**Knowledge-First Epistemology and Philosophy of Mind**

***Syllabus***

***PRACTICAL INFORMATION*:**

*Time*: Wednesdays, 17:45–19:15

*Venue*: 4.011

*Course Identification Number*: 14213.0134

*Course Language*: English

***INSTRUCTOR*:**

*Name*: Francesco Praolini

*e-mail*: [francesco.praolini@gmail.com](mailto:francesco.praolini@gmail.com) or [francesco.praolini@uni-koeln.de](mailto:francesco.praolini@uni-koeln.de)

*Website*: <https://www.francescopraolini.com>

***OFFICE HOURS*:**

TBA

*Office*: 4.206

***COURSE DESCRIPTION:***

***1. Content***

This course aims to critically engage with Timothy Williamson’s epistemology and philosophy of mind as they are presented in his book *Knowledge and Its Limits* and to critically examine the arguments for and against its core theses advanced by both advocates and foes of Williamson’s philosophical project.

***2. Aims***

The aim of the course is to introduce students to current issues in epistemology and philosophy of mind. More specifically, the course aims to familiarize students with Timothy Williamson’s epistemology and philosophy of mind, and to critically engage with arguments for and against its core theses.

At the end of the course students should:

1. understand the central issues in Timothy Williamson’s epistemology and philosophy of mind, including core theses, arguments, and methodology;
2. understand relevant relations between these issues;
3. be able to clearly and concisely expound these issues in their own words;
4. be able to critically discuss questions and assess arguments relating to these issues;
5. be able to offer and argue for their views on these issues.

***3. Format***

The course is designed as a reading seminar with presentations by students and the instructor, either individually on in groups. Students are expected to read the required readings before each class and actively participate in class discussions. Additional optional readings are recommended, but, obviously, not mandatory.

***4. Previous Knowledge***

While no specific previous philosophical knowledge is required, familiarity with contemporary analytic philosophy (and epistemology in particular) and basic knowledge of logic will be useful. For this reason, this course is intended for advanced undergraduate students in philosophy.

Additionally, good command of English is of central importance, as all readings will be in English, the course assignments will be in English, and the course will be taught in English.

***EVALUATION:***

***1. How to Pass the Course* [“*Studienleistungen*”]**

To be able to pass the course, each student must:

1. actively participate in class discussion and present at least one of the required readings (either individually or in groups);
2. adequately complete at least 50% of the weekly assignments.

*1.1 Weekly Assignments*

Each weekly assignment consists of one or two very narrow questions aimed to assess your understanding of core concepts and core arguments. Answers should be fairly straightforward and take about half a page at most. There are twelve assignments due over the course of the semester; one for each week (with the exception of the first). Thus, to be able to pass the course, **you should adequately complete at least six out of twelve assignments**. Each assignment is due on Tuesday at 11:59pm. The assignments may be hand-written if necessary, although obviously in that case I must be able to read your handwriting. Collaboration on assignments is not permitted, although I encourage students to work through the text and discuss arguments together. Details of assignments will be made available at least a week before they are due.

*1.2 Make-Up Assignments*

In case the student cannot, for serious reasons and regularly or for a long period of time, attend class, or in case s/he does not, for serious reasons, give a presentation and/or submit sufficiently many weekly assignments (in time), s/he may be given the chance to complete a make-up assignment (for example, a detailed summary on the material covered in the classes which the student missed).

***2. How to Receive a Grade for the Course Module* [“*Modulabschlussprüfungen*”]**

To receive a grade for the course module, students are required to:

1. satisfy the requirements necessary to pass the course (See *Section 1. How to Pass the Course* [“*Studienleistungen*”]);
2. write a 4000-word paper.

Each student can freely decide whether to write the paper to receive a grade for the course module. In other words, it is not mandatory to write the paper to pass the course; but only to receive a grade for the entire course module.

To receive a grade for the course module, students must register for the course exam through KLIPS during the registration periods specified by the KLIPS application.

In addition to registering through KLIPS, students have to inform me, the instructor, personally about their interest in writing a paper. Unfortunately, I will not be notified through the KLIPS application and, thereby, I will not be able to know whether you are interested in writing the paper, unless you explicitly tell me so.

