

Dr Anders Kraal

Introduction to Epistemology

1. Course content

The course offers a survey of the Theory of Knowledge (or “Epistemology”). We start by surveying some epistemological milestones in the History of Philosophy (Ancient and Modern), and then turn to major epistemological developments in Contemporary Philosophy. Questions to be dealt with include:

- Is it possible to specify *adequate criteria* for knowledge?
- Is it possible to arrive at *absolutely certain* knowledge?
- Is all knowledge derived from *experience*?
- Can we know things by some innate power in the mind, i.e. *intuition*?

2. Lectures

Mondays and Wednesdays 10:00-13:00 we have online lectures via Collaborate Ultra, accessed via Canvas. Lectures will be recorded and accessible also after the live lectures.

3. Instructor

Dr. Anders Kraal (anders.kraal@ubc.ca)

4. Instructor office hours

The last hour of each lecture occasion, from 12-13, will be devoted to Q&A. This will be our online substitute for regular on-campus office hours.

5. Instructor email policy

The instructor will aim to read and reply to emails Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 13:00-14:00.

6. Teaching assistants

Livia Graf and Chase Dority

TA's will be marking exams, and will answer questions about marked work via email.

7. Required readings

Readings will consist entirely of excerpts and papers available online on Canvas.

8. Course requirements

There will be two exams worth 30% of the final grade each, and one final exam worth 40% of the final grade. (For dates, see the Schedule at the end of this document.)

In the first two exams you will be asked to provide answers to 5 questions dealing with matters brought up in class prior to the date of the exam. The questions will be made available to you on Canvas at 10:00

am of the exam day, and you will have to 11:30 am to upload your answers. If you live in an alternate time zone, you will be offered to write a non-identical but similar exam, on the same difficulty level and dealing with the same content, 12 hours after the regular one. If you miss either of these exams you will automatically be assigned 0 points for the relevant exam unless you provide the TA with a UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale for doing a make-up exam (this should be provided within 1 week of the day of the exam).

In the final exam, you will be asked to provide answers to 10 questions dealing with matters brought up in class prior to the date of the exam. The questions will be made available to you on Canvas, and you will have 2.5 hours to upload your answers. The date and time of the final exam isn't decided yet. If you live in an alternate time zone, you will be offered to write a non-identical but similar exam, on the same difficulty level and dealing with the same content, 12 hours after the regular one. A missed final will automatically receive 0 points, unless you provide the TA with a UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale for an extended deadline (this is to be provided within 1 week of the day of the exam).

9. Learning outcomes

At the end of the course the student will be expected to

- (1) be familiar with major epistemological issues in the History of Philosophy;
- (2) be familiar with major epistemological issues in Contemporary Philosophy; and
- (3) be able to provide critical reflection on the aforementioned content.

11. Marking parameters

Your mark in this course will be a function of three main factors:

- (1) your performance on the examinable momenta *relative to your peers*,
- (2) your comprehension of the course material,
- (3) demonstration of skill in assessing and evaluating philosophical ideas.

12. Marking scale	90-100%: A+	76-79%: B+	64-67%: C+	50-54%: D
	85-89%: A	72-75%: B	60-63%: C	0-49%: F
	80-84%: A-	68-71%: B-	55-59%: C-	

The degree of difficulty on the examinable momenta will be set so as to aim at a class average outcome that by and large conforms to the department average for this course down the years, which is in the range 70%-75%. Upward scaling may be used to this effect.

13. Missed-lecture policy

If you miss a lecture, just watch the recording of it on Canvas.

14. Policy on review of marked work

Marks on exams will be posted on canvas. Feedback on expected outcomes of exams and papers will be provided (typically by the Instructor) in so-called Feedback Sessions which will be integrated with the regular lectures. Any concerns about the marking of an exam should be submitted to the marker (typically the TA) via email, and will be responded to (typically by the TA) via email.

16. Plagiarism (quoting from the UBC Academic Calendar)

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. See also <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

17. UBC values and policies (quoting from the UBC Academic Calendar)

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policiesresources-support-student-success>)

18. Schedule

The following schedule is tentative, and may or may not change depending on the needs and flow of the course.

May: Part 1: Epistemological Milestones in the History of Philosophy

Plato's rationalism	(excerpts on Canvas)
Aristotle's empiricism	(excerpts on Canvas)
Augustine's rationalism	(excerpts on Canvas)
Aquinas' empiricism	(excerpts on Canvas)
Descartes' rationalism	(excerpts on Canvas)
Locke's and Hume's empiricism	(excerpts on Canvas)
Leibniz's rationalism	(excerpts on Canvas)
Kant's criticism	(excerpts on Canvas)

***Exam on May 27, worth 30% of course points*

June: Part 2: Epistemological Milestones in Contemporary Philosophy

The early Bertrand Russell's rationalism	(excerpts on Canvas)
The early Wittgenstein's empiricism	(excerpts on Canvas)
Rudolf Carnap's empiricism	(excerpts on Canvas)
WVO Quine's anti-foundationalism	(excerpts on Canvas)
The later Wittgenstein's anti-foundationalism	(excerpts on Canvas)
Continental Philosophy: Husserl, Foucault, and Derrida	(excerpts on Canvas)

***Exam on June 10, worth 30% of course points*

Edmund Gettier's challenge	(excerpts on Canvas)
Roderick Chisholm's "internalist" response	(excerpts on Canvas)
Alvin Goldman's "externalist" response	(excerpts on Canvas)
David Lewis's "Elusive Knowledge"	(excerpts on Canvas)
Tim Williamson's <i>Knowledge and Its Limits</i>	(excerpts on Canvas)

***Final exam during the Summer 1 exam period.*

19. The nature of this syllabus

This syllabus sets out the policies according to which this course will proceed. Enrollment in the course involves an acceptance of these policies.