School of Humanities and Languages

ARTS3373: Contemporary Epistemology
S1, 2016

Wednesdays 9–12
Goldstein G05

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Course Convenor and Lecturer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Professor Stephen Hetherington</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room</td>
<td>MB 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>9385 2318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.hetherington@unsw.edu.au">s.hetherington@unsw.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation Time</td>
<td>Wednesdays 12–2</td>
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2. Course Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units of Credit (UoC)</th>
<th>6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Description</td>
<td>Epistemology is the philosophical study of knowledge and conceptually related phenomena. Most people rarely, if ever, think carefully about what knowledge really is – in spite of using the term ‘know’ confidently and extensively (such as in claims about our living in a ‘knowledge economy’ with ‘knowledge industries’, or about the need to be a ‘knowledge nation’). If knowledge is not what we assume it is, for instance, perhaps we are badly mistaken – at least sometimes, maybe always – when attributing it to ourselves and to others. So, in this course we ask carefully what knowledge is. And we ask whether we might have serious limitations as supposed knowledge-seekers – limitations that arise because we are instances of a particular kind of being with associated imperfections. Or can we have knowledge, even with our inherent imperfections and limitations? Do we even have knowledge in ways that reflect our imperfections? (Is knowledge itself real yet imperfect?) In this course we will focus those questions via the concept of self-knowledge. What is self-knowledge? How do we gain it? Do we gain it? That will cover the first five weeks of the course. Building on those five weeks, we will discuss more fully some related issues: how to analyse knowledge; the nature of good evidence; reliable belief-formation and justification; human versus animal knowledge; sceptical challenges to our having knowledge of the physical world, or to our having justified beliefs in the unobserved, or to our knowing what we are thinking; knowledge-how; disagreement and ancient scepticism; fallibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Aims</td>
<td>The philosophical aim is for students to gain an awareness of some philosophically important ideas and ways of thinking about knowledge and related phenomena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>An increased ability to engage critically and imaginatively with those ideas and those ways of thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Attributes</td>
<td>1. Being capable of independent and collaborative enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Being rigorous in analysis, critique, and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Being capable of effective communication</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. Learning and Teaching Rationale

The course will be taught via what is usually called the Socratic method. This means that the emphasis will not simply be on my presenting (as course convenor) what I regard as being the correct answers to the philosophical questions being discussed. Each meeting will be conducted as a guided but shared inquiry. In other words, it will be a seminar, in which I will lead the discussion. I will begin each meeting by presenting some of the main issues, claims, and concepts that are to be found in the reading for that week. I will then pose questions for discussion. These are intended to encourage students to reflect critically and imaginatively upon those issues, claims, and concepts. I will encourage students to follow through the implications and subtleties of their comments and suggestions. Students will be encouraged to interact with each other in those ways, too. What is sought is an atmosphere of inquiry – active learning.

This is sought because, for most students, it is a particularly effective way to gain – and to retain – a deeper sense of what philosophical thinking involves. Not coincidentally, it also reflects the way in which philosophy is actually conducted among professional philosophers. Philosophy is a discipline within which there is much critical debate. This can be a way of showing respect for someone’s ideas. It can also be about what might appear to be the simplest aspects of an issue. For it is all too easy to take for granted – as being quite clear and simple – much that is actually not so clear or simple. A great deal of philosophical discussion thus tries to clarify questions, before offering and assessing answers to them. In this class we will aim to become better at posing, and at answering, some fundamental epistemological questions. Skills of understanding, analysing, reasoning, and imagining will be called upon – and strengthened, hopefully.

I will not ‘spoon-feed’ you, such as by dictating lectures, or by distributing notes or posting web material, for you merely to absorb. This is a course in which you will have a marked opportunity to think – and to think for yourself. This opportunity to improve your ability to think well and philosophically will also place more responsibility upon you to do so. It will be up to you to pay attention, to be ready for potentially surprising changes of direction in discussion (always knowing that I will not allow these to divert us too far from the day’s main questions), and to note important points without my always having to say which are important points.

You are never required to agree with what you read for the course. But if you do disagree with it, you should think of good reasons for why, in your view, it is mistaken. This also applies to your reading material that has been written by me. You need not agree with what I have written; try to think of good arguments against what I say.

4. Teaching Strategies

See section 3 above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Assessed</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes Assessed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>3000 words</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>11 April (Monday of week 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Two hours</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>UNSW Exam Period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The essay will be on topics from meetings 1 through 5. The final exam will be on topics from meetings 6 through 12.
Please Note: The Arts and Social Sciences Protocols and Guidelines state the following:

A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).

The Attendance Guidelines can be found in full at:
https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/

Formal Examination

As mentioned above, this course has a formal examination which will be scheduled in the formal examination period from 10 – 27 June 2016. Students are expected to give their studies priority and this includes making themselves available for the entire examination period. Travel commitments made prior to the publication of the final examination timetable are not a valid reason for alternate assessment.

For information about examination dates, location and procedures at UNSW, visit:

Grades

All results are reviewed at the end of each semester and may be adjusted to ensure equitable marking across the School.

