PHIL 180: Theory of Knowledge
Section 01: M 5:30-8:20 pm, DH-208

Instructor:	Prof. Thomas F. Pyne
Office Hours:	MW 1:00-2:00, and by appointment
	In addition, I will conduct "virtual" office hours in the
	SacCT 'Discussions' room on /Thursdays 9:00-10:15 am.
Office Location:	Mendocino 3000
Phone:	(Office) 278-7288
	(Philosophy Department) 278-6424
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Required Texts:	Louis P. Pojman. The Theory of Knowledge: Classical and Contemporary Readings. Third Edition. Wadsworth (2003).

Course Description

"Examines the concept of knowledge. Representative topics include: the role of sense perception and memory, the importance of certainty, the justification of belief, philosophical skepticism, the concept of truth, and the nature of philosophical inquiry. Emphasis is on contemporary formulations."
Prerequisite: 6 units in philosophy or instructor permission. 3 units.

Course Objectives

The course is a systematic introduction to Epistemology via certain selected, but fundamental, epistemological issues. Those issues include:
– the status and force of skepticism
– the existence and nature of *a priori* knowledge

- – the content of perceptual states
- – the proper analysis of knowledge in light of the Gettier counterexamples
- – disputes regarding justification
- – foundationalism vs coherentism
- – whether knowledge is a mental state or a relation to the environment
- – "naturalized" epistemology: is the enterprise of normative epistemology at an end?
- – the ethics of belief: the existence of epistemic duties
- – the scope and nature of rationality

The course will present the current state of these issues against their historical background and assist the student in developing reasoned views on them.

Students will demonstrate their achievement of the course objectives through:
- Reading comprehension quizzes on each reading assignment;
- Exams which test for a deeper understanding of the philosophical questions, as well as of the arguments for or against particular answers; students will show their understanding via essay answers;
- Participation in in-class and/or online discussion;
- Composition of argumentative papers on particular epistemological questions.

Access the Course

The course will be 'web-assisted.' That is, it will use the SacCT course management system.   Students may use their Saclink account to log into the course from the SacCT Login page (https://online.csus.edu).

If you do not have a Saclink account yet, refer to the Setting Up a Saclink Account webpage (http://www.csus.edu/saclink/settingUp.stm).

To get started using SacCT visit the Student Resources webpage (http://www.csus.edu/WebCT/student/). There you will find Online Tutorials, Frequently Asked Questions, and other help resources. You can also ask me for help.

Course Delivery

While PHIL 180 will be in most ways a standard lecture/discussion class, it will be 'web-assisted.' That is, we will be using some features of the SacCT course management system.

In particular you will take quizzes and exams, participate in discussions, and submit papers through SacCT. In addition, you may communicate with me, as well as with other students in the class, through the SacCT 'Mail' facility. The class lecture notes will be archived in the relevant folder within 'Course Content'

Communications

The course will use the communication tools built into SacCT:
- Announcements: It's a good idea to check for announcements from time to time
- Mail: You may send me a message using the 'Mail' function in SacCT. I will respond promptly.
- Discussions: You will be expected to participate in discussions, whether in class or through the 'Discussions' function in SacCT.
- Calendar: Exams and due dates for papers will all appear in the Calendar.

Technical Requirements

To access a course on SacCT you will need access to the Internet and an internet browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari). To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please run the Check Browser from your SacCT course. Refer to the SacCT Browser Tune-up page for instructions.

For help or to report a problem with SacCT you can:
- Visit the Student SacCT FAQ's webpage
- Submit a SacCT Problem Form
- Contact the University Help Desk at (916) 278-7337

Work for Course

1. Quizzes on Reading Assignments (15%)
   You will be responsible for the readings assigned for a particular class day. While you will be responsible for the whole reading, I may indicate in the Schedule below that you should pay particular attention of some part of the reading. As a result, it may happen that other parts will not be treated in class. You will be responsible for them anyway. The quiz for the reading assignment must be taken by the beginning of the Monday or Wednesday class period for which it is assigned. That will be true even for those watching it via cable on Tuesday mornings.

2. Midterm Exam (20%) The midterm will be a combination of multiple-choice, fill-in, true/false questions, plus some essay questions. The questions will be on the readings, lectures, and discussions.

3. Final Exam (20%) Same as the midterm. The final will cover all the readings, lectures, and discussions since the midterm.

4. First Paper (4-5 pages) (20%)
   See '**Paper Topics'** below.

5. Second Paper (7-10 pages) (20%)

6. Discussion Contributions (5%)
    You will be expected to make regular contributions to discussion, either in the class period itself or in the online 'Discussion' conducted in SacCT.

