

# PH252-15 Epistemology

**22/23**

**Department**

Philosophy

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

Lucy Campbell

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

We tend to think that knowing things is important. Knowing things is better than being ignorant of them. And it's better than merely having true beliefs about things - for example, it's better than having a belief which is true by coincidence, or as the result of a lucky guess. But what is it to know that something is the case? Is knowledge true belief plus some extra ingredient? If so, what? Is knowledge true belief which is justified, for example, or a true belief which is caused by the facts? Or a true belief which you've formed skilfully or competently, as opposed to clumsily or out of luck? Or perhaps knowledge is something completely different from true belief. If so what could it be? Some sui generis kind of mental state? Some kind of ability, for example to make rational use of facts or truths? All of these have been suggested by different philosophers writing in the Western contemporary tradition as ways of understanding knowledge. In the first half of term we will assess some of these ways of thinking about the general category of knowledge. And after reading week, we will zoom in to closely investigate one very important and particularly fascinating variety of knowledge - the knowledge we each have about other people's thoughts and feelings, so-called 'knowledge of other minds'.

### Module aims

The aim of the course is to introduce students to some of the main concepts, topics, and positions in contemporary Western epistemology. It will give students the opportunity to develop both their

understanding of key aspects of the epistemology literature, and their skills of philosophical analysis and argumentation.

## **Outline syllabus**

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

1. What is Knowledge? Truth, Belief, and Justification
2. What is Knowledge? Zagzebski's challenge and Virtue Epistemology
3. What is Knowledge? A State of Mind?
4. What is Knowledge? Knowledge-that as knowledge-how?
5. What is Knowledge? A Rational Ability?

## **READING WEEK**

1. Knowledge of Other Minds 1: Introduction and Analogy Theory
2. Knowledge of Other Minds 2: Theory Theory
3. Knowledge of Other Minds 3: Perceptualism
4. Knowledge of Other Minds 4: Perception, Expression, and (combatting) Scepticism

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- clearly identify the particular philosophical questions with which the module is concerned
- understand and engage critically with some of the methodological presuppositions underlying particular approaches
- clearly state key arguments, problems, and positions, and engage with them critically, both in class and in written work
- display a good understanding of technical epistemological notions, making appropriate use of these both in discussion and written work
- demonstrate broadly-based knowledge and understanding across of a range of key accounts of propositional knowledge
- demonstrate broadly-based knowledge and understanding across of a range of key approaches to knowledge of other minds
- demonstrate detailed understanding of specific accounts of propositional knowledge, along with some of their motivations and challenges
- demonstrate detailed understanding of specific accounts of knowledge of other minds, along with some of their motivations and challenges

## **Indicative reading list**

- Linda Zagzebski, "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems"
- John Greco, "Knowledge as Credit for True Belief"
- Jennifer Lackey, "Why we don't Deserve Credit for Everything we Know"
- Timothy Williamson, "Is Knowing a State of Mind?"
- Elizabeth Fricker, "Is Knowing a State of Mind? The Case Against"

- John Hyman, "Knowledge as an Ability", Ch. 7 in /Action, Knowledge, and Will/
- Alex Hyslop and Frank Jackson, "The Analogical Inference to Other Minds"
- Robert Pargetter, "The Scientific Inference to Other Minds"
- Paul Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes"
- Jane Heal, "What are Psychological Concepts For?"
- W.E.S. McNeill, "On Seeing that Someone is Angry"
- Anita Avramides, "Perception, Reliability, and Other Minds"
- Anil Gomes, "Perception, Evidence, and our Expressive Knowledge of Others' Minds"
- Asa Wikforss, "Knowledge, Belief, and the Asymmetry Thesis"

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## **Research element**

The students' main assessment is a 2,500 word essay (80%). They will be expected to contribute their own research to this essay rather than to rely simply on the lecture material. Research may include sourcing additional reading material, developing one's own line of argument, discussion with peers.

## **Interdisciplinary**

The material on 'theory-theoretical' knowledge of other minds, covered in the second half of the course, connects up with some issues in developmental psychology and in cognitive neuroscience.

