

COURSE OUTLINE		
TERM: Spring 2024	COURSE NO: PHIL 302	
INSTRUCTOR: Michel-Antoine Xhignesse	COURSE TITLE: <i>Knowledge and Truth</i>	
E-MAIL: michelxhignesse@capilanou.ca	SECTION NO(S): 01	CREDITS: 3.0
OFFICE HOURS: Monday, 09h00-13h00 PST		
COURSE WEBSITE: eLearn		

Capilano University acknowledges with respect the Lilwat7úl (Lil'wat), x^wmə 1̄ 0k^wəyəm (Musqueam), shíshálh (Sechelt), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) people on whose territories our campuses are located.

COURSE FORMAT

Three hours of class time, plus an additional hour delivered through on-line or other activities for a 15-week semester, which includes two weeks for final exams.

COURSE PREREQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES

45 credits of 100-level or higher coursework

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

This course deals with one of the core areas of philosophy—the theory of knowledge (epistemology). Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge in its most general terms—its nature, scope and limits. It is a large field intersecting in significant ways with every other area of philosophy as well as any number of disciplines outside of philosophy (including the arts, sciences and the humanities) engaged in the project of enquiry or in the search for knowledge.

This course attempts to provide students with a broad understanding of epistemology through an examination of a number of its key questions, including: What is knowledge? What does it take for a belief to be justified? Does justification depend essentially on providing some reason supporting the belief, or can we know something without knowing that (or how) we know it? Are some beliefs self-justifying and/or absolutely certain, or should we be skeptical of every claim to knowledge? Can we know that there is an external world beyond our sensations? Are we entitled to rely on such things as perception, intuition, or inductive inferences from the past to the future? Can science (or any other mode of enquiry, for that matter) give us objective knowledge? Does the sex or gender of the knower play an important role in how or what we know? What is the relationship between justification and truth?

This course will examine these and related questions through a selection of papers and articles from many of the key figures in epistemology, focussing primarily on the arguments of epistemologists in contemporary debate.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND/OR RESOURCES

Readings will be made available on eLearn.

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this course, students will have:

- An ability to accurately and clearly explain the key concepts of epistemology
- An advanced understanding of the major epistemological theories and the positions covered in the course.
- An ability to thoughtfully and critically discuss abstract questions relating to knowledge and truth.
- An appreciation of the complexities underlying the general project of enquiry, and consequent to that, an enhanced sense of humility in the face of those complexities.
- An enhanced confidence and ability at critically challenging often uncritically accepted assumptions, including their own assumptions or beliefs.
- An ability to apply their understanding of epistemology to a variety of diverse fields of enquiry.
- An enhanced general ability to understand and critically examine complex lines of reasoning.
- An enhanced general ability to construct and express, verbally and in writing, complex lines of reasoning.

COURSE CONTENT

Week 1 – January 3

Defining Knowledge

An introduction to knowledge.

- Plato – *Meno*

Week 2 – January 10

Problems with Justified True Belief

Is knowledge justified true belief?

- Edmund Gettier – *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?*
- Linda Zagzebski – *The Inescapability of Gettier Problems*

Week 3 – January 17

Externalism

Causal and reliabilist theories.

- Alvin Goldman – *A Causal Theory of Knowing*
- David Armstrong – *The Thermometer View of Knowledge*

Week 4 – January 24

Contextualism and Subject-Sensitive Invariantism

Does ‘knowledge’ depend on context? Whose?

- David Lewis – *Elusive Knowledge*
- Jason Stanley – *Knowledge and Practical Interests, Ch. 5*

Week 5 – January 31

Skepticism

Can we know anything at all?

- René Descartes – *Meditations on First Philosophy, Meditation 1 & 2*
- G.E. Moore – *Proof of an External World*

Week 6 – February 7

Truth

What is it?

- Bertrand Russell – *Truth and Falsehood*
- Paul Horwich – *The minimalist conception of truth*

Week 7 – February 14

Bullshit 1

What is the difference between lying and bullshitting?

- Harry Frankfurt – *On Bullshit*

Week 8 – February 28

Bullshit 2

Trolling and the generic term ‘-porn’.

- Thi Nguyen and Bekka Williams – *Moral Outrage Porn*
- Rachel Barney – *[Aristotle] On Trolling*

Week 9 – March 6

Truth in Politics

Propaganda and its uses.

- Jason Stanley – *How Propaganda Works, Ch. 2: Propaganda Defined*
- Hannah Arendt – *Truth and Politics*

Week 10 – March 13

Evidence and Justification

Induction.

- Bertrand Russell – *On Induction*
- Nelson Goodman – *The New Riddle of Induction*

Week 11 – March 20

Testimony and Expertise

Can we know things that other people tell us?

- Alvin I. Goldman – *Experts: Which Ones Should You Trust?*
- Jennifer Lackey – *Testimony: acquiring knowledge from others*

Week 12 – March 27

Problems With Testimony

Cases where testimonial knowledge seems suspect.

- Alison Hills – *Moral Testimony*
- Malcom Budd – *The Acquaintance Principle*

Week 13 – April 3

Situated Knowledge

Wherefore skepticism?

