

Knowledge and Its Limits-Spring 2023

Instructor: Juan S. Piñeros Glasscock

Classroom: Aderhold 403

Class time: M W 2-3:15pm

Email: jpinerosglasscock@gsu.edu

Office: 25 Park Pl, 16th floor, Rm. 1624

Office Hours: Th 3:30-6pm (online)

CRNs: PHIL 4150 (21168)

PHIL4150H (21169)

PHIL6150 (21170)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Should psychologists appeal to *knowledge* in their explanations (or should they instead appeal to beliefs)? Should you *know* what you say (or is it enough if it is true)? And is skill a standard form of knowledge (or something else more basic)? The course shall explore these questions from the lens of the ‘knowledge-first’ program in epistemology, the idea that knowledge plays a fundamental explanatory role in human psychology. As such, the course aims to provide an introduction to epistemology, while simultaneously delivering a deeper exploration into one of its most important contemporary developments.

OBJECTIVES

The course aims to serve both as an advanced introduction to epistemology through the lens of the ‘knowledge-first’ program in epistemology. Undergraduate students will have the opportunity to develop reading, writing, and critical skills to produce advanced philosophical work; graduate students will have the opportunity to develop original research in an exciting contemporary topic.

PREREQUISITES & RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

Undergraduate students must have passed at least a 3000-level course; but it is strongly recommended that they have taken at least one other philosophy course. Basic knowledge of argument analysis tools will be presupposed. If you have only taken a single 3000-level philosophy course, you should consult with me to set clear expectations.

For students with little or no background in epistemology, I recommend the following two texts for background:

- Jennifer Nagel, *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP)
- SEP ‘Epistemology’ entry: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/>

TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIALS

Every student must purchase Timothy Williamson’s *Knowledge and Its Limits* (Oxford University Press). It is available through the library. All other [readings](#) will be available online through iCollege.

GRADING SCHEME AND ASSIGNMENTS

4150	%	4150H	%	6150	%
Participation and attendance.	10	Participation and attendance	10	Participation and attendance	10
Perusall Reading	10	Perusall Reading	10	Presentation.	10
Tests x2. Feb 15+Apr 12	40 (20x2)	Tests x2. Feb 15+Apr 12	30 (15x2)	Extended Abstract Mar 31	15
Revisions Document Apr 27	10	Revisions Document Apr 27	10	In-class research hour & abstract feedback Feb 15+Apr 12	15 (5+10)
Revised Essay Apr 27	30	Revised Essay Apr 27	30	Revisions Document Apr 27	10
		Presentation.	10	Final Paper. Apr 27	40

Lateness penalty on written assignments: 3% deduction per 24 hours of lateness. If you anticipate needing an extension, get in touch with me as early as possible. (Consult the [Absences Policy](#) for make-ups of in-class assignments. Tests require a documented excuse of an emergency).

Short descriptions of assignments (more detailed instructions will be provided at appropriate times in the semester):

- a. **Participation and attendance:** As a branch of the humanities, the value of philosophy depends partly on its mode of acquisition—in the conversations and arguments that we have with each other. As such, students are expected to attend every class and to participate actively, speaking, listening, and participating in class assignments. Unexcused absences can significantly impact your grade in this category, as summarized in this table:

# of unexcused absences	0-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9+
grade range	A to A+	B to A-	C- to B-	F to D	0

*Criteria for what constitutes an excused absence are provided in the [Absences Policy](#).

- *Laptop use is permitted; but you can lose this privilege if you use it in ways that distract me or your peers during class (e.g. watching a video, playing a game, or using social media). Cellphones, earbuds, and all other electronics must be stowed away. Failure to abide by this policy will impact your participation grade.*



- b. **Perusall Reading:** We shall use Perusall, an online annotation tool for some of our readings. Reading assignments can be found on iCollege under Content/Perusall. The program helps me keep track how well you're reading (e.g. how much attention you pay to different sections, and what comments you write). On this basis, you will be assigned a grade for each reading. It is easy to receive full credit: (i) read the whole piece assigned for the day carefully, using your cursor to track where your attention is, and (ii) make 2-3 good comment per reading.

To earn full credit, you must do the reading and make all annotations **by 9pm the night before** (so that I have time to look over your comments).

If you prefer reading on paper, you can take pictures of your notes and send them via email by 9pm. Because I cannot track your time-spent reading, you will need to annotate a lot more heavily than other students.

