

Theory of Knowledge, 70.261 – fall semester 2009
 Lectures: Thrs 1:40-4:30, in CHO 410
 Instructor: Dr. Derek Brown (727-9765, brownd@brandonu.ca)
 Office: CHO 331, office hours Tues 1-3pm or by appt.

This course will survey core issues in epistemology, or the theory of knowledge. The text will provide students with general introductions to each topic, as well as detailed analyses of various issues; primary source articles will be made available to students throughout the course. The latter are extremely important, it is instructive for students to read *and work through* Lock, Hume, Russell, and so on when contemplating their views.

We will discuss one or two chapters of the text per week. We begin with the skeptical tradition and its modern challenge (chps 2,3) and proceed by examining some *sources* of knowledge, notably perception, memory, and the a priori (chps 4,13,12). Following this we will consider some ways in which knowledge has been defined and analysed, and some of the challenges that arise for those attempts (chp 5). This will lead us to contrasting theories of justification, including foundationalism & coherentism, and internalism & externalism (chps 6-9). We will then consider whether or not epistemology should be *naturalized*, or confined to the workings of science (chp 10). Topics in the final weeks of the course will be decided in consultation with students.

Text: Pojman, L. (2001). *What can we know? 2nd ed.* Wadsworth.
 Additional readings will be made available in class.

Evaluation

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| Periodic reading summaries | | 10% |
| Essays | (2 essays, worth 15% & 20%) | 35% |
| Presentation | | 15% |
| Pre-presentation outline | | 8% |
| Post-presentation discussion questions | | 2% |
| Tests | (2 x 15% each) | 30% |

- ◇ *Essays* will be between 4&8 pages in length. The first will be largely expository, based on class material. The second will be a self-directed research article developed in concert with each student's presentation.
- ◇ *Presentation*. Students will be responsible to present an article or topic to the class whose content will be developed with the instructor.
- ◇ In the class prior to a presentation, the student(s) scheduled to present in the next class will provide others with a *pre-presentation outline*, which will outline the material to be presented, emphasizing its main arguments.
- ◇ Immediately after a presentation is complete, a pre-assigned student will lead the class with *post-presentation discussion questions*, 3-4 questions about the presentation that can guide our discussion. These must be submitted to the instructor *before* the presentation begins.
- ◇ *Tests* will be conducted in class, and will consist of short answer and essays questions.

Rough Course Schedule

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| Week 1: | Introduction | Chapter 1. |
| Week 2: | Skepticism | Chapters 2&3. |
| Week 3: | Perception | Chapter 4. |
| Week 4: | Memory and the a priori | Chapters 13&12. |
| Week 5: | Knowledge: an analysis | Chapter 5. |
| Week 6: | Foundationalism | Chapter 6. |
| Week 7: | Coherentism | Chapter 7. |
| Week 8: | Internalism & externalism | Chapters 8&9. |
| Week 9: | Naturalized Epistemology | Chapter 10. |
| Weeks 10-13: | Presentations and other topics | TBA |

Students are specifically referred to the policy on 'Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct' under the 'Registration Regulations' section of the General Calendar (in subsection 'Registration' and sub-subsection 'Coursework and Examinations'). This is available in print or online. Violations of this policy, including all forms of plagiarism, will not be tolerated.