

PHIL 240-002: Introduction to Epistemology

2020–21 Term 2 (Jan–Apr 2021)

Course Meetings: Online, MWF 10–11 Vancouver time. (See note on synchronicity)
Instructor: Dr. Jonathan Jenkins Ichikawa — jonathan.ichikawa@ubc.ca

This is an introduction to *epistemology*—the branch of philosophy having to do with questions about knowledge and justified belief. No prior philosophical experience will be assumed. See the week-by-week descriptions below for more detail about the subject matter for this course.

Note on Synchronicity

There will be four components to the weekly schedule of the course:

1. **Reading. (Asynchronous, Monday deadline)** Students should start by completing the assigned reading. This should be completed, along with a very brief exercise graded for credit, before the Monday class meeting.
2. **Lecture. (Synchronous Monday, or asynchronously)** I'll give a live Zoom presentation Mondays (10am Vancouver time). Students are encouraged to attend it live, or they can review it asynchronously afterward.
3. **Student Engagement. (Asynchronous)** Details TBA. The point of this component will be to have students engaging in the week's material with one another, and generating a list of questions or discussion points for the Friday component.
4. **Recap/Discussion (Friday)** I'll hold another Zoom meeting Fridays (10am Vancouver time) to follow up on ideas emerging from the student engagement and answer outstanding questions. Students are encouraged to attend it live, or they can review it asynchronously afterward.

Objectives:

This course has three main objectives:

1. to familiarize students with central concepts, ideas, and arguments in epistemology, both as expressed through canonical texts, and as applicable in daily life;
2. to familiarize students with philosophical argumentation more broadly, giving students the resources for further philosophical study inside or outside of epistemology;
3. to develop analytical reading and writing skills, including the ability to construct a philosophical essay that advances a point of view and considers objections to it.

The course makes no assumption of previous philosophical study, but it does assume that students know how to write in clear and grammatical English. Students with less background in English prose may wish to work with [UBC's Learning Commons](#) and/or the UBC Philosophy Department's [essay clinic](#).

Me:

I'm Jonathan Ichikawa. I've been teaching at UBC since 2011; most of my research throughout my career has been in epistemology. Please feel free to call me "Jonathan," "Dr. Ichikawa," or "Professor Ichikawa", whichever makes you most comfortable.

Texts:

TBA. Students will likely be required to purchase one inexpensive book — less than \$20. I do not anticipate any other required expenses.

Assessment:

TBA.