PHIL 468 Epistemology

Course Description: In this course, we will examine three central topics in contemporary, analytic epistemology that have been the focus of much current attention; namely, the role of justification in the epistemological landscape, the epistemic significance of disagreement, and the value of knowledge. These topics will be examined in considerable depth through reading some of the most recent developments in these areas.

Required Work: Students will be expected to write two 3-5 page papers during the course of the semester. Students can choose their own topics for these papers, but they must be on the material assigned for this course, turned in at the start of class on the day that the reading in question is due, and completed by 11/25/08 (no more than one can be turned in per class period). In addition, students will be expected to write one 7-8 page presentation (details TBA) and one 12-15 page final paper (which ideally will be an expanded version of the presentation). The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- Class discussion, worth 10% of the final grade.
- Two 3-5 page papers, each worth 15% of the final grade.
- One 7-8 page presentation, worth 20% of the final grade.
- One 12-15 page final paper, worth 40% of the final grade.

Blackboard: Some of the business of this course, including access to readings on reserve, will be conducted through the Course Management System (Blackboard). You are encouraged to check it frequently, as I may post announcements there from time to time. To access Blackboard, you will need to use your NetID and password.

Readings available on Blackboard.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

I. Introduction

09/23 Opening Remarks.

09/30 Class is canceled; read the following articles:

- Laurence BonJour, Chapter 3 of The Structure of Empirical Knowledge, available on Blackboard.
Recommended:


II. The Role (if any) of Epistemic Justification

10/07 Jonathan Sutton, Chapters 1 and 2 of WJ.
10/14 Jonathan Sutton, Chapters 3 and 4 of WJ.

Recommended:


III. The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement

Adam Elga, “Reflection and Disagreement,” available on Blackboard.
10/28 David Christensen, “Disagreement, Question-Begging, and Epistemic Self-Criticism,” available on Blackboard.
Adam Elga, “How to Disagree about How to Disagree,” available on Blackboard.
Thomas Kelly, “Peer Disagreement and Higher Order Evidence” available on Blackboard.
*7-8 Page Presentation Due.*

Recommended:


van Inwagen, Peter. 1996. “It is Wrong, Everywhere, Always, and for Anyone, to Believe Anything
IV. The Value of Knowledge

       Wayne Riggs, “The Value Turn in Epistemology,” available on Blackboard.
11/18  Ernest Sosa, Chapters 4 and 5 of *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge*,
       available on Blackboard.
       John Greco, “The Value of Knowledge,” available on Blackboard.
       Wayne Riggs, “Two Problems of Easy Credit,” available on Blackboard.

Note: Duncan Pritchard at the University of Edinburgh has many resources that are worth consulting on the value of knowledge, such as a weblog devoted to the topic, links to relevant papers, upcoming conferences, discussions, and so on. You can access this information from his website at: [http://www.philosophy.ed.ac.uk/staff/DuncanPritchard.htm](http://www.philosophy.ed.ac.uk/staff/DuncanPritchard.htm).

12/08  *12-15 Page Final Paper Due.*