***COURSE SCHEDULE:***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *April 3:* | ***Week 1: Welcome and Introduction*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Gettier, E. (1963). ‘Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?’ *Analysis* 23:121–3.  *Optional Readings*:  Ichikawa, J.J. and C.S.I. Jenkins (2018). ‘On Putting Knowledge First’, in A.J. Carter, E.C. Gordon, and B. Jarvis, *Knowledge First: Approaches in Epistemology and Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  McGlynn, A. (2014). ‘Introduction: Lessons from Gettier’, *Knowledge First?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.  Williamson, T. (2000). ‘Introduction’, *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  Williamson, T. (2011). ‘Knowledge-First Epistemology,’ in S. Bernecker and D. Pritchard (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Epistemology*. New York: Routledge.  Williamson, T. (2014). ‘Knowledge First,’ in M. Steup, J. Turri, and E. Sosa (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. | |
| *April 10:* | ***Week 2: Knowledge as a State of Mind*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Williamson, T. (2000). ‘1. A State of Mind’, *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  *Optional Readings*:  Cassam, Q. (2009). ‘Can the Concept of Knowledge Be Analysed?’ in P. Greenough and D. Pritchard (eds.), *Williamson on Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  McGlynn, A. (2014). ‘2. Belief’, *Knowledge First?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.  McGlynn, A. (2014). ‘8. Is Knowledge a Mental State?’, *Knowledge First?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.  Smith, M. (2018). ‘The Cost of Treating Knowledge as a Mental State’, in A.J. Carter, E.C. Gordon, and B. Jarvis, *Knowledge First: Approaches in Epistemology and Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. | |
| *April 17:* | ***Week 3: Knowledge as a State of Mind*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Nagel, J. (2013). ‘Knowledge as a Mental State’, in T. Szabó Gendler and J. Hawthorne (eds.), *Oxford Studies in Epistemology: Volume 4*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 275–310. | |
| *April 24:* | ***Week 4: Broadness*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Williamson, T. (2000). ‘2. Broadness’, *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  *Optional Readings*:  Fricker, E. (2009). ‘Is Knowing a State of Mind? The Case Against’, in P. Greenough and D. Pritchard (eds.), *Williamson on Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  Williamson, T. (2000). ‘3. Primeness’, *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. | |
| *May 8:* | ***Week 5: Luminosity*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Williamson, T. (2000). ‘4. Anti-Luminosity’, *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  *Optional Readings*:  Berker, S. (2008). ‘Luminosity Regained’, *Philosopher’s Imprint* 8(2): 1-22.  Cohen, S. (2010). ‘Luminosity, Reliability, and the Sorites’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 81(3): 718-30.  McGlynn, A. (2014). ‘7. Luminosity’, *Knowledge First?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.  Srinivasan, A. (2015). ‘Are We Luminous?’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 90(2): 294–319. | |
| *May 15:* | ***Week 6: Luminosity*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Smithies, D. (2012). ‘Mentalism and Epistemic Transparency’, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 90(4): 723–41. | |
| *May 22:* | ***Week 7: Margins of Error and Iteration Principles*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Williamson, T. (2000). ‘5. Margins and Iterations’, *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  *Optional Readings*:  Cohen, S. and J. Comesaña (2013). ‘Williamson on Gettier Cases in Epistemic Logic’, *Inquiry* 56(1): 15–29.  Cohen, S. and J. Comesaña (2013). ‘Williamson on Gettier Cases in Epistemic Logic and the Knowledge Norm for Rational Belief: A Reply to a Reply to a Reply’, *Inquiry* 56(4): 400–15.  Greco, D. (2015). ‘Iteration Principles in Epistemology I: Arguments For’, *Philosophy Compass* 10(11): 754–64.  Greco, D. (2015). ‘Iteration Principles in Epistemology II: Arguments Against’, *Philosophy Compass* 10(11): 765–71.  Sorensen, R.A. (2007). ‘Knowledge Beyond the Margin for Error’, *Mind* 116 (463): 717–22.  Weatherson, B. (2013). ‘Margins and Errors’, *Inquiry* 56(1): 63–76.  Williamson, T. (2007). ‘Knowledge within the Margin for Error’, *Mind* 116(463): 723–6  Williamson, T. (2013). ‘Gettier Cases in Epistemic Logic’, *Inquiry* 56(1): 1–14.  Williamson, T. (2013). ‘Response to Cohen, Comesaña, Goodman, Nagel, and Weatherson on Gettier Cases in Epistemic Logic’, *Inquiry* 56(1): 77–96. | |
| *May 29:* | ***Week 8: Margins of Error and Iteration Principles*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Greco, D. (2014). ‘Could KK Be OK?’, *The Journal of Philosophy* 111(4): 169–97.  *Optional Readings*:  Das, N. and B. Salow (2018). ‘Transparency and the KK Principle’. *Noûs* 52(1): 3–23.  Dorst, K. (forthcoming). ‘Abominable KK Failures’, *Mind.*  Greco, D. (2015). ‘Iteration and Fragmentation’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 88(1): 656–73.  Stalnaker, R. (2015). ‘Luminosity and the KK Thesis’, in S. Goldberg (ed.), *Externalism, Self-Knowledge, and Skepticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. | |
| *June 5:* | ***Week 9: Skepticism*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Williamson, T. (2000). ‘8. Scepticism’, *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  *Optional Readings*:  Putnam, H. (1981). ‘1. Brains in a Vat’, *Reason, Truth, and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  Magidor, O. (2018). ‘How Both You and the Brain in a Vat Can Know Whether or Not You Are Envatted’, *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 92(1): 151–81. | |
| *June 19:* | ***Week 10: Evidence*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Williamson, T. (2000). ‘9. Evidence’, *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  *Optional Readings*:  Brueckner, A. (2009). ‘E = K and Perceptual Knowledge’, in P. Greenough and D. Pritchard (eds.), *Williamson on Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  Dodd, D. (2007). ‘Why Williamson Should Be a Sceptic’, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 57(229): 635–49.  Littlejohn, C. (2011). ‘Evidence and Armchair Access’, *Synthese* 179(3): 479–500.  Littlejohn, C. (2011). ‘Evidence and Knowledge’, *Erkenntnis* 74(2): 241–62.  McGlynn, A. (2014). ‘4. Evidence’, *Knowledge First?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.  Neta, R. (2008). ‘What Evidence Do You Have?’, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 59(1): 89–119.  Rizzieri, A. (2011). ‘Evidence Does not Equal Knowledge’, *Philosophical Studies* 153: 235–42. | |
| *June 26:* | ***Week 11: Evidence*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Comesaña, J., and Kantin, H. (2010). ‘Is Evidence Knowledge?’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 80(2), 447–54. | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *July 3:* | ***Week 12: Assertion*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Williamson, T. (2000). ‘11. Assertion’, *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  *Optional Readings*:  Brown, J. (2010). ‘Knowledge and Assertion’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 81(3): 549–66.  DeRose, K. (2002). ‘Knowledge, Assertion, and Context’, *Philosophical Review* 111(2): 167–203.  Douven, I. (2006). ‘Assertion, Knowledge and Rational Credibility’, *Philosophical Review* 115(4): 449–85.  Hawthorne, J. (2004). *Knowledge and Lotteries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  Kelp, C. and M. Simion (forthcoming). ‘The C Account of Assertion: a Negative Result’, *Synthese*.  Kvanvig, J. (2009). ‘Assertion, Knowledge and Lotteries,’ in P. Greenough and D. Pritchard (eds.), *Williamson on Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  McGlynn, A. (2014). ‘5. Assertion’, *Knowledge First?* London: Palgrave Macmillan. | |
| July 10: | ***Week 13: Assertion*** |
| *Required Reading*:  Lackey, J. (2007). ‘Norms of Assertion’, *Noûs* 41(4): 594–626. | |

