

This course is a survey of issues in epistemology, with a focus on recent debates. Topics include the nature of knowledge, epistemology and technology, epistemic injustice, and social epistemology.

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Office hours: Tu 1:30–2:30, F 11:00–noon, and by appointment

Texts: Course readings will be available via Brightspace.

We will read several chapters of Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice* (ISBN 9780198237907). You might want your own copy.

- Students are strongly encouraged to print out course readings and bring them to class.

Response papers: Students are required to write a 300–500 word critical response to the assigned readings each week. These should be turned in via Brightspace by midnight (end of day) on **Monday** before the class meeting for which the reading is assigned.

- A reading response paper should address one of the assigned readings for the week and do three things:

1. Begin with a direct quotation of a sentence or two of the assigned reading which could be taken as the thesis, capturing the core claim being made. (Direct quotations should include page references and do not count toward the assigned length.)
2. Provide a critical summary of one of the readings. State in your own words what the author is trying to do. Ask yourself: What *reasons* does the author give for believing their thesis? Why do they think it matters?
3. End by raising at least one question about the reading.

- Reading response papers should *not* outline the whole reading. Do not try mention everything. Decide what you think is the most important thing, and leave out parts that do not relate to that.
- You may pose an objection, but you still need to concisely state what you're objecting to.
- If parts were confusing or hard to follow, then you can say so! You are not expected to understand every reading fully before we meet to discuss it. The goal is to engage with the reading, struggle with it, and form an opinion of how things fit together.

Presentations: All students will, during a regular class meeting, make a presentation that both offers a summary of the central claim and argument of a reading and raises points to open class discussion. It should not be a point-by-point repetition of the reading! It may dig in on one particular theme, evaluate how successful the article is, or connect the article to earlier readings in the course. The target length is 5–15 minutes.

- Students registered for 522 will also pitch their final paper at the last class meeting.

Final papers: Students registered for 422 will write a 6–8 page (2000–3000 word) final paper which may be on an assigned topic.

- Students registered for 522 will write a 12–15 page (4000–5000 word) final paper on a topic of their own choosing.

Grading: The two lowest response paper grades will be dropped. Late response papers will be marked at a penalty, based on how late it was and how much of a habit the student has made out of turning things in late.

10% Participation, 50% Response papers, 10% Presentations, 30% Final paper

Absences: Attendance is part of the participation grade. If you aren't there, then you can't participate. Absences for legitimate reasons will be excused. Let the instructor know in a timely fashion. • If you are or suspect you are contagious, *do not* come to class!

Academic honesty: You are encouraged to discuss issues from the course with each other and with others outside of class, but you are responsible for your own ideas and your own words. Students who turn in work that is not theirs will be failed for the assignment on the first infraction and failed for the course on the second infraction.

Electronic device policy: Students may use laptops or tablets for class readings and note taking, but they should not be used for purposes unrelated to class. Students who do may have their laptop/tablet privileges revoked.

- Students may not use smartphones during class. That said, I realize that there are other things going on. If you have to take an important call or message during class, you should leave the room with a minimum of fuss.

Schedule of topics

This is a tentative schedule. Specific readings may take more or less time than indicated, we may drop or add some readings as we go.

Week 1 Aug 26 - introduction

Edmund Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” (1963)

Week 2 Sep 2 - Gettierology

Linda Zagzebsky, “The Inescapability of Gettier Problems” (1994)

Jennifer Nado, “Re-engineering knowledge” (2026)

Week 3 Sep 9 - the problem of the criterion + internalism/externalism

Roderick Chisholm, “The Problem of the Criterion” (1966)

Clayton Littlejohn, “Internalist vs. Externalist Conceptions of Epistemic Justification” (2025)

Week 4 Sep 16 - empiricism

John Norton, “Small-e empiricism Defined and Defended” and “Why not Big-E Empiricism” (2026)

William Robinson, “Dispensing with experiential acquaintance” (2026)

Week 5 Sep 23 - self knowledge

Aaron Zimmerman, “Self-Knowledge: Rationalism vs. Empiricism” (2008)

Luke Copek, “Transparency and past beliefs” (2026)

Week 6 Sep 30 - collective knowledge

Avram Hiller and R. Wolfe Randall, “Epistemic Structure in Non-Summative Social Knowledge” (2023)

