

Philosophy 3141: The Theory of Knowledge
Spring 2007: T/TH 10:00-11:45 IH 203
Office: M/W 10:45am – 11:30am
T/TH 9:00am – 10:00am
and other times by appointment

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Our texts are: D.L.C. Maclachlan's *Philosophy of Perception*, Laurence Bonjour's *Epistemology: Classic Responses and Contemporary Responses*, and Stephen Stich's *The Fragmentation of Reason: A Preface To A Pragmatic Theory of Cognitive Evaluation*.

Section 1: Perception

- 1.22 Logic handout, Maclachlan, pp. xii to 6.
- 1.24 Maclachlan, chapters 2-4, pp. 7 -32

- 1.29 **Logic assignment and three extractions due**
Maclachlan Chapters 5-8 (pp. 33-64)
- 1.31 Maclachlan Chapters 5-8 (pp. 33-64)

- 2.5 Maclachlan Chapters 9-10 (pp.65-82)
- 2.7 Maclachlan Chapters 9-10 (pp.65-82)

- 2.12 **Short Paper on Direct Realism due**
Maclachlan Chapters 11-14 (pp.83-122)
- 2.14 Maclachlan Chapters 11-14 (pp.83-122)

Section 2: Epistemological Replies

- 2.19 Bonjour Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-52)
- 2.21 Bonjour Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-52)

- 2.26 **Your choice (from M11-14 to B1-3) Short Paper due**
Bonjour Chapters 4-6 (pp. 53-128)
- 2.28 Bonjour Chapters 4-6 (pp. 53-128)

- 3.4 Bonjour Chapters 7-8 (pp. 129-189)
- 3.6 Bonjour Chapters 7-8 (pp. 129-189)

- 3.11 Bonjour Chapters 9-10 (pp. 190-238)
- 3.13 Bonjour Chapters 9-10 (pp. 190-238)
- Short Paper on Skepticism due**

- 3.18 **Spring Break**
- 3.20 **Spring Break**

- 3.25 **Review**
- 3.27 **Midterm Exam**

Section 3: Naturalism/Pragmatism

- 4.1 Bonjour Chapters 11-12 (pp. 239-278)
- 4.3 Bonjour Chapters 11-12 (pp. 239-278)

- 4.8 Stich Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-54)
- 4.10 Stich Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-54)

- 4.15 **Short Paper on Naturalism due**
Stich Chapter 3 (pp. 55-74)
- 4.17 Stich Chapter 3 (pp. 55-74)

- 4.22 Stich Chapter 4 (pp.75-100)
- 4.24 Stich Chapter 4 (pp 75-100)

- 4.30 **Short Paper on Naturalism II due**
Stich Chapter 5 (pp.101-124)
- 5.1 Stich Chapter 5 (pp. 101-124)

- 5.6 Stich Chapter 6 (pp.125-158)
- 5.8 Stich Chapter 6 (pp. 125-158)
- 5.9 **Midwest Colloquium in Philosophy: Stich Talk at 2pm and 5pm**

- 5.15 **Final: Thursday 1:30 to 3:30pm**

Course Content: This course is designed to be an advanced philosophy course in the theory of knowledge and will presuppose student's knowledge of the philosophical tools of analysis and argumentation (we will spend part of the first class reviewing these tools). My aim in this course is to provide you with a broad understanding of several key issues in contemporary epistemology. We will begin this course with an investigation of the problem of perception. The reason it is called a "problem" is simply that while common sense tells that one of the best ways of coming to know the world around us is by using our sense perceptions, if these perceptions are simply the end result of a complex causal process, then we need to know whether the end results of these processes, i.e., our perceptions of the world, are at all similar to the beginnings of these processes, i.e., the world itself. This difference provides a strong foothold to various skeptical views. We will then develop various epistemological positions such as coherentism, foundationalism, internalism, externalism, and naturalized epistemology, as they respond to this problem. We will wrap up this course by outlining a "pragmatic" approach which attempts to answer epistemological questions by an appeal to empirical psychological findings, as outlined by Steven Stich, who will also come to campus on the last day of the semester, as the third speaker of this year's Midwest Colloquium in Philosophy.

Class Format: Our class will have the following weekly routine. Readings will be due on Tuesdays along with short presentations by all students of the readings and class discussions will take place. On Thursday, I will give summarizing lectures based on the discussion and readings.

Grading: (1) Each student will receive a grade for their Tuesday's work: just showing up gives you a C, (skipping receives an F), a good oral presentation with no discussion or questions asked will give you a B, if you add to the discussion and/or ask questions, you will earn an A for the day. If you keep on schedule with readings and can speak up in class on the topic, an A is easy! (2) There are 6 short papers due. Their style must follow the extract, explain, and evaluate format. If done well, this will be the most difficult part of the class. You will need to construct an accurate argument from a text, defend each premise from the author's point of view, and evaluate it from your own point of view. (3) The midterm and final exams will be open book and open note exams designed to get you to understand the views and arguments needed in order to develop your own epistemological views. If you attend class, take good notes, and understand what's going on, then these exams should not be difficult. (4) Your overall aim is to write a ten page "My Epistemology" paper which is due with the final. In this paper, you will need to develop, argue for, and defend your views on perception, justified inferences, skepticism, and naturalism. Ideally, the six short papers will provide you with "first draft" material. Each of these four parts will count for 25% of your final grade.

University of Minnesota Policies:

Grading standards (definition of grades):

A: represents outstanding achievement relative to the course requirements.

B: represents achievement significantly above the course requirements.

C: represents achievement meeting the course requirements in every respect.

D: represents achievement worthy of credit, but failing to meet all course requirements.

S: represents satisfactory achievement, which is equivalent to a C- or better.

F (or N): represents failure (or no credit) because the work was either (1) completed but not worthy of credit or (2) not completed and no incomplete was given.

I (Incomplete): assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. This requires a written agreement between instructor and student.

Make-up exam policy:

Make-up exams are available only if a student has an excellent reason and arrangements are made either before the missed exam or as quickly as humanly possible thereafter.

Senate student academic workload policy:

For undergraduate courses, as one credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of "learning effort" per week necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade (C) in the course, you should expect in this four credit course to spend an additional eight hours a week on course work outside the classroom.

Statement on accommodations for students with disabilities:

Please contact the Disability Services Office, 589-6163, Room 362 Briggs Library to discuss and arrange for accommodation needs.

Statement on classroom conduct:

Students are expected to interact with the instructor and other students with respect and courtesy. Students should attend every class session prepared to learn and work. Participation in class is expected, which includes both speaking up and listening. Give class your full attention while here. Complete all assignments including the reading in a timely fashion. Do not use cell phones or recording equipment to class without the instructor's consent. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to the instructor or to other students will be asked to leave. Students whose behavior suggests the need for counseling or other assistance may be referred to counseling services. Students whose behavior violates the University Student Conduct Code will be subject to disciplinary action.

Statement on academic misconduct:

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. In this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Statement regarding sexual harassment:

University policy prohibits sexual harassment as defined by the University of Minnesota Regents' policy:

<http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.pdf>