

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2017-18

Philosophy 3501G: Epistemology

Fall Term 2017	Instructor: Prof. Robert DiSalle
Tuesday, 12:30-1:30; Thursday, 12:30-2:30	Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, 11:30-12:30
P&AB 148	(and by appointment)
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Epistemology considers questions about knowledge: what it is to have knowledge, as opposed to mere opinion or conjecture, and how we can justify our claims to knowledge. For this reason it has played a part in the history of the other main branches of philosophy, metaphysics and ethics, examining the justification for our claims to knowledge about what there is, and how we ought to act. For the same reason, epistemological inquiry has played a part in the history of science and mathematics, and every intellectual field in which there is a need to examine the grounds of our beliefs.

This course considers some of the most important problems in the theory of knowledge, from a selection of classical and contemporary viewpoints. In this way we will gain some insight into the origins, motivations, and evolution of these problems as well as their implications for contemporary thought. Topics will include justification of beliefs, the relation between sense and reason, scepticism and certainty, foundationalism and coherentism, connections between knowledge and language, deductive and non-deductive inference, epistemological naturalism, and the role of the a priori in our common sense and scientific knowledge. Prerequisite: Philosophy 2500F/G.

TEXTS

Text: Huemer, ed. *Epistemology: Contemporary Readings* (Routledge, 2002)
(Available at UWO Bookstore; supplementary readings will be posted on OWL.)

REQUIREMENTS

2 short essays (each 25% of final mark)
Final exam (40% of final mark)
Regular participation in class discussion (10% of final mark)

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/proceduresappeals.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