- c. **Tests:** These will consist of a few short questions, testing your understanding of the material, and an essay question. Your response to the essay question for one of your tests will become the basis for your Final Essay. *These will be administered in class.*
- d. **Revised Essay:** You will choose one of your two essays submitted for the in-class Tests, and revise it into a polished piece of writing (~2K words).
- e. **Revisions Document (4000-level version):** An explanation of the changes you have made to your essay, outlining both which issues you found as you thought about the question further, as well as how you attempted to address the feedback you received from me.
- f. **Presentation (Honors):** 15-minute presentation on one of the [readings](#) assigned for class.

Grad-only (6000-level) assignments:

- g. **Extended Abstract:** 750K words document, offering a short synopsis of your final essay project, of the sort requested at many professional conferences. The abstract should clearly identify your thesis and your central argument(s) for it.
- h. **In-class research hour and abstract feedback:** While the undergraduate students write their Tests, grad students will do two research assignments connected to their final paper project: (1) A planned research hour; and (2) Give anonymous feedback on a peer's abstract.
- i. **Final Papers:** 3K words research paper on a topic studied in the course. The aim is for it to serve as the basis for a professional conference submission (such as an APA meeting) or/and a thesis project.

Since I shall give substantive feedback on the Abstract, I do not give comments on drafts. However, I am happy to discuss ideas with you during office hours as you develop your paper.

Accommodations: *I am committed to ensuring that the course is accessible to all students. I would be happy to revise assignments and provide accommodations for students with a registered disability, in line with GSU's policies. Please contact me as soon as possible if you require accommodations so that we can work together on a plan that will enable you to have equitable opportunity to succeed in the course*

Grading schedule: I'll aim to grade assignments within 7-10 business days.

Grading Scale

A+4.3	98 - 100	C+2.3	77 - 79
A 4.0	93 - 97	C 2.0	73 - 76
A- 3.7	90 - 92	C- 1.7	70 - 72
B+3.3	87 - 89	D 1.0	60 - 69
B 3.0	83 - 86	F 0.0	0 - 59
B- 2.7	80 - 82		

EMAIL POLICY AND OFFICE HOURS

Email is restricted to non-philosophical questions that can be answered in a few sentences. To discuss philosophical questions, please arrange to meet with me during office hours, either online or in-person (if my standard hours don't work for you, shoot me an email to set up a separate appointment).

Office hours must be booked at least 24 hours in advance through the Webex tab on iCollege. But this is just for scheduling purposes. ~~The default is in-person, and you must tell me if you prefer to meet online.~~ Office hours will be online for the time being, but I will continue to be available 15 mins after class for general questions/follow-ups to the seminar.

Don't use the iCollege messaging system to contact me. I don't get alerts about it, and I only check it sporadically.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Introduction: Gettier and the Definition of Knowledge		
Jan 9	<i>Background</i>	<i>Recommended:</i> (i) Edmund Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”. (ii) Linda Zagzebski, “The Inescapability of Gettier Problems”.
Jan 11	<i>Introduction</i>	Williamson, <i>Knowledge and its Limits</i> [KaiL], “Introduction”.
Jan 16 MLK Day (No class)		
Assertion as First Test Case		
Jan 18	<i>Emergency skip...</i>	<i>Emergency skip...</i>
Jan 23	<i>W. on the knowledge norm</i>	KaiL, Ch.11.
Jan 25	<i>Is knowledge sufficient for assertion?</i>	Jessica Brown, “Knowledge and Assertion”.
Jan 30	<i>Continued...</i>	Brown continued...
Knowledge and the World		
Feb 1	<i>Is knowledge necessary for assertion?</i>	Jennifer Lackey, “Norms of Assertion”.
Feb 6	<i>Knowledge as a mental state</i>	KaiL Ch.1.
Feb 8	<i>W.s defense of externalism</i>	Kail Ch.2.
Feb 13	<i>The normative import of externalism</i>	Amia Srinivasan, “Radical Externalism”.
Feb 15	Test / Research Session	
Knowledge and the Mind		
Feb 20	<i>The normative import of externalism (cont'd)</i>	<i>Amia Srinivasan, “Radical Externalism”. (cont'd)</i>