## **Subject specific skills**

Distinguishing distinctively epistemological concerns from (e.g.) psychological and metaphysical concerns.

Understanding key concepts, problems, positions, and arguments in philosophical epistemology.

Stating, constructing, and reconstructing epistemological arguments and positions.

Critically engaging with epistemological arguments and positions.

Engaging charitably with philosophical material, from lectures, peers, and the academic literature.

Jointly discussing, debating, understanding, and critiquing epistemological positions and issues in conversation with peers.

Developing a confident yet critical attitude to one's own philosophical thinking, and using this in developing one's own philosophical ideas and understanding.

Structuring a philosophical essay around a single, clear, and compelling line of argument.

## **Transferable skills**

Pinpointing crucial distinctions and presuppositions which make a difference to the cogency of an

argument or point of view.

Identifying the main points in a piece of argumentative writing or speech, understanding how these are intended to relate to one another, and what they are aimed at achieving. Careful listening and/or reading, and note-taking in order to achieve this.

Explaining others' arguments and points of view, including when these are complex and/or challenging.

Critically assessing others' points of view, carefully, open-mindedly, and respectfully.

Assessing the cogency of one's own thinking, and developing one's clarity of thought.

Organisational, presentational, and time-management skills.

Research skills: sourcing materials, note-taking, writing essay plans etc.

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## **Study**

### **Study time**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Required</b>
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	8 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Private study	124 hours (83%)
Total	150 hours

### **Private study description**

Private study includes reading the weekly reading material, taking notes to further understanding, answering weekly test questions (to be submitted as two sets in weeks 6 and 11), and researching and writing the 2,500 word assessed essay.

### **Costs**

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## **Assessment**

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### **Assessment group A2**

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>
Set of exercises (weeks 1-5)	10%	
One exercise corresponding to the material of each week the first half of term. Students are expected to complete these questions as we move through the first half of term, but the answers will be submitted as a set in week 6.		
Set of exercises (weeks 7-10)	10%	
One exercise corresponding to the material of each week the second half of term. Students are expected to complete these questions as we move through the second half of term, but the answers will be submitted as a set in week 11.		
2,500 word essay	80%	
An essay on a topic from a list of questions, covering the material from the whole module.		

## Feedback on assessment

Marks will be given for each of the two exercise sets, alongside model answers (written by the lecturer) for students to compare theirs to, in order to help them understand their mark. Students will be able (and encouraged) to make use of lecturer's office hours for more detailed in-person discussion of their exercise marks.

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## Availability

### Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 3 of UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 4 of UPHA-VL79 BA in Philosophy with Psychology (with Intercalated year)

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations
- UPHA-V700 Undergraduate Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 3 of V700 Philosophy
  - Year 3 of V700 Philosophy
- Year 4 of UPHA-V701 Undergraduate Philosophy (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of UPHA-V702 Undergraduate Philosophy (with Work Placement)
- UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 2 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 3 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)

This module is Core option list A for:

- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
- UMAA-GV18 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 4 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 4 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
- Year 3 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations

This module is Core option list B for:

- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
- Year 2 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations

This module is Core option list C for:

- Year 4 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations

This module is Core option list F for:

- UMAA-GV18 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 4 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 4 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year

This module is Option list A for:

- UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
  - Year 2 of VL78 Philosophy with Psychology
  - Year 3 of VL78 Philosophy with Psychology
- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
- UMAA-GV18 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 4 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 4 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year

- UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations
  - Year 3 of GV19 Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations
  - Year 4 of GV19 Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of GV17 Mathematics and Philosophy
- UMAA-GV18 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 2 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
  - Year 2 of GV18 Mathematics and Philosophy with Intercalated Year
- Year 2 of UMAA-GV19 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy with Specialism in Logic and Foundations
- UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 2 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
  - Year 3 of VQ72 Philosophy and Literature
- Year 4 of UPHA-VQ73 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature with Intercalated Year

This module is Option list D for:

- UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V1V5 History and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of V1V5 History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V8 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)
- UHIA-V1V7 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)
  - Year 2 of V1V7 History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)
  - Year 3 of V1V7 History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)

This module is Option list E for:

- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law