

# Epistemology and Partiality (PHIL8100)-Fall 2022

**Instructor:** Juan S. Piñeros Glasscock

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**Classroom:** Seminar Room (25 Park Place,  
Room 1618)

**Office:** 1624

**Class time:** Th 4:30-7pm

**Office Hours:** T 2-3:30pm; Th 1:30-3pm

**CRN:** 21346

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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According to a traditional view, you should assess evidence and form beliefs from an impartial perspective that ignores ties to self and others. This course focuses on the challenge to this view raised by ‘epistemic partiality’, the idea that beliefs about friends and loved ones are subject to distinct norms, because friends and loved ones must regard each other ‘in best possible light’. We shall critically assess different attempts to make sense of this idea, beginning with Iris Murdoch. Other topics may include the influence of attention and emotion on beliefs, epistemic norms and responsibilities, and pragmatic and moral encroachment.

## OBJECTIVES

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The course aims to introduce students to an important subject in contemporary epistemology, in a way that may enable them to make contributions to the ongoing debate.

The assignments aim to provide practice at general scholarly and critical skills that may serve them in future endeavors, both at GSU and beyond.

## RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

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No previous knowledge of the specific material is required, but a general background in philosophy will be assumed. Students without such background should consult with the instructor if they wish to enroll in the course.

For students with little background in epistemology, I recommend:

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

## TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIALS

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All readings will be available online through iCollege.

## GRADING SCHEME AND ASSIGNMENTS

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Assignment	Final grade %
a. Participation and attendance	10%
b. In-class presentation (15 mins)	15%
<i>Final Essay-Related Assignments</i>	
c. Two critical summaries <b>due by Mar 11<sup>th</sup></b>	10%
d. Extended abstract (1K limit) <b>due Mar 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	15%
e. Comments on peer's abstract <b>due Mar 29<sup>th</sup></b>	10%
f. Final Paper <b>Apr 26<sup>th</sup> (Draft Apr 12<sup>th</sup>)</b>	40%

*Lateness penalty on written assignments:* 3% deduction per 24 hours of lateness. If you anticipate needing an extension, please get in touch with me as early as possible. Note that assignments (d) and (e)

The assignments are designed to foster the course objectives as follows (more detailed instructions on each assignment will be provided at appropriate times in the semester):

- Participation and attendance:** Regular participation in class discussions is crucial to engaging fully with the material. As such, students are expected to attend every class. However, I want students to take every precaution when it comes to Covid 19. Even if you have slight symptoms, please refrain from coming to class.
- Presentations:** Each student will present on a paper assigned for the class. The format will be similar to the comments-format in a professional conference and requires a handout.
- Extended abstract:** 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. *Must be on time to take advantage of peer's comments.*
- Summaries:** Short (max 500 words) summary of a non-assigned paper that either cites or is cited by one of the papers assigned. Graded as pass/fail, but I will provide feedback on style. These summaries will be posted on a shared doc, as a communal resource for the class.
- Discussion and comments on a peer's abstract:** You will write comments on a peer's abstract (in the form of a referee report) and then meet with them to discuss these comments. *No late assignments accepted.*

- f. **Final Papers:** 3K words research paper on a topic studied in the course. The aim is for this paper to serve as the basis for a professional conference submission (such as an APA meeting) or/and a thesis project.

Students will have the **option** to receive comments either on a **full draft** or the final submission. To receive comments on a draft, the draft must be submitted by April 12<sup>th</sup>.

*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.*

## EMAIL POLICY AND OFFICE HOURS

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Email is restricted for 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 office hours don't work for you, shoot me an email to set up a separate appointment).