The proportion of marks lying in each grading range is determined not by any formula or quota system, but by the way that students respond to assessment tasks and how well they meet the objectives of the course. Nevertheless, since higher grades imply performance that is well above average, the number of distinctions and high distinctions awarded in a typical course is relatively small. At the other extreme, on average 6.1% of students do not meet minimum standards and a little more (8.6%) in first year courses. For more information on the grading categories see:

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Assignments must be submitted electronically through Moodle (http://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au/). You must use your zID login to submit your assignments in Moodle.

There is one “Learning Activity” in Moodle, labelled according to the appropriate assessment. Please electronically submit your assignment to the correct “Learning Activity”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment task to be submitted in Moodle</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>11 April (Monday of week 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Please note that the deadline to submit an assignment electronically is 4:00 pm on the due date of the assignment.

When you submit your assignment electronically, you agree that:

I have followed the Student Code of Conduct. I certify that I have read and understand the University requirements in respect of student academic misconduct outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Misconduct Procedure. I declare that this
assessment item is my own work, except where acknowledged, and has not been submitted for academic credit previously in whole or in part.

I acknowledge that the assessor of this item may, for assessment purposes:

- provide a copy to another staff member of the University
- communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (such as Turnitin) which may retain a copy of the assessment item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking.

Your assignment will be available with feedback in hard copy within three weeks of the due date.

You are required to put your name (as it appears in University records) and UNSW Student ID on every page of your assignments.

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Moodle/Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalsupport@unsw.edu.au. Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year).

If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on its system status on Twitter.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle

**Late Submission of Assignments**

The Arts and Social Sciences late submissions guidelines state the following:

- An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).

- The late penalty is the **loss of 3%** of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late. (For the essay in this course, which will be marked out of 40, this figure of 3% will amount to 1 point per day, or part thereof, that the essay is late.)

- Work submitted **14 days after** the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

- Work submitted **21 days after** the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will automatically fail the course.

The Late Submissions Guidelines can be found in full at: https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/Protocols-Guidelines/
The penalty may not apply where students are able to provide documentary evidence of illness or serious misadventure. Time pressure resulting from undertaking assignments for other courses does not constitute an acceptable excuse for lateness.

### 6. Extension of Time for Submission of Assessment Tasks

The Arts and Social Sciences Extension Guidelines apply to all assessed tasks regardless of whether or not a grade is awarded, except the following:

1. any form of test/examination/assessed activity undertaken during regular class contact hours
2. any task specifically identified by the Course Authority (the academic in charge of the course) in the Course Outline or Learning Management System (LMS), for example, Moodle, as not available for extension requests.

A student who missed an assessment activity held within class contact hours should apply for Special Consideration via myUNSW.

The Arts and Social Sciences Extension Guidelines state the following:

- A student seeking an extension should apply through the Faculty’s online extension tool available in LMS.
- A request for an extension should be submitted before the due time/date for the assessment task.
- The Course Authority should respond to the request within two working days of the request.
- The Course Authority can only approve an extension up to five days. A student requesting an extension greater than five days should complete an application for Special Consideration.
- The Course Authority advises their decision through the online extension tool.
- If a student is granted an extension, failure to comply will result in a penalty. The penalty will be invoked one minute past the approved extension time.

### 7. Attendance

The Arts and Social Sciences Attendance Guidelines state the following:

- A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a face-to-face or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.
- If a student is unable to attend all classes for a course due to timetable clashes, the student must complete the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Permitted Timetable Clash form (see information at Item 8 below). A student unable to attend lectures in a course conducted by the School of Education can apply for “Permission to Participate in Lectures Online”.
- Where practical, a student’s attendance will be recorded. Individual course outlines/LMS will set out the conditions under which attendance will be measured.
• A student who arrives **more than 15 minutes late** may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.

• If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.

• Reserve members of the Australian Defence Force who require absences of more than two weeks due to full-time service may be provided an exemption. The student may also be permitted to discontinue enrolment without academic or financial penalty.

• If a Course Authority rejects a student’s request for absence from a class or activity the student must be advised in writing of the grounds for the rejection.

• A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance.

• A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course’s learning outcomes and/or volume of learning.

• A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.

• The Dean will only grant such a request after consultation with the Course Authority to ensure that measures can be organised that will allow the student to meet the course’s learning outcomes and volume of learning.

• **A student who attends less than 80% of the classes/activities and has not submitted appropriate supporting documentation to the Course Authority to explain their absence may be awarded a final grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).**

• A student who has submitted the appropriate documentation but attends less than 66% of the classes/activities will be asked by the Course Authority to apply to discontinue the course without failure rather than be awarded a final grade of UF. The final decision as to whether a student can be withdrawn without fail is made by Student Administration and Records.

**Students who falsify their attendance or falsify attendance on behalf of another student will be dealt with under the Student Misconduct Policy.**

8. Class Clash

Students who are enrolled in an Arts and Social Sciences program (single or dual) and have an unavoidable timetable clash can apply for permissible timetable clash by completing an online application form. Students must meet the rules and conditions in order to apply for permissible clash. The rules and conditions can be accessed online in full at: [https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/FASSFile/Permissible_Clash_Rules.pdf](https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/FASSFile/Permissible_Clash_Rules.pdf)

For students who are enrolled in a non-Arts and Social Sciences program, they must seek advice from their home faculty on permissible clash approval.
9. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s thoughts or work as your own. It can take many forms, from not having appropriate academic referencing to deliberate cheating.