Assignment Submission Instructions

Papers: Papers will be submitted in SacCT.
In writing the paper, follow the instructions for argumentative papers found in the "Guidelines for Writing Philosophy Papers" at the Philosophy Department website:
http://www.csus.edu/phil/WritingGuidelines&GradingStandardsforPapers.htm

To submit a paper in SacCT:
- Enter SacCT at https://online.csus.edu;
- Open the main page for PHIL 180;
- Open 'Assignments' (under 'Course Tools' on the left margin);
- Open the correct assignment; you will see the text of the assignment itself as well as the due date and time;
- You will see a space for the paper – don't use that;
- Instead, click on the 'Attachment' button;
- Attach your paper as an *editable* file that will open in Microsoft Word (*not* a .pdf or .htm file); if you're unsure, attach it as a 'text' (.txt) or 'rich text' (.rtf); those options are available in all word-processing programs;
- Late papers will be lowered a grade increment for every day past the due date. I leave the window open for submitting papers for five days past the date.

Discussions

Philosophy involves discussion and argument. It's the best way to explore philosophical questions, the best way to learn how to philosophize. So I will expect you to participate in the discussions. You will either receive full credit for participation (5%) or no credit, depending on how seriously you take your responsibility to make contributions. If I notice that you are not participating, I will let you know that I expect more.

To participate in an online discussion:
- Enter SacCT;
- Open 'Discussions' (under 'Course Tools' on the left margin');
- Click on one of the topics; you will be able to read the other contributions;
- You can contribute to the discussion by clicking 'Create Message'.

Online Quizzes/Exams

Reading Quizzes: There will be a reading quiz for every class. A reading quiz will consist of ten or so multiple-choice questions designed so that a careful reader should be able to answer them. The quiz will 'open' a week before it is due;   it will 'close' at

the beginning of the Monday/Wednesday class period in which the readings will be discussed.

To take a reading quiz in SacCT:
Enter SacCT at https://online.csus.edu;
- Open the main page for PHIL 180;
- Open 'Assessments' (under 'Course Tools' on the left margin of the main page);
- Answer the questions (make sure you 'submit' each question as well as the entire exam).

You will have only one chance to take the quiz, so check your answers before submitting.

Exams: The exam window will open 72 hours before it is due. You must take the exam during that time.

To take an exam in SacCT, follow the instructions for taking a reading quiz. The difference between an exam and a quiz will be the time constraints. You will have 75 minutes to take the midterm, two hours (120 minutes) to take the final. In addition, each individual question will have a time limit.

Grading

Exams: Exams will receive numerical grades; your score will be 'out of' 100.

Papers: Papers will receive letter grades. To determine the final grade, those letter grades will be converted into the highest number in the grade range under 'Grading Criteria' below. (For example, a B grade on a paper converts to 89.)

Reading Quizzes: Reading quizzes will receive a grade of **2** (full credit), **1** (inadequate comprehension), or **0** (not taken). An average of **1.7** or above will receive full credit (100). Lower scores will be prorated.

Discussion: Discussion participation will receive either complete credit (100) or none (0).

Final Grade: The final grade for the course will be determined by the weighted sum of the exams, quizzes, discussion, and papers.

Grading Criteria

Scaled Score	Letter Equivalent
100-94	A
93-92	A-

91-90	B+
89-84	B
83-82	B-
81-80	C+
79-74	C
73-72	C-
71-70	D+
69-64	D
63-62	D-
61-	F

Viewing Grades in SacCT

For reading quizzes you will be able to see your score as soon as you have submitted your quiz.
For exams, and papers I will post the grades as soon as I have finished grading them. You can see your grades during the semester by going to 'MyGrades' in SacCT.

Course Policies

Make-Up Exams

Since you may take exams at your convenience over a period of 72 hours, there will be no make-up exams. The opening and closing dates and times for exams will be listed in the calendar.

Late Work

For papers, I will leave the assignment window open for five days after the due date. The grade will be lowered a grade increment for every day it's late.

University Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Honesty, Policy & Procedures. The policy on Academic Honesty and other information regarding student conduct can be accessed from the University Policy Manual (http://www.csus.edu/umanual/index.htm).

The University Library has a helpful treatment of plagiarism at http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353.

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). For more information please visit the SSWD website (http://www.csus.edu/sswd/). They are located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu.

Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

University Resources

The CSUS Writing Center

The Writing Center provides encouraging, focused, and non-judgmental one-to-one tutorials in writing. Their tutors can help with writing at all points in the process, from initial planning and organizing through developing and revising a paper. You can bring the assignment to them for help.

