

# EPISTEMOLOGY I

## Syllabus

### Semester 2

MODULE TUTOR: Dr. Rush Stewart  
OFFICE: Chesham Building 4.08  
LECTURE TIME: T 15:00-16:00  
LOCATION (LECTURE): Strand Building, S-2.08  
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays (online), 16:00-17:00  
Tuesdays, 16:00-17:00  
CONTACT: [rush.stewart@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:rush.stewart@kcl.ac.uk)

## DESCRIPTION

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Epistemology is the study of knowledge. What is knowledge? Can we have it? If so, how much and under what conditions? What are the appropriate methods for obtaining it? Those are classic questions of the discipline, and will be our focus in the first half of the course. Epistemology has come to encompass a wide array of other questions concerning rationality and belief, some of which we will consider in the second half of the course. First, there's a gentle introduction to the degree of belief paradigm that is prominent in formal epistemology. Second, we look at some epistemological problems that emerge in the social setting. Third, we consider some questions at the intersection of epistemology and ethics.

## AIMS

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The module aims to promote advanced critical perspectives on issues in epistemology including classic questions regarding the nature, extent, and conditions of knowledge, and questions central to emerging areas of inquiry such as social epistemology and issues at the intersection of ethics and epistemology.

## LECTURES AND SEMINARS

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This module runs for ten weeks. Each week, there is a one-hour lecture and a one-hour seminar.

## PREREQUISITES

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There are no formal prerequisites.

## KEATS

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Access to all materials relevant to the course, including readings and the current version of the syllabus, is available via [KEATS](#). Please check KEATS regularly for any announcements of modifications to the schedule or readings.

The **reading list** for the course contains numerous additional readings on each topic.

## ASSESSMENT

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The **formative essay** does *\*not\** count towards your degree. Formative essays of **1,500 words** are to be submitted to your seminar leader via email by **16:00 Monday, March 6, 2023**. Formative essays must be completed by the deadline in order to receive feedback. This feedback is crucial for your summative assessment. Essay questions will be distributed in due course.

There will also be a 2 hour summative exam. The **summative** assessment *\*does\** count towards your degree. Date in Period 2 TBC (May/June).

For further information on assessment, including [what to do if you need an extension or you miss a deadline](#), please consult the [Student Handbook](#). An extension for a summative essay requires filing an MCF. The tutor cannot approve it.

## SCHEDULE

Please check [KEATS](#) regularly for any announcements of modifications to the schedule or readings.

All reading should either be available on [KEATS](#) or in the library. If you have difficulty accessing reading, please let me know.

| Date                     | Topic   |
|--------------------------|---|
| EPISTEMOLOGY: THE BASICS |   |
| 17.01                    | <b>Knowledge</b><br>Gettier – “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”<br>Nozick – <i>Philosophical Explanations</i> , ch. 3, pp. 167–178, 186–187   |
| 24.01                    | <b>Skepticism</b><br>Descartes – <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditations 1 and 2<br>Stroud – “The Problem of the External World”<br>Optional: Bostrom – “Are You Living In a Computer Simulation?” ( <a href="#">Video Summary</a> ) |
| 31.01                    | <b>Justification</b><br>Fumerton – “Theories of Justification”<br>Optional: Huemer – “Phenomenal Conservatism and the Internalist Intuition”  |
| 07.02                    | <b>Induction</b><br>Hume – <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Section 4 and Part 1 of Section 5<br>Goodman – “The New Riddle of Induction”  |
| FORMAL EPISTEMOLOGY      |   |
| 14.02                    | <b>Bayes, Locke, and Lotteries</b><br>Titelbaum – <i>Fundamentals of Bayesian Epistemology 1</i> , ch. 1 and Section 2.2 though the “Warning”<br>Optional: Foley – “The Epistemology of Belief and the Epistemology of Degrees of Belief”         |
| 21.02                    | Reading Week  |
| SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY      |   |
| 28.02                    | <b>Disagreement</b><br>Feldman – “Reasonable Religious Disagreements”<br>Christensen – “Disagreement as Evidence: The Epistemology of Controversy”<br>Optional: Aumann – “Agreeing to Disagree”<br>Optional: Elga – “Reflection and Disagreement” |
| 07.03                    | <b>Aggregation</b><br>Dietrich – “Jury Theorems,” <a href="#">SEP Entry</a> , Sections 1–2.4<br>List – “The Theory of Judgment Aggregation: An Introductory Overview,” Sections 1 and 2   |
| ETHICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY  |   |
| 14.03                    | <b>Ethics of Belief</b><br>Clifford – “The Ethics of Belief”<br>James – “The Will to Believe”<br>Optional: Pascal – <i>Pensées</i> , Sections 233 and 234   |

21.03 **Epistemic Injustice**

Lackey – “Credibility and the Distribution of Epistemic Goods”

Optional: Fricker – *Epistemic Injustice*, ch. 1

28.03 **Moral Encroachment**

Moss – “Moral Encroachment”

Angwin, et al. – “[Machine Bias](#)”