In many cases plagiarism is the result of inexperience about academic conventions. The University has resources and information to assist you to avoid plagiarism.

The Learning Centre assists students with understanding academic integrity and how to not plagiarise. Information is available on their website: https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/. They also hold workshops and can help students one-on-one.

If plagiarism is found in your work when you are in first year, your lecturer will offer you assistance to improve your academic skills. They may ask you to look at some online resources, attend the Learning Centre, or sometimes resubmit your work with the problem fixed. However, more serious instances in first year, such as stealing another student’s work or paying someone to do your work, may be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures.

Repeated plagiarism (even in first year), plagiarism after first year, or serious instances, may also be investigated under the Student Misconduct Procedures. The penalties under the procedures can include a reduction in marks, failing a course or for the most serious matters (like plagiarism in an Honours thesis) or even suspension from the university. The Student Misconduct Procedures are available here: http://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf

10. Course Schedule

To view course timetable, please visit: http://www.timetable.unsw.edu.au/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Commencing:</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 March (week 1)</td>
<td>[Introduction to course + ] Knowing one’s body</td>
<td>S-K, ch. 1 [see below on what ‘SK’ denotes]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 March (week 3)</td>
<td>What is knowledge (including self-knowledge)?</td>
<td>S-K, ch. 3: Plato, Meno 97a–99d; Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge, pp. 28–32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 March (week 4)</td>
<td>How to gain self-knowledge? And what is its value?</td>
<td>S-K, ch. 4: Cassam, Self-Knowledge for Humans, ch. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 April (week 5)</td>
<td>Scepticism: Is self-knowledge possible?</td>
<td>S-K, ch. 5: Descartes, ‘Meditation I’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 April (week 6)</td>
<td>Reliability and evidence</td>
<td>Kornblith, ‘Knowledge in humans and other animals’; Feldman &amp; Conee, ‘Evidentialism’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 April (week 8)</td>
<td>Knowledge as tracking the truth</td>
<td>Nozick, Philosophical Explanations, pp. 172–80, 197–211</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 May (week 9)</td>
<td>Scepticism: Can there be rational belief about the unobserved?</td>
<td>Hume, <em>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</em>, sections IV, V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 May (week 10)</td>
<td>Scepticism: Can there be knowledge of one’s own mind?</td>
<td>Hetherington, <em>Knowledge Puzzles</em>, ch. 21; Kripke, <em>Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language</em>, pp.7–21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 May (week 11)</td>
<td>Ancient scepticism and disagreement</td>
<td>Sextus Empiricus, <em>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</em>, excerpts; Feldman, ‘Epistemological puzzles about disagreement’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 May (week 12)</td>
<td>Fallibilism</td>
<td>Hetherington, ‘Fallibilism’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 11. Course Resources

**Textbook Details**
- *Self-Knowledge*, by me (Stephen Hetherington), Broadview Press, 2007 [referred to in section 9 above as ‘S-K’]

**Additional Readings**
- Other required readings will be available through Moodle.

### 12. Course Evaluation and Development

Courses are periodically reviewed and students’ feedback is used to improve them. Feedback is gathered using various means including UNSW’s Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) process.

### 13. Student Support

The Learning Centre is available for individual consultation and workshops on academic skills. Find out more by visiting the Centre’s website at: [http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au)

### 14. Grievances

All students should be treated fairly in the course of their studies at UNSW. Students who feel they have not been dealt with fairly should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve any issues with their tutor or the course convenors.

If such an approach fails to resolve the matter, the School of Humanities and Languages has an academic member of staff who acts as a Grievance Officer for the School. This staff member is identified on the notice board in the School of Humanities and languages. Further information about UNSW grievance procedures is available at: [https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html](https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html)
15. Other Information

myUNSW

myUNSW is the online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing and current students and UNSW staff. To visit myUNSW please visit either of the below links:
https://my.unsw.edu.au
https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html

OHS

UNSW's Occupational Health and Safety Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. For all matters relating to Occupational Health, Safety and environment, see http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/

Special Consideration

In cases where illness or other circumstances produce repeated or sustained absence, students should apply for Special Consideration as soon as possible.

The application must be made via Online Services in myUNSW. Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration.

Applications on the grounds of illness must be filled in by a medical practitioner. Further information is available at:
https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/SpecialConsideration.html

Student Equity and Disabilities Unit

Students who have a disability that requires some adjustment in their learning and teaching environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the course convener prior to or at the commencement of the course, or with the Student Equity Officers (Disability) in the Student Equity and Disabilities Unit (9385 4734). Information for students with disabilities is available at: http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au

Issues that can be discussed may include access to materials, signers or note-takers, the provision of services and additional examination and assessment arrangements. Early notification is essential to enable any necessary adjustments to be made.