Jesper Kallestrup, “Knowledge-Qua in Groups” (2025)

Week 7 Oct 7 - epistemic injustice

Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* pp. 17–29, 43–108 (2007)

Week 8 Oct 14 - epistemic injustice, continued

Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* pp. 147–175 (2007)

Sanford Goldberg, “Can the Demands of Justice Always Be Reconciled with the Demands of Epistemology?” (2021)

Week 9 Oct 21 - epistemic injustice as a group problem

J. Y. Lee, “Bystander Omissions and Accountability for Testimonial Injustice” (2021)

Havi Carel and Ian James Kidd, “Institutional Opacity, Epistemic Vulnerability, and Institutional Testimonial Justice” (2021)

Giulia Terzian and Inés Corbalán, “Our epistemic duties in scenarios of vaccine mistrust” (2021)

Week 10 Oct 28 - knowledge on-line

Karen Frost-Arnold, “Wikipedia” (2018)

Hanna Gunn and Michael Lynch, “Google Epistemology” (2018)

Dallas Amico-Korby, Maralee Harrell, and David Danks, “Do It Yourself Content and the Wisdom of the Crowds” (2026)

Week 11 Nov 4 - problems with misleading sources

Jack M. C. Kwong, “Gatekeeping the mind” (2025)

Christopher Blake-Turner, “Fake news, relevant alternatives, and the degradation of our epistemic environment” (2025)

Week 12 Nov 11 - deep fakes

Regina Rini, “Deepfakes and the Epistemic Backstop” (2020)

Joshua Habgood-Coote, “Deepfakes and the Epistemic Apocalypse” (2023)

Week 13 Nov 18 - science and social knowledge

Haixin Dang and Liam Kofi Bright, “Scientific conclusions need not be accurate, justified, or believed by their authors” (2021)

Carla Fehr and Janet Minji Jones, “Culture, exploitation, and epistemic approaches to diversity” (2022)

Week 14 Nov 25 Thanksgiving

Week 15 Dec 2

final presentations, discussion

Appendix: AI Use Policy

Prohibited use: Students may not use AI systems to write any part of any document submitted for the course.

- Students are responsible for their own words. Neither Large Language Models (LLMs) nor any other Generative AI may be used to generate the text of student papers, regardless of whether the AI is used as a stand-alone chatbot (like ChatGPT, Claude, or CoPilot), as a plug-in for a word processing program, or in some other capacity.
- Students may not use AI systems to construct bibliographies or lists of citations. Some examples: It is prohibited to input a passage into an AI system to generate a list of supporting citations. It is prohibited to prompt an AI system with a list of sources and ask it to format the list according to a particular citation style.
- Students may not use AI to edit papers in ways where the AI is given free reign to make changes. For example: It is prohibited to input a paper or section of a paper into an AI system with the prompt that it should correct the grammar, where the AI system returns an edited version of the whole paper or section.
- Students may not use Generative AI to make figures, graphics, or images that are part of the document.

Allowed use: There are several uses of AI that are either allowed or not prohibited.

- Students may use focussed tools that suggest specific changes at the sentence level and below, where the student has an explicit yes/no option to accept or reject each change. (Examples include Grammarly as well as the grammar checking options in Microsoft Word and Google Docs. Fully generative options in those apps are not allowed.)
- Students may use reference manager software (such as EndNote, BibTeX, or Zotero) which format references using programmed rules based on user-entered data.
- Students may include AI-generated text or images in the document where the text or image is included as an example or illustration of AI-generated content. Such content must carry an explicit statement of what service or model was used to generate it.
- It is not explicitly prohibited for students to use AI systems in brainstorming ideas or thinking about topics. Nevertheless, students should be aware that there are a number of dangers posed by using AI in these contexts. First, LLMs are prone to confabulating sources and misattributing ideas. Second (and relatedly), LLMs may reproduce ideas and formulations of ideas from prior literature without a citation. As a result, a writer who uses AI in the course of developing a paper may (unwittingly) end up committing plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. Students are strongly encouraged instead to brainstorm and discuss topics with other humans: their fellow students, the instructor, and anyone else who will listen.

Consequences: Violation of this policy (either use of AI in a prohibited way or failure to disclose allowed use) will be treated as an instance of academic dishonesty and punished accordingly.