Sac State Library

The Sac State Library's webpage is http://library.csus.edu.
To find a book or periodical, click on "Eureka: Library Catalogue" under "Resources and Collections or go directly to http://eureka.lib.csus.edu/

For an undergraduate library, our philosophy holdings are pretty good.

I particularly recommend Sac State librarian Lisa Roberts' website "Philosophy: Resources."   Two ways to find it: through "Research Guides" under "Resources and Collections", or go directly to http://library.csus.edu/guides/robertsl/philoguide.htm

Student Computing Labs

To access SacCT from campus, or use any of the other campus online resources, you can use the IRT managed student computer labs on campus. See University Labs website , that is, http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/generalinfo/about.stm
for information about locations, hours, and resources available.
SacCT is the course management system used on the Sac State campus for web-assisted courses. To access a course on SacCT, you must login from the SacCT Login Page (https://online.csus.edu).

To learn more about SacCT visit the Student Resources webpage (http://www.csus.edu/WebCT/student/) where you can view online Tutorials, FAQ's and other help resources.

Paper Topics

1. <u>Due Monday, March 16, 5:30</u> , (4-5 pages)
   Consider two propositions.
   A. Gold is a color.
   B. Gold* is gold#.
   Assuming for the the purpose of argument that both propositions are true, defend a position on the following issues:
   i.   Is **A** *a priori*? If so, what makes it so? If not what experiences are necessary conditions for knowing that *A*?
   ii. Since (i) does not require you to agree that the conditions for knowing A can ever be met, what if you were a skeptic? What argument would you make that we cannot know that *A*?
   iii. Caecus is blind from birth. Can Caecus know that *A*? Is there any difference between what Caecus knows, or the way he knows it, and what you know when you know it?
   iv. Is **B** *a priori*? If so, what makes it so? If not, can Caecus know that **B**?
   v.   Caecus can certainly know that **B**. He knows that tomatoes and bananas are green when unripe, and turn red and yellow respectively when they ripen. Describe the difference in the content of Caecus' knowledge and yours, if any. If you think that there is no difference, explain how Caecus can have access to the content of **B**.
   'gold*' = the element (AU)
   'gold#' = the color

2. <u>Due Monday, May 18, 5:30, (7-10 pages)</u>
   Choose between two topics:
   (1) Give an account of what makes believing that *p* a case of <u>knowing</u> that *p*.
        Consider all the issues that need to be dealt with:
        i.   What is the correct response to the Gettier Problem?
        ii. Must the knowledge-producing properties (the factors that turn justified true belief into knowledge) be recognizable to the knower on direct reflection?
        iii. Must the knower be certain?
        iv. Must the knower of *p* know that he knows *p*?

   (2) Give an account of what makes believing that *p* a case of justified believing that *p*.
        Consider all the issues that need to be dealt with:
        i.   Does our noetic structure need foundations? If so, what sorts of beliefs are properly basic?
        ii. In order for belief that p to be justified, what alternatives are relevant? How must those alternatives be dealt with?
        iii. Among the relevant alternatives consider at least one skeptical hypothesis. How can that skeptical hypothesis be dealt with.
        iv. What is the correct response to skepticism in general?

Course Schedule

The contents of square brackets are readings from the text. If the material for a meeting is not from the text you will see [Lecture] instead.

If something is due for a given day the "Due Date" box will indicate so. The SacCT calendar will also show due dates.

Week	Topic	Readings	Due Dates
Week 1 **M 1/26**	Introduction: Concepts and Problems Knowledge, Belief, Perception, Truth, Justification. The Point of Knowledge; the function of belief		
Week 2 **M 2/2**	**Skepticism** The Varieties of Ancient Skepticism The Differences between Ancient and Modern Skepticisms Skeptical Hypotheses Skepticism as an 'Ideal'.	Pojman, "Part II: Skepticism," 19-21; Russell,"What Can We Know? Appearance and Reality," 5-8; Descartes,"First Meditation," 22-24; Hume, "Skepticism Regarding the Senses," 39-48; Lehrer, "Why Not Skepticism?"-56-63	**Reading Quiz 1** **M (5:30)** – Pojman – Russell – Descartes – Hume – Lehrer
Week 3 **M 2/9**	**Responses to Skepticism** Common Sense, Criteria, Paradigm Cases, and Skeptical Solutions to Skeptical Doubts Is Global Skepticism Coherent?	Chisolm, "The Problem of the Criterion," 9-17; Moore, "A Defense of Common Sense," 49-63.	**Reading Quiz 2** **M (5:30)** – Chisolm – Moore
Week 4 **M 2/16**	**The *A Priori*** Synthetic *A Priori* Knowledge Some Surprising Results	Pojman, "Part VII: *A Priori* Knowledge," 367-369; Descartes, "Second- Fifth Meditation," 24-39; Chisolm, "Truths of Reason," 409-421; Kripke, "*A Priori* Knowledge, Necessity, and Contingency," 422-429.	**Reading Quiz 3** **M (5:30)** – Pojman – Descartes – Chisolm – Kripke
Week 5 **M 2/23**	**The *A Posteriori* – Perception** Representationalism Phenomenalism	Pojman, "Part III: Perception," 71-74; Locke, "A Representational Theory of Perception," 75-88; Russell, "A Defense of	**Reading Quiz 4** **M (5:30)** – Pojman – Locke – Russell

