?
★ What do you think of these arguments and counter-arguments?
★ Having read the paper for a second time, taking notes, it would be good to spend some time writing down answers to the above questions, in order to focus the work done so far.

**After the seminar:** spend at least an hour writing up your notes of the discussion.