Feb 22	<i>Williamson on the primacy of factivity</i>	KaiL Ch.3
Feb 27	<i>Knowledge and mind-reading</i>	Jennifer Nagel, “Factive and non-factive mental-state attributions”
Mar 1	<i>Knowledge vs. belief in psychological explanations</i>	Phillips et al. “Knowledge before belief” + <u>at least one reply</u> to the article.
Luminosity and KK		
Mar 6	<i>W.’s anti-luminosity argument</i>	KaiL Ch.4
Mar 8	<i>Defending Luminosity</i>	Brian Weatherson, “Luminous Margins”.
Mar 13-19	March Break	
Mar 20	<i>Application to knowledge</i>	KaiL Ch.5.
Mar 22	<i>Defending KK</i>	Daniel Greco, “Could KK be OK?”
Action and Skill		
Mar 27	<i>Williamson on epistemic-practical parallels</i>	Williamson, “Acting on Knowledge”.
Mar 29	<i>Does action entail knowledge?</i>	Piñeros Glasscock, “Practical Knowledge and Luminosity”. Extended abstract (6000-level) due Mar 31.
Apr 3	<i>Action entails knowledge</i>	Beddor and Pavese, “Practical Knowledge without Luminosity”.
Apr 5	<i>Is know-how propositional?</i>	Ryle, “Knowing How and Knowing That”
Apr 10	<i>Intellectualism about action</i>	Stanley and Williamson, “Knowing How”
Apr 12	Test / Research Session	
Apr 17	<i>The K-1 program: past and future</i>	Williamson, “Where did it come from? Where will it go?”.
Apr 19	<i>Tim Williamson e-visit!</i>	Tim Williamson e-visit! (instead of reading, send a critical question)
Apr 24	<i>The end</i>	Final essay and Revisions Doc due Apr 27 (all levels).

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY: GENERAL SYLLABUS STATEMENT: SPRING 2023

Diversity and Inclusion: GSU is home to a highly diverse student body. In our classrooms this diversity is a source of strength and a resource for teaching and learning. The Department of Philosophy welcomes voices and viewpoints that have been historically marginalized or underrepresented within the discipline. Faculty and students in Philosophy courses commit to creating an intellectual environment that is inclusive of students' experiences, beliefs, and perspectives, regardless of their race, religion, language, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identification, ability status, socioeconomic status, national identity, or any other identity markers.

Respect & Civility: All students in this course should be treated with respect and dignity and provided an equitable opportunity to participate, contribute, and succeed. Disagreement is part of philosophical discussion. But students should avoid language that is demeaning or stigmatizing, particularly when addressing other members of the class and responding to their views. Students who wish to use a name or pronoun other than what is available on the class roll or iCollege may introduce themselves to the class using it or inform the instructor via email. Students should use the names and pronouns preferred by students and faculty.

- **This syllabus provides a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary.**
- The last day to **withdraw** from a course with the possibility of receiving a “W” for **Spring 2023** is **Feb 28th**. A student may be awarded a **W** no more than 6 times in their careers at Georgia State. After 6 Ws, a withdrawal is recorded as a WF, which counts as an F in a GPA.
- **The customary penalty for any violation of academic honesty is an "F" in the course, which cannot be replaced by repeating the course or with a withdrawal.** See selections from the University Policy on Academic Honesty below. **Copying or using any material from the internet in any way without proper citation is a violation of the policy.**
- Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the [Access and Accommodation Center \(AACE\)](#). Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by AACE of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodations are sought.
- Students are responsible for confirming that they are attending the course section for which they are registered. Failure to do so may result in an F for the course.
- By University policy and to respect the confidentiality of all students, **final grades** may not be posted, emailed, or given out over the phone. To see your grades, use PAWS.
- Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State University. Upon completing the course, please take the time to fill out the online course evaluation.

Please subscribe to one of our department listservs for current information and events:

<https://philosophy.gsu.edu/listserve-form/>

For more information on the philosophy program and the value of philosophy courses visit:

<http://philosophy.gsu.edu>

For more information on GSU Code of Conduct visit:

<https://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/>

For more information on student accommodations visit the AACE website:

<https://access.gsu.edu/>

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY, FROM THE GSU CATALOG

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The university assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for fairness require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.

The university's policy on academic honesty is published in the Faculty Handbook and On Campus: The Student Handbook and is available to all members of the university community. The policy represents a core value of the university, and all members of the university community are responsible for abiding by its tenets. Lack of knowledge of this policy is not an acceptable defense to any charge of academic dishonesty. All members of the academic community—students, faculty, and staff—are expected to report violations of these standards of academic conduct to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are on file in the offices of the deans of each college, the office of the dean of students, and the office of the provost.