## SCHEDULE AND READINGS

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Introduction through Murdoch		
Jan 13	<i>Murdoch's Loving Gaze</i>	Iris Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection"  (Pay particular attention to the idea of loving attention as illustrated by the case of M. and D.)
The Debate over Epistemic Partiality and Its Background		
Jan 20	<i>Early Forerunners</i>	i. G.E.M. Anscombe, "What is it to believe someone?" ii. Judith Baker, "Trust and Rationality"
Jan 27	<i>Evidentialism</i>	i. Richard Feldman, "The Ethics of Belief" ii. Shah and Velleman, "Doxastic Deliberation"
Feb 3	<i>Epistemic Partiality</i>	i. Sarah Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality in Friendship" ii. Simon Keller, "Friendship and Belief"
Critics of Epistemic Partiality		
Feb 10	<i>Critics of Partiality 1</i>	i. Fantl and McGrath, "Evidence, Pragmatics, and Justification" ii. Jason Kawall, "Friendship and Epistemic Norms"
Feb 17	<i>Critics of Partiality 2</i>	i. Pamela Hieronymi, "The Wrong Kind of Reason" ii. Lindsay Crawford, "Believing the Best"

Feb 24	<i>Critics of Partiality 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Sanford Goldberg, “Against Epistemic Partiality in Friendship”</li> <li>ii. Arpaly and Brinkerhoff, “Why Epistemic Partiality is Overrated”</li> </ul>
<b>Related Topics in the Contemporary Debate</b>		
Mar 3	<i>Permissivism and Grit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Roger White, “Epistemic Permissiveness”</li> <li>ii. Paul and Morton, “Believing in Others”</li> </ul>
Mar 10	<i>Faith and hope</i> <b>Catherine Rioux visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Ryan Preston-Roedder, “Faith in Humanity”</li> <li>ii. Catherine Rioux, TBD</li> </ul> <p><i>Final deadline for summaries: Mar 11<sup>th</sup></i></p>
Mar 17	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
Mar 24	<i>Perception and Bias</i> <b>Jessie Munton visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Tamar Gendler, “On the Epistemic Costs of Implicit Bias”</li> <li>ii. Jessie Munton, “Prejudice as a Misattribution of Salience” / WIP</li> </ul> <p><i>Abstracts due Mar 22<sup>nd</sup></i></p>
Mar 31 <b>(Online)</b>	<i>Murdochean variations</i> <b>Cathy Mason visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Troy Jollimore, <i>Love’s Vision</i> (ch.3)</li> <li>ii. Cathy Mason, “The Epistemic Demands of Friendship” /WIP</li> </ul> <p><i>Peer comments due Mar 29<sup>th</sup></i></p>
Apr 7	<i>Moral Encroachment</i> <b>Georgi Gardiner visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Rima Basu, “Radical Moral Encroachment”</li> <li>ii. Georgi Gardiner, “Rape, Alcoholism, and Selling Sex: Against the New Ethics of Belief” (unpublished-please do not circulate)</li> </ul>
Apr 14	<i>Self-trust</i> <b>John Schwenkler visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Berislav Marušić, “Belief and Difficult Action”</li> <li>ii. John Schwenkler, TBD</li> </ul> <p><i>Draft due Apr 12<sup>th</sup> (optional)</i></p>
Apr 21	<i>Presentations by Neil and Juan</i>	<p>Neil van Leeuwen, “Identity and Groupish Belief” (unpublished-please do not circulate)</p> <p>Juan, “The Truthful Experience of a Friend” (draft will be circulated ahead of class)</p> <p><i>Final paper due Apr 26<sup>th</sup></i></p>

## **Department of Philosophy: General Syllabus Statement: Spring 2021**

**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 2022 is **March 1**. 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.

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**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

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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).

## FURTHER PARTICULARS

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- I am **vaccinated and boosted** against covid 19. I **strongly encourage** all students to do the same and follow CDC guidelines throughout the semester. Vaccines are **free and available** on the Atlanta Campus. Please visit: <https://covidinfo.gsu.edu/covid-19-resources/covid-19-vaccine/> to register for a vaccine if you have not already done so.
- *Absences due to emergency:* If you must be absent due to an emergency (e.g. due to illness), please write to me with at least 3 hours in advance, and I will record our meeting. Students who miss more than one class will be asked to write critical summaries of each of the pieces discussed in class during their absence.
- 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, this 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 4, 2022---