Week	Topic	Readings	Due Dates
		Representationalism," 115-119; Stace, "Science and the Physical World: A Defense of Phenomenalism," 96-99;	– Berkeley – Stace
Week 6 **M 3/2**	Not-So-Naïve Realism Criteria for Knowledge The Criteria for Knowledge	Whitely, "Phenomenalism: Its Grounds and Difficulties," 100-107; Reid, "A Commonsense Defense of Direct Realism," 108-114; Pojman, "Part IV: The Analysis of Knowledge," 121-125; Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge," 125-127;	**Reading Quiz 5** **M (5:30)** – Whitely – Reid – Pojman – Gettier
Week 7 **M 3/9**	The 'Causality' Condition and the 'Defeasibility' Condition	Feldman, "An Alleged Defect in the Gettier Counter-Examples," 127-8; Goldman, "A Causal Theory of Knowing," 128-138; Lehrer & Paxson, "Knowledge: Undefeated Justified True Belief," 138-142;	**Reading Quiz 6** **M (5:30)** – Feldman – Goldman – Lehrer & Paxson
Week 8 **M 3/16**	The 'No-Relevant Alternatives' Condition and Reliabilism Foundationalism and Its Alternatives	Goldman, "Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge," 142-153; Pojman, "Part V: Theories of Justification (I)," 157-162;	**Reading Quiz 7** **M (5:30)** – Goldman – Pojman **Paper 1** **M (5:30)**
Week 9 **M 3/23**	Classical Foundationalism and Fallibilist Foundationalism Critique of Foundationalism: The Argument from Epistemic Ascent	Chisolm, "Contemporary Classical Foundationalism," 163-174; Audi, "Contemporary Modest Foundationalism," 174-182; Bonjour, "A Critique of Foundationalism," 182-194;	**Reading Quiz 8** **M (5:30)** – Chisolm – Audi
Week 10 **M 3/30**	**Spring Break**		
Week 11 **M 4/6**	A Survey of the Issue "Foundherentism"	Sosa, "The Raft and the Pyramid," 222-237; Haack, "A Foundherentist Theory of Empirical Justification," 237-247	**Reading Quiz 9** **M (5:30)** – Sosa – Haack **Midterm Exam** **Window 4/6, 8:20-4/10, 11:30 pm.**

Week	Topic	Readings	Due Dates
Week 12 **M 4/13**	Externalism and Its Critics	Pojman, "Theories of Justification (II)," 257-259; Goldman, "Reliabilism: What is Justified Belief?" 260-273; Lehrer, "A Critique of Externalism," 273-286	**Reading Quiz 10** **M (5:30)** – Pojman – Goldman – Lehrer
Week 13 **M 4/20**	Externalism and its Critics (cont.)	Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized," 287-295; Conee & Feldman, "The Generality Problem for Reliabilism," 296: Steup, "A Defense of Internalism," 310-321;	**Reading Quiz 11** **M (5:30)** – Quine – Conee/Feldman – Steup
Week 14 **M 4/27**	Normative Considerations in Epistemology: "Right Knowing"	Kornblith, "Naturalistic Epistemology and Its Critics," 322-333; Greco, "Virtues in Epistemology," 348-363	**Reading Quiz 12** **M (5:30)** – Kornblith – Greco
Week 15 **M 5/4**	Normative Considerations in Epistemology: "Right Believing"	Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief," 515-518; James, "The Will to Believe," 518-526; Pojman, "Believing, Willing, and the Ethics of Belief," 536-555;	**Reading Quiz 13** **M (5:30)** – Clifford – James – Pojman
Week 16 **M 5/11**	Rationality, Intersubjective or Objective?	Rorty, "Dismantling Truth: Solidarity Versus Objectivity," 588-595; Levin, "A Defense of Objectivity," 596-606.	**Reading Quiz 14** **M (5:30)** – Rorty – Levin
Week 17 **M 5/18**	Final Exam Week (No class)		**Paper 2 M (5:30)** **Final Exam** **Window 5/18,** **5:30 - 5/22, 11:30.**

The descriptions and due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.

Good luck!