- Lorraine Code – *Is the sex of the knower epistemologically significant?*
- Paul Simard Smith (Métis) – *The Epistemology of Deep Disagreement and Indigenous Oral Histories*

EVALUATION PROFILE

Attendance and participation – 10%

- 1% per day

Annotated reading – 10%

- January 17, 24, or 31

Group presentation – 20%

- February 28 – April 3

Essay – 30%

- April 10

Final exam – 30%

- TBA

Total = 100%

GRADING PROFILE

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D = 50-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	F = 0-49
A- = 80-84	B- = 70-72	C- = 60-62	

Incomplete Grades

Grades of Incomplete “I” are assigned only in exceptional circumstances when a student requests extra time to complete their coursework. Such agreements are made only at the request of the student, who is responsible to determine from the instructor the outstanding requirements of the course.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the due date listed. Late assignments may be accepted at the instructor’s discretion.

Missed Exams/Quizzes/Presentations, etc.

Make-up exams, quizzes and/or tests are given at the discretion of the instructor. They are generally given only in medical emergencies, due to severe personal crises, or to honour community needs and traditional practices (arranged ahead of time where possible). Some missed activities may not be able to be accommodated. Please consult with your instructor.

Attendance and participation

Students are expected to attend all classes and associated activities. Students will earn 1% per class, up to a maximum of 10%.

English Usage

Students are expected to proofread all written work for any grammatical, spelling, and stylistic errors. Instructors may deduct marks for incorrect grammar and spelling in written assignments.

Electronic Devices

Students may use electronic devices during class for note taking only.

Online Communication

Outside of the classroom, instructors will (if necessary) communicate with students using either their official Capilano University email or eLearn; please check both regularly. Official communication between Capilano University and students is delivered to students' Capilano University email addresses only.

UNIVERSITY OPERATIONAL DETAILS**Tools for Success**

Many services are available to support student success for Capilano University students. A central navigation point for all services can be found at: <https://www.capilanou.ca/student-life/>

Capilano University Security: download the [CapU Mobile Safety App](#)

Policy Statement (S2009-06)

Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Academic Integrity, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.

Academic Integrity (S2017-05)

Any instance of academic dishonesty or breach of the standards of academic integrity is serious and students will be held accountable for their actions, whether acting alone or in a group. See policy S2017-05 for more information: <https://www.capilanou.ca/about-capu/governance/policies/>

Violations of academic integrity, including dishonesty in assignments, examinations, or other academic performances, are prohibited and will be handled in accordance with the Student Academic Integrity Procedures.

Academic dishonesty is any act that breaches one or more of the principles of academic integrity. Acts of academic dishonesty may include but are not limited to the following types:

Cheating: Using or providing unauthorized aids, assistance or materials while preparing or completing assessments, or when completing practical work (in clinical, practicum, or lab settings), including but not limited to the following:

- Copying or attempting to copy the work of another during an assessment;
- Communicating work to another student during an examination;
- Using unauthorized aids, notes, or electronic devices or means during an examination;
- Unauthorized possession of an assessment or answer key; and/or,
- Submitting of a substantially similar assessment by two or more students, except in the case where such submission is specifically authorized by the instructor.

Fraud: Creation or use of falsified documents.

Misuse or misrepresentation of sources: Presenting source material in such a way as to distort its original purpose or implication(s); misattributing words, ideas, etc. to someone other than the original source; misrepresenting or manipulating research findings or data; and/or suppressing aspects of findings or data in order to present conclusions in a light other than the research, taken as a whole, would support.

Plagiarism: Presenting or submitting, as one's own work, the research, words, ideas, artistic imagery, arguments, calculations, illustrations, or diagrams of another person or persons without explicit or accurate citation or credit.

Self-Plagiarism: Submitting one's own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructors, or re-submitting work, in whole or in part, for which credit has already been granted without permission of the instructors.

Prohibited Conduct: The following are examples of other conduct specifically prohibited:

- Taking unauthorized possession of the work of another student (for example, intercepting and removing such work from a photocopier or printer, or collecting the graded work of another student from a stack of papers);
- Falsifying one's own and/or other students' attendance in a course;
- Impersonating or allowing the impersonation of an individual;
- Modifying a graded assessment then submitting it for re-grading; or,
- Assisting or attempting to assist another person to commit any breach of academic integrity.

Sexual Violence and Misconduct

All Members of the University Community have the right to work, teach and study in an environment that is free from all forms of sexual violence and misconduct. Policy B401 defines sexual assault as follows:

Sexual assault is any form of sexual contact that occurs without ongoing and freely given consent, including the threat of sexual contact without consent. Sexual assault can be committed by a stranger, someone known to the survivor or an intimate partner.

Safety and security at the University are a priority and any form of sexual violence and misconduct will not be tolerated or condoned. The University expects all Students and Members of the University Community to abide by all laws and University policies, including the [B.401 Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy](#) and [B.401.1 Sexual Violence and Misconduct Procedure](#).

Emergencies: Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the emergency policies where appropriate and the emergency procedures posted on the wall of the classroom.