

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (SPRING 2008)

PHIL-209-01 – Class Number 5694 ♦ 217 Stein Hall ♦ MWF 12:00-12:50pm

Andrea Borghini • e-mail: aborghin@holycross.edu • Office: 519 Smith Hall • Phone: 508-793-3453
url: <http://www.holycross.edu/departments/philosophy/website/borghini.html>

Course Description

The course will address the main facets of one of the hardest and most poignant philosophical questions: What do we know, really? This is an introductory course, and no previous knowledge of philosophical texts and issues is required to enroll. The course is structured as a series of lectures during which students' participation is highly encouraged. New readings are assigned for each class.

Structure and Course Requirements:

Readings and Participation: You will be expected to complete the assigned readings before the class for which they are assigned, to bring the texts under discussion with you to class, and to come to class prepared to discuss them.

Attendance: You are expected to attend each class. If you will be absent, please e-mail me in advance (aborghin@holycross.edu). The only grounds for which absences will be excused are religious holidays, family crises, illness, or athletic competitions (which does not include athletic training); absences due to the last three reasons must be explained by a note from a dean or a doctor. For each class, I keep track of students who are late. Accumulating several late arrivals will incur in a grade reduction of one third of a grade. If you have scheduling conflicts, please come see me.

Weekly Assignments: Each week, I will post an assignment on Blackboard. Typically, I will post the assignment on Monday, and you are expected to reply by the following Friday by 12:00pm, class time. Anytime an assignment is posted, I will send you a notification message through Blackboard. Please bring your reply to class. There will be eleven assignments. You may skip four during the semester. (I will count only the seven best assignments towards your final grade.) Missing more than four will result in a substantial grade reduction (see below). I keep track of late postings. Accumulating several late postings will incur in a grade reduction of one third of a grade.

In class examination: Midterm; Final (date, time and location TBA)

Papers: 1200 to 1600 words each. The first paper is due in class on Wednesday, February 13; the second paper is due in class on Friday, April 11. Papers should be typed in Times New Roman, size 12 font, double-spaced, and all the page margins should measure one inch. Paper topics will be distributed one week to ten days in advance.

Required Texts:

The following books are required (the last one is optional):

Paul K. Moser and Arnold vander Nat, *Human Knowledge. Classic and Contemporary Approaches*, 3rd edition, Oxford University Press, 2003, ISBN: 978-0195149661 (in the schedule abbreviated as: HK)

Sven Bernecker and Fred Dretske, *Knowledge. Readings in Contemporary Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, 1999, ISBN: 978-0198752615 (in the schedule abbreviated as: K)

Timothy Schroeder, *Three Faces of Desire*, Oxford University Press, 2004, ISBN: 978-0195172379

Grade Breakdown:

Weekly Assignments: 21%

Midterm: 12%

Paper I: 20%

Paper II: 25%

Final: 16%

Participation: 6%

Please be advised: In order to pass the class you are required to do *all* the coursework (e.g. completing one out of two papers will result in failing the class). Late papers incur in a penalty of one third of a letter grade per day (e.g. from A to A-). As for weekly assignments, if you miss more than four, a penalty of one third of a letter grade will be applied to your overall final grade. Finally, plagiarism, cheating, and collusion, in any form, will not be tolerated, in accordance with the *Student Handbook*, p. 35.

Office Hours:

My office hours are Monday and Wednesday: 1-3pm in 519 Smith Hall. I am also on campus at other times, and you can make an appointment to see me by e-mail (aborghin@holycross.edu). Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me about any aspect of the course.

