

**Phil 532, Seminar on Moral Epistemology**  
**Summer 1 2025**  
**T, Th 1-4pm**

<b>Instructor</b>
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### **Required Learning Materials**

Papers posted on Canvas, some available through LOCR.

### **Course Description and Aims**

This is a course on moral epistemology. We will look at theories of moral inference, moral perception, the role of emotions in moral epistemology, and the nature and role of intuitions in moral philosophy. Along the way we will address skeptical challenges, and examine some probative areas of applied epistemology: moral social epistemology, moral testimony, moral memory.

### **Learning Expectations**

Students are expected to do the readings in advance, attend class, stay focused and undistracted during the lecture portions of the class, and to actively participate in classroom discussions. Students are also required to submit all assignments on time.

### **Piazza**

We will be using Piazza for class discussion. Rather than emailing questions to the teaching staff, I encourage you to post your questions on Piazza. If you have any problems or feedback for the developers, email [team@piazza.com](mailto:team@piazza.com).

Find our class signup link at: \*\*

### **Assessments of Learning**

Your final mark will be determined by

- 1) 10% weekly reaction posts (on Piazza)
  - 2) 15% in class presentation
  - 3) 75% term paper
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- 1) Weekly reaction posts. Each week, students should post a brief (250-500 word) reaction to the readings and discussion from the previous week. These will be posted on the class Piazza site by midnight each Sunday night. You can discuss the material with other students, but please do not use AI to help you. There is not a fixed expectation for these responses; appropriate posts include:
    - Summarizing the main point of a reading
    - Clarifying a particularly interesting argument in the reading
    - Raising an objection to a reading
    - Drawing connections between the ideas in the reading to broader themes

- 2) In class presentation. Students should pair up (if needed, three can group) and pick a day with readings assigned. The group should present the reading(s) for the day with an oral presentation that is about 15 minutes long (7-8 mins per person), and then field questions from the class that will launch us into a general discussion. Handouts are fine, and use of AI to prepare is also fine. After the presentation, each person should be prepared to talk about all of the assigned readings in depth.
- 3) Term paper. Students will produce a term paper engaging a major theme of the course. Students are encouraged to discuss topics with me in advance, or gather feedback on Piazza. I expect papers to be between 5000 and 7000 words, and there is an 8000 word upper limit. This is a philosophy research paper. It should advance an original argument. No research outside of the readings is required, but for most topics it is encouraged. No AI help for this except to proof read. The deadline for the paper is \*\*.

I will not accept late work except with a valid excuse from Arts Advising. Any request to re-grade work must be submitted in writing, detailing reasons for awarding a higher grade and indicating the new grade being requested.

Relationship between percentages and letter grades:

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

A Range: Exceptional Performance. Mastery of the subject matter; strong evidence of original thinking; good organization in written work; impressive capacity to analyze; insightful critical evaluations.

B Range: Competent Performance. Evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues.

C Range: Adequate Performance. Understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work; not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour.

D Range: Problematic Performance. Some incomplete understanding of the subject matter; limited evidence of critical and analytical skills; lack of original thinking.

F Range: Inadequate Performance. Little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; little or no evidence of critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

### **Electronic Devices in the Class**

I allow the use of computers and electronic devices but only to take notes and access class-related material. Above all, do not use your electronic devices in ways that might disturb other students. If you, as a student, are disturbed by another's use of electronic devices, please let me know. Violation of this policy can lead me to revise it.

### **University Policies**

#### **Academic Concession**

[UBC's academic concession policy](#) "articulates the University's commitment to support students in their academic pursuits through the application of academic concessions in the event that students

experience unanticipated events or circumstances that interfere with their ability to accomplish academic work.” An academic concession may be granted for a student when an unexpected situation or circumstance prevents them from completing graded work or exams.

Students may request an academic concession for the following three reasons:

- Unanticipated changes in personal responsibilities that create a conflict
- Medical circumstances
- Compassionate grounds

If students have a disability or ongoing medical condition that affects their studies for more than one term, they may request an [academic accommodation](#).

Requests should be made as early as reasonably possible. Normally, the academic advising office will manage student’s request.

### **Academic Integrity**

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President’s Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University’s policies and procedures, may be found under [Discipline for Academic Misconduct](#) in the Academic Calendar.

### **Resources to Support Student Success**

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 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 on the UBC Senate website: <https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>

### **Learning Resources**

Some learning resources are available on the Canvas website, such as links to helpful information about writing philosophy papers. I also want to bring your attention to the Philosophy Essay Clinic: <https://philosophy.ubc.ca/undergraduate/philosophy-essay-clinic/>

### **Copyright**

All materials of this course (any handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s)

constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline. Note: recording of the course is not permitted.

### **Reading Schedule**

***Draft:*** This is an indication of likely topics. **Particular readings will be developed in due course.**

Moral Inferentialism

Moral Perception

    And epistemic dependence

Emotions and Moral Knowledge

    And Tracking

    And Sentimentalism

Moral Intuitionism

    And Seemings

    And Self Evidence

Moral Knowledge and Social Epistemology

Moral Testimony

Moral Recollection