

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, in both the analytical and continental traditions. 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 online (link on canvas).

3. Instructor

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

4. Instructor office hours

TBD

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

TBD. TA 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 three exams worth 20% 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 three exams you will be asked to provide answers to around 5 questions dealing with matters brought up in class prior to the date of the exam. 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 (this should be provided *before* the exam begins), in which case the weight of the missed exam will be transferred to the final exam.

In the final exam, you will be asked to provide answers to around 10 questions dealing with matters brought up in class prior to the date of the exam. A missed final will automatically receive 0 points, unless you provide the TA with a UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale (this is to be provided before the final exam), in which case it will be your responsibility to arrange a Standing Deferred Exam with UBC at some later date (which could be months after the course ends).

Please note that all students will be writing the exams at exactly the same time. There will be no exams for alternate time zones. Please make sure, prior to taking the course, that you are able to meet this requirement.

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 10: Plato's rationalism

May 12: Aristotle's empiricism

May 17: Rationalism and empiricism in Medieval Philosophy

May 19: Descartes' rationalism

May 24: Locke's empiricism, and Leibniz's rationalist reply [**Exam1 10:00-10:50**]

May 26: Hume's empiricism, and Kant's rationalist reply

May 31: Kant continued [**Exam2 10:00-10:50**]

June 2: Russell's rationalism, Wittgenstein's and Carnap's empiricist reply

June 7: Pragmatism and anti-foundationalism in Quine and the later Wittgenstein [**Exam3 10:00-10:50**]

June 9: Analyzing the concept of knowledge (I): Gettier and Chisholm

June 14: Analyzing the concept of knowledge (II): Goldman, Lewis, and Williamson

June 16: Continental perspectives: Lyotard and Foucault on the sociology of knowledge

***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.