EPISTEMOLOGY

Academic Program:
Master of Arts in Philosophy
Master of Arts in Philosophy (2 years)

Level:
Master’s

Type:
Core

Semester:
Winter

Instructor:
Nenad Miscevic

Credits:
2.0

Additional Information:
Mandatory for 2 years MA in 1st year

Description:
The course introduces the main topics and issues in contemporary epistemology. First, the value of knowledge. Next, the nature and definition(s) of knowledge, in particular the relation of knowledge and epistemic justification. Next, we address the classical topic of kinds of justification: a priori vs. a posteriori knowledge. In this context we look at imagination and intuition as possible sources of knowledge.

Course goal:
The primary goal of the course is to help students to understand the main issues in contemporary epistemology, reflect upon them, and, hopefully, come up with their own preferences and arguments for them.

Learning outcomes:
By the end of the course students will be expected to understand the main issues in epistemology. They will probably choose the views they think to be most plausible, and will be able to defend their choices.

Teaching style
The course will combine some lecturing at the beginning, with more seminar work as it proceeds, involving students in active participation.
Week 1  General introduction.
Introducing the domain of epistemology: motivation for knowledge true belief, knowledge, skepticism, understanding.

Obligatory reading:
  D. Pritchard: What is this thing called knowledge? Ch. 1
Additional reading:
  Selections from D. Pritchard: Epistemic Angst

Week 2  Desire for knowledge – the motivating virtue

Passing directly to the motivational issue and introducing the desire for knowledge, as the central motivating epistemic force; discussing also the dissenting view of E. Sosa.

Obligatory reading:
  Miscevic: Curiosity - The Basic Epistemic Virtue
  Sosa: For the love of knowledge?
Additional reading:
  Roberts & Wood: Love of knowledge, from his *Intellectual virtues*

Week 3  Desire for knowledge and the value of knowledge

Analysing the link between motivation and value: which comes first? Comparing knowledge and true belief as candidates for the main target of epistemic motivation.

Obligatory readings:
  Pritchard: What is this thing called knowledge, Chs 2. And 6
  J L. Kvanvig: Curiosity and the Response-Dependent Special Value of Understanding
  Miscevic: The origin of epistemic value

Week 4  What is knowledge?

We start from internalism, as historically the first proposal about defining knowledge. Two classical internalist approaches, foundationalism and coherentism shall be discussed.

Obligatory readings:
  Brett Coppenger: Traditional Internalism-An Introduction
  Selections from R. Chisholm: Theory of knowledge

Week 5  Justification and the Gettier problem

We point to a fundamental problem of internalism, following the challenge of Gettier.

Obligatory readings:
  E. Gettier: Is justified true belief knowledge?
  D. Pritchard: What is this thing called knowledge? Ch. 3

Additional reading:
  Selections from Phil. Studies volume on Gettier problem
Week 6. Reliabilism – externalism
The externalist option is being presented and discussed.

Obligatory readings:

A. Goldman: What is justified belief
D. Pritchard: What is this thing called knowledge? Ch. 4
Additional reading: Alvin Goldman: Internalism Exposed

Week 7. Virtue epistemology
The mixed strategy is presented: knowledge comes from virtue. We concentrate on epistemic virtues, taking Sosa as our exemplary thinker.

Obligatory readings:

Sosa Epistemic Competence and Judgment
Sosa: Knowledge, Reflection, and Action

Additional reading:

Jesper Kallestrup & Duncan Pritchard: Dispositional Robust Virtue Epistemology Versus Anti-Luck Virtue Epistemology
selections from E. Sosa: Knowing full well

Week 8. A priori/a posteriori: the classical contrast
There are classically two ways for a piece of knowledge to be justified; a priori and a posteriori. They are introduced and briefly discussed.

Obligatory readings:

Albert Casullo A Priori Knowledge
C. S. I. Jenkins Intuition, 'Intuition', Concepts and the A Priori,

Additional reading:

Miscevic: Reflective aposteriority

Week 9. Application: thought experiments
The contrast re-appears in the discussion of philosophical thought experiments; we consider it in its historical context.

Obligatory readings:

Katerina Ierodiakonou & Sophie Roux: Thought Experiments in Methodological and Historical Contexts

Week 10 Epistemology of imagination
Obligatory readings:

Amy Kind and Peter Kung: The Puzzle of Imaginative Use,
Timothy Williamson: Knowing by Imagining,

Additional reading:

Amy Kind: Imagining Under Constraints

**Week 11  Imagination and intuition**
The traditional moral epistemology has recently come under attack from defenders of experimental philosophy.

- Obligatory readings:
  - Selections from Chudnow: Intuition

**Week 12  Conclusion**
Can the area of epistemology be unified, to what extent, and in which way?

- Obligatory reading:
  - Nenad Miscevic: Epistemology – the unified picture

**Assessment:**
- Discussion in the class – roughly 10 %
- Presentation in the class – roughly 30 %
- Final paper – roughly 60 %