



## Epistemology and Philosophy of Science Course Descriptor

Course Title	Epistemology and Philosophy of Science	Faculty	Philosophy
Course Code	NCHPH725	Course Leader	Dr Ioannis Votsis
Credit Points	20	Teaching Period	Any
FHEQ Level	7	Date Approved	June 2020
Compulsory/ Optional	Optional		
Pre-requisites	None		
Co-requisites	None		

### COURSE SUMMARY

This course investigates the nature of knowledge and justification, both generally and in the particular setting of the sciences. To a lesser extent, it also investigates related metaphysical matters. Students will study theories that seek to understand the relation between perception and belief. Moreover, they will examine the conditions under which a token belief is justified and even counts as knowledge. They will deliberate on the issue whether justification requires cognitive awareness of the reasons for endorsing a given belief. Additionally, they will consider what, if anything, can be said to defeat the sceptic. Students will also contemplate on the relation between perception, evidence and theory in the context of scientific research. They will explore different inferential accounts of this relation, paying particular attention to how evidence is used, and how it ought to be used, to falsify or confirm theories. Lessons from the history of science will provide checks and balances to these accounts as well as to accounts of the exact limits of scientific knowledge. Finally, students will reflect on some related topics in the metaphysics of science such as what are laws of nature and what constitutes a good scientific explanation.

### COURSE AIMS

The aim of this course is to:

- Develop students' skills in understanding and evaluating the primary accounts of knowledge, justification, theory and evidence.

- Promote students' ability to interpret, analyse and compare key texts in epistemology and the philosophy of science. To enable students to form, elaborate and defend their own views in epistemology and the philosophy of science.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1d Demonstrate wide-ranging knowledge of, and recognition of systematic connections between, epistemological questions and debates both in the ordinary context and in the scientific one.
- K2d Demonstrate detailed and constructive critical engagement with the texts and theories of a wide range of key figures in epistemology and the philosophy of science

### SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS

- S1d Employ advanced scholarly techniques to clarify and situate epistemological ideas and arguments belonging to a variety of periods and traditions.

### TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1d Show self-direction in working independently, creatively, and to deadlines.
- T2d Respond systematically and creatively to complex, wide-ranging, and unpredictable data, theories, and arguments.
- T3d Produce original, clear, sophisticated, and persuasive treatments of complex topics.
- T3d Consistently apply an excellent level of technical proficiency in written English, using an advanced application of scholarly terminology, that demonstrates the ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and with sophistication.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning strategies for this course will include:

- 30 hours of lectures
- Two one-hour one-to-one tutorials

Course information and supplementary materials are available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Students are required to attend and participate in all timetabled sessions for this course. Students are also expected to manage their directed learning and independent study in support of the course.

## EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The study of philosophy cultivates skills that are employable across a range of sectors. These include the abilities to:

- Work independently, creatively, and to deadlines.
- Conduct research and explore relevant existing knowledge.
- Analyse, contextualise, and interpret complex ideas and materials.
- Synthesise and evaluate information against a backdrop of uncertainty.
- Solve problems through logical reasoning.
- Present findings and opinions in a clear, structured manner, whether orally or in writing.
- Engage in collaborative and constructive discussion.

## ASSESSMENT

### FORMATIVE

Students will be formatively assessed during the course by means of set assignments. These do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with developmental feedback, both written and oral.

### SUMMATIVE

Assessment will be in one form:

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Written assignment	100%	Yes	N/A	5000 words

The written assignment will be assessed in accordance with the assessment aims set out in the Programme Specification.

### FEEDBACK

Students will receive feedback in a variety of ways, written and oral, within one-to-one tutorials, in discussion phases of lectures, and on formatively and summatively assessed assignments. Students will also attend the formal meeting, Collections, in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their performance.

Feedback is provided on summative assessment and is made available to the student either via email, the VLE or another appropriate method.

### INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

### BOOKS

Audi, R. (2010) *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, 3rd edition, Routledge.

Curd, M., J.A. Cover and C. Pincock (eds.) (2012) *Philosophy of Science: The Central Issues*, second edition, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Curd, M. and S. Psillos (eds.) (2008), *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Science*, New York, NY: Routledge.

Feldman, R. (2003) *Epistemology*, Prentice Hall PTR.

Greco, J. and E. Sosa (eds.) (1999) *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*, Oxford: Blackwell.

O’Hear, A. (1989) *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schurz, G. (2013) *Philosophy of Science: A Unified Approach*, New York: Routledge.

Skyrms, B. (1999) *Choice and Chance*, fourth edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Smith, Q. (ed.) (2008) *Epistemology: New Essays*, Oxford University Press.

Sosa, E, J. Kim, J. Fantl and M. McGrath (eds.) (2008) *Epistemology: An Anthology*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

**INDICATIVE TOPICS**

- Epistemology
  - Philosophy of Science
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<b>Title: NCHPH725 Epistemology and Philosophy of Science Course Descriptor</b>					
<b>Approved by: Academic Board</b>					
<b>Location: Academic Handbook/Programme specifications and Handbooks/ Postgraduate Programme Specifications/MA Philosophy Programme Specification/Philosophy Course Descriptors</b>					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Owner	Proposed next review date	Modification (As per AQF4) & category number
2.0	January 2022	April 2022	Brian Ball	April 2025	Category 3: Changes to Course Learning Outcomes
1.0	June 2020	June 2020	Brian Ball	April 2025	