Definitions and Examples

The examples and definitions given below are intended to clarify the standards by which academic honesty and academically honorable conduct are to be judged. The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions and examples suggest conditions under which unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs; however, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions that also will be judged unacceptable by the academic community.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any para-phrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or in part, taken from the Internet or other computer-based resource without properly referencing the source (for example, the URL) is considered plagiarism. A complete reference is required in order that all parties may locate and view the original source. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

Multiple Submissions: It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

Cheating on Examinations: Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, computer-based resources, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the faculty member.

Unauthorized Collaboration: Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as its being one's own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with another person or source or with a computer-based resource is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty knowingly to provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

Falsification: It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources, falsification of the results of experiments or computer data, false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage).

ABSENCES POLICY

What to do if I miss a class?

A/ In every case, you should (a) do the reading, (b) review handout once I post it, and (c) find someone in the class to share your notes with you. If you have questions after you have done this, you can schedule office hours through iCollege to discuss with me anything you don't understand.

What else should I do?

A/That depends. There are three types of absences.

(1) No good excuse: *based on choices that you could arrange your life around.*

Examples: *you slept in, you missed your bus, your car ran out of gas, you have a big assignment for this or another course that you want to prioritize.*

There's nothing to do here. You simply don't get participation/attendance marks for that class. That's OK, so long as you only have 1-2 of these. **No need to email me if you have no good excuse.** *Remember:* you can still get an A+ for attendance participation with 1-2 unexcused absences.

(2) Illness/Medical reasons: First, **notify me by email.** If it is your first illness excuse, I will take your word for it; for further excuses you will need to provide a doctor's note. This will excuse your attendance. If you also want participation credit, you must make a post in the discussion board on iCollege (Assessments/Discussions) summarizing an argument from the reading assigned for that class, and posting a quick comment on it (e.g. an objection, or a connection with another reading, or a question the argument raises). It must be posted the same week that you missed.

If you test positive for Covid19, the flu, or some other transmissible illness, follow CDC quarantine guidelines (right now, quarantine for at least 5 days/until you test negative for covid19).

(3) Pregnancy: Pregnancy is governed under Title IX. If you're pregnant, your first step is to register with the Access and Accommodations Center (AACE). They will provide me with a notification of your pregnancy and you will then be able to miss class without any further documentation. If you're pregnant, please get in touch with me as soon as possible so that we can work together to make sure you have every opportunity to succeed at this course.

(4) Other good excuses: these are unforeseeable events that prevent you from coming to class.

Examples: *a close relative died, your car got stolen, your flight got cancelled.*

First, you should **notify me by email** asap. I generally ask for documentation, e.g. a copy of the flight reservation showing the cancellation of your flight. Once I have this, I will give you credit for attendance. If you also want participation credit, you must make a post in the discussion board on iCollege (Assessments/Discussions) summarizing an argument from the reading assigned for that class, and posting a quick comment on it (e.g. an objection, or a connection with another reading, or a question the argument raises). It must be posted the same week that you missed.

FURTHER PARTICULARS

- Receiving a grade of “**incomplete**” – in order to receive an incomplete, a student must inform the instructor, either in person or in writing, of his/her inability (non-academic reasons) to complete the requirements of the course. Incompletes will be assigned at the instructor’s discretion (if you have specific criteria for assigning incompletes, put them here) and the terms for removal of the “I” are dictated by the instructor. A grade of incomplete will only be considered for students who are a) passing the course with a C or better, b) present a legitimate, non-academic reason to the instructor, and c) have only one major assignment left to finish.
- In keeping with USG and university policy, the course website will make every effort to maintain the privacy and accuracy of your personal information. Specifically, unless otherwise noted, it will not actively share personal information gathered from the site with anyone except university employees whose responsibilities require access to said records. However, some information collected from the site may be subject to the Georgia Open Records Act. This means that while we do not actively share information, in some cases we may be compelled by law to release information gathered from the site. Also, the site will be managed in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which prohibits the release of education records without student permission. For more details on FERPA, go [here](#).
- **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:** The selling, sharing, publishing, presenting, or distributing of instructor-prepared course lecture notes, videos, audio recordings, or any other instructor-produced materials from any course for any commercial purpose is strictly prohibited unless explicit written permission is granted in advance by the course instructor. This includes posting any materials on websites such as Chegg, Course Hero, OneClass, Stuvia, StuDocu, and other similar sites. Unauthorized sale or commercial distribution of such material is a violation of the instructor’s intellectual property and the privacy rights of students attending the class and is prohibited.

---Last updated Feb 16, 2023---