

Phil 121 Epistemology

Instructor: Kelvin Villegas

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Office Hours: *by appointment*

Course Description:

What is knowledge? By what methods are we able to acquire it? What obstacles prevent us from acquiring it, and how can those obstacles be overcome? These questions will guide our inquiries in this course as we examine several topics in contemporary analytic epistemology. Topics covered in this course include virtue epistemology, responses to Gettier cases, externalism vs internalism, skepticism, and social epistemology. Along the way we will also consider how these questions and problems arose and developed historically.

Grading Components:

3 Quizzes- (4 multiple choice + 3 short answer)	24%
Midterm	36%
Final Assignment Options:	40%
(A) Final Exam	
or	
(B) Final Paper	
-5-8 pages	

Grading Scale:

A+	95% - 100%
A	93% - 94.9%
A-	90% - 92.9%
B+	86% - 89.9%
B	83% - 85.9%
B-	80% - 82.9%
C+	76% - 79.9%

C	73% - 75.9%
C-	70% - 72.9%
D+	66% - 69.9%
D	63% - 65.9%
D-	60% - 62.9%
F	0% - 59.9%

Texts:

All readings will be provided. No need to purchase materials.

Key Dates:

June 21 - July 23, 2021

Deadlines

- **Add** - Thursday, June 24
- **Drop** - Monday, June 28 (tuition reversed)
- **Financial Aid Disbursement** - Monday, June 14 (if enrolled by [June 1 priority deadline](#))
- **No classes** are held in observance of Independence Day - Monday, July 5
- **Request "W" Grade** - Friday, July 9 (no tuition reversal)
- **Change Grade Option** - Friday, July 9
- **Grades Due** - Thursday, July 29

Resources and Policies:

DRC Accommodations-UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your [Academic Access Letter](#) from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, as soon as possible in the academic quarter, preferably within 1 week. I also encourage you to discuss with me ways we can ensure your full participation in this course. I encourage all students who may benefit to learn about the DRC and the UCSC accommodation process. You can visit the DRC website at drc.ucsc.edu. You can make an appointment and meet remotely with a DRC staff member by emailing drc@ucsc.edu.

Title IX-The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors.

The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. [Information about the Title IX Office](#), the [online reporting link](#), applicable campus resources, reporting responsibilities, the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#), and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at titleix.ucsc.edu.

Student Health Center-<https://healthcenter.ucsc.edu/services/index.html> In addition to providing medical and health care, the Student Health Center provides resources and information for overall wellness and sexual health at Student Health Outreach and Promotion (SHOP). SHOP also provides a safe, confidential, and nonjudgmental space where you can talk about and get information about alcohol and other drugs. The COVE offers a space for sober students or students questioning their relationship to alcohol and other drugs. If you're seeking more information, strategies, and opportunities to engage in honest dialogue about safer social and party experiences, visit Party Like a Slug.

CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services) <https://caps.ucsc.edu/> If you are in distress, managing heightened stress and anxiety, or want to get more support and a counselor's perspective on something you're going through, CAPS provides a variety of services for your needs—including immediate crisis support, scheduled individual appointments, group counseling, and workshops led by peer advisors.

Slug Support <https://deanofstudents.ucsc.edu/slug-support/program/> If you are facing financial challenges, food and housing insecurity, or other concerns, and you are not sure how to find the resources you need, contact Slug Support at (831) 459-4446. You can also contact Slug Support if you are concerned about a friend or peer and they will connect with that person to help them get access to the resources they need. I can also contact Slug Support on your behalf.

Basic Needs <https://basicneeds.ucsc.edu> If you are experiencing challenges related to basic needs, such as food, housing, health & wellness, or financial security, visit the Basic Needs hub for information about food pantries, accessible housing, mental health support, and financial aid options.

Academic Dishonesty-Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

You are responsible for being familiar with UCSC's policies on academic misconduct (https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct). Proper sourcing and good scholarship are

expected. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If you have any questions or concerns about how to avoid plagiarism and ensure the originality of your work, please ask us.

- UCSC's library resource page: <https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/citesources>
- UCLA has helpful tips on avoiding plagiarism: <http://guides.library.ucla.edu/bruin-success/>

Schedule

Week 1

First Meeting:

Introduction:

- What is Epistemology?
- Ancient Epistemology:
- Plato

Reading:

- Plato, *Theaetetus* (Selection)
- Hetherington, *Epistemology: The Key Thinkers* (Ch2/Section 7 'The *Theaetetus*': pg43-46)

Second Meeting:

- Knowledge as 'Episteme'
- Aristotle

Reading:

- Hetherington, *Epistemology: The Key Thinkers* (Ch 3 pg50-71)
- Optional:* Richard McKirahan, "Aristotle's Subordinate Sciences"

-----Quiz #1 Due Saturday, Jun 26 @ 5pm-----

Week 2

Third Meeting:

Anti-Luck Epistemology:
-Gettier Problem

Reading:

-Duncan Pritchard, *Epistemology* (Ch1 pg 6-18)
-Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge"

Fourth Meeting:

Anti-Luck Epistemology:
-Sensitivity Condition
-Safety Condition

Reading:

-Duncan Pritchard, *Epistemology* (Ch 2)

-----Quiz #2 Due Saturday, Jul 3 @ 5pm-----

Week 3

Fifth Meeting:

Skepticism:
-What is skepticism?
-What is certainty?
-What is the connection between knowledge and certainty?

Reading:

-Rene Descartes, *Meditations* I-II (pg 12-15)
- "Ancient Greek Skepticism" :
<https://iep.utm.edu/skepanci/>
- "David Hume: (4. Skepticism)"
<https://iep.utm.edu/hume/#H4>

Sixth Meeting:

Skepticism:
-How do we overcome Skepticism?

Reading:

-St. Austine, *Against the Academicians* (Selections)
-Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, (Selections)

-----Midterm Due Saturday, Jul 10 @ 5pm-----

Week 4

Seventh Meeting:

Virtue Epistemology:

- Intellectual virtues
- Virtue Reliabilism
- Virtue Responsibilism

Reading:

- Duncan Pritchard, *Epistemology* (Ch 3)
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Selections*)

Eighth Meeting:

Virtue Epistemology:

- Anti-Luck Virtue Epistemology

Reading:

- Duncan Pritchard, *Epistemology* (Ch 4)
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Selections*)

-----Quiz #3 Due Saturday, Jul 17 @ 5pm-----

Week 5

Ninth Meeting:

Social Epistemology:

- How do epistemological problems arise at the societal level?
- What role is there for virtue (if any) in these circumstances?

Reading:

- Miranda Fricker, “Epistemic Injustice and a Role for Virtue in the Politics of Knowing”
- Jose Medina, “Active Ignorance, Epistemic Others, Epistemic Friction”

Tenth Meeting:

Social Epistemology:

- How do communities work together to acquire knowledge?
- What role does friendship have in the acquisition of knowledge and interconnectedness of a community

Reading:

- Zagzebski, “Virtue Ethics and Epistemology”
- Erica Neely, “Two Concepts of Community”
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* - (On Friendship)

-----Final Exam Due Monday, Jul 26 @ 5pm-----

-----**(or) Final Paper Due**---