***COURSE MATERIAL:***

***1. Required Readings***

Obviously, most readings for the course will be drawn from the following book:

* Williamson, T. (2000). *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

More precisely, we will be reading the following seven chapters of Williamson’s seminal book:

1. A State of Mind

2. Broadness

4. Anti-Luminosity

5. Margins and Iterations

8. Scepticism

9. Evidence

11. Assertion

This book is available online for free through Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln and through Oxford Scholarship Online via this link: <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/019925656X.001.0001/acprof-9780199256563>. There also appear to be **two** physical copies of this book at the Philosophisches Seminar library.

The other required readings include:

* Gettier, E. (1963). ‘Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?’ *Analysis* 23:121–3.
* Nagel, J. (2013). ‘Knowledge as a Mental State’, in T. Szabó Gendler and J. Hawthorne (eds.) *Oxford Studies in Epistemology: Volume 4*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 275–310.
* Smithies, D. (2012). ‘Mentalism and Epistemic Transparency’, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 90(4): 723–41.
* Greco, D. (2014). ‘Could KK Be OK?’, *The Journal of Philosophy* 111(4): 169–97.
* Comesaña, J., and Kantin, H. (2010). ‘Is Evidence Knowledge?’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 80(2), 447–54.
* Lackey, J. (2007). ‘Norms of Assertion’, *Noûs* 41(4): 594–626.

All required readings are also accessible through Dropbox via this link: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pzwnc1b6c684n52/AAC263F2XPaOiajUG7twHiANa?dl=0>.