Tentative Schedule:

Week 1

- 1.16 (W) Intro & Skepticism: Groarke, "Ancient Skepticism" (Stanford Encyclopedia)
- 1.18 (F) Skepticism: Sextus Empiricus (HK: 81-91)

Week 2

- 1.21 (M) **ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**
- 1.23 (W) Skepticism: Augustine: from *Contra Academicos* (HK: 92-94)
- 1.25 (F) Skepticism: Descartes: *Meditation I* (HK: 114-117) **(Assignment #1 due)**

Week 3

- 1.28 (M) Sources: Perception: Bonjour, "Perception" (Stanford Encyclopedia)
- 1.30 (W) Sources: Perception: Locke (HK: 129-136)
- 2.1 (F) Sources: Perception: Aquinas (HK: 96-108) **(Assignment #2 due)**

PAPER #1 TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

Week 4

- 2.4 (M) Sources: Introspection: Descartes: *Meditation II* (HK: 117-120)
- 2.6 (W) Sources: Introspection: Boghossian (K: 480-498)
- 2.8 (F) Sources: Introspection: Boghossian (K: 480-498) cont'ed **(Assignment #3 due)**

Week 5

- 2.11 (M) Sources: Memory: Hume, from *Enquiry*, Section 10 (E-res)
- 2.13 (W)** Sources: Memory: Martin and Deutscher (K:512-520)
PAPER #1 DUE
- 2.15 (F) Sources: Memory: Coady (K: 537-546) **(Assignment #4 due)**

Week 6

- 2.18 (M) Sources: Induction: Russell (K: 547-551)
- 2.20 (W) Sources: Induction: Reichenbach (K: 552-555)
- 2.22 (F) Sources: Induction : Rationalists solution and recap **(Assignment #5 due)**

Week 7

2.25 (M) Sources: A Priori: Plato, *Meno* (HK: 35-38) [class taught by colleague]

2.27 (W) Midterm (materials up to week 6 included)

2.29 (F) Sources: A Priori: Kitcher (K: 574-588) **(Assignment #6 due)**

Week 8

3.3 (M) **ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**

3.5 (W) **ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**

3.7 (F) **ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**

Week 9

3.10 (M) Sources: A Priori: Kitcher (K: 574-588) cont'd

3.12 (W) Modes: Knowledge: Gettier (K: 13-15); Feldman (K: 16-17)

3.14 (F) Modes: Knowledge: Pollock (HK: 309-317) **(Assignment #7 due)**

Week 10

3.17 (M) Modes: Knowledge: Q&A [class held on an evening of Week 9]

3.19 (W) Modes: Knowledge: Pollock (HK: 309-317)

3.21 (F) **ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**

Week 11

3.24 (M) **ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**

3.26 (W) ---

3.28 (F) Modes: Belief: Schwitzgebel, "Belief" (Stanford Encyclopedia) **(Assignment #8 due)**

Week 12

3.31 (M) Modes: Belief: Schwitzgebel, "Belief" (Stanford Encyclopedia) **#2 PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED**

4.2 (W) Modes: Belief: The Argument From Indifference (prof notes)

4.4 (F) Justification: Allston (HK: 359-379) **(Assignment #9 due)**

Week 13

4.7 (M) Justification: Allston (HK: 359-379)

4.9 (W) Justification: recap of knowledge, belief, and justification

4.11 (F) Modes: Desire: Schroeder, *Three Faces of Desire*: Chapter 1
DUE PAPER #2

Week 14

4.14 (M) Modes: Desire: Schroeder, *Three Faces of Desire*: Chapter 5

4.16 (W) Modes: Desire: Schroeder, *Three Faces of Desire*: Chapter 5

4.18 (F) Modes: Desire: Schroeder, *Three Faces of Desire*: Chapter 6
(Assignment #10 due)

Week 14

4.21 (M) Modes: Intention: Descartes, *Meditation IV* (HK: 125-126); Kant: Selection from *Groundwork* (E-res)

4.23 (W) Modes: Intention: Bratman, "Intention, Belief, Practical, Theoretical"
<http://www-philosophy.stanford.edu/fss/papers/BratmanIBPT.pdf>

4.25 (F) Modes: Intention: Bratman, "Intention, Belief, Practical, Theoretical" cont'ed
(Assignment #11 due)

Week 15

4.28 (M) Conclusions

5.3-10 **FINAL** Date, time, and location TBA