

Seminar in Epistemology

I Course Information

- Course number: PHI 6306.
- Section 6000.
- Wednesdays 3:00 – 6:00.
- Location: Griffin–Floyd Hall 0200.
- Instructor: Rodrigo Borges
- Office: Griffin-Floyd Hall, room 314.
- Office hours: Thursdays 9:00am – 12:00 (or by appointment).
- Contact Information: rodrigo.borges@ufl.edu.

2 Course Description

This graduate course explores key issues in contemporary epistemology, focusing on the nature of knowledge and epistemic justification. We critically reassess the traditional definition of knowledge as justified true belief in light of the Gettier Problem. Challenging the common view that Gettier refuted this account, we examine recent theories suggesting the problem is a solvable paradox rather than a definitive refutation.

Extending into social epistemology, we investigate how social contexts shape our understanding of knowledge. Topics include testimony, collective belief, epistemic injustice, and communal practices in knowledge formation. By integrating individual and social perspectives, the course aims to demonstrate that justified true belief remains a robust account of knowledge.

3 Course Goals

This graduate course aims to equip students with a nuanced understanding of knowledge and justification in contemporary epistemology. Students will critically analyze the “justified true belief” model, grappling with the Gettier Problem and exploring its proposed solutions. By examining the interplay between individual and social dimensions of knowledge, including topics like testimony and epistemic injustice, students will develop the ability to critically assess and contribute to current debates surrounding knowledge.

4 Course Requirements

Assignment	% of Course Grade
Presentation	25%
Participation in discussion	15%
Research Paper	60%

4.1 Attendance and Classroom Policies

Students are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned reading in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

- <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

4.2 Presentation

Students will present on the topic of their final paper.

4.3 Participation in discussion

A participation grade will be determined by the quality of your contributions to discussion in class. The quality of that participation is here understood in terms of your comprehension of the material under discussion as well as your skill at focusing on salient questions, evaluating arguments, and producing your own arguments.

You are expected to participate in class discussions regularly. Mere quantity of participation is not enough to do well on your participation grade, but relatively frequent participation is certainly advisable. I will call on people freely to ensure everyone participates.

4.4 Research Paper

Students will write one (1) argumentative paper of around 6000 words on a topic in epistemology. Topics will be provided. It will be possible for you to propose your own topic. However, before you pursue a topic different from the ones provided by the instructor, you must check with him whether the topic is appropriate.

5 Grade Scale

See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at:

- <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

	Grade Scale	Grade Value
A	100 - 93	4.00
A-	92 - 90	3.67
B+	89 - 86	3.33
B	85 - 82	3.00
B-	81 - 79	2.67
C+	78 - 75	2.33
C	75 - 72	2.00
C-	71 - 69	1.67
D+	68 - 66	1.33
D	65 - 62	1.00
D-	61 - 60	0.67
E	59 - 0	0.00

6 Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, ‘We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’ The Honor Code

- <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class. Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of ‘E’ for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida’s Student Honor Code as follows: ‘A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.’ Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

7 Students with disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

7.1 Counseling

You should be aware that UF provides counseling and other kinds of help for students in distress. You can call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center at 352-392-1575 and see their website at www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/.

8 Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

9 Office Hours

I strongly encourage you to set up a meeting to discuss anything related to the course. I will hold office hours on Thursdays 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 (or by appointment). To set up an appointment please email me at: rodrigo.borges@ufl.edu. My office is located in the 3rd floor of the Griffin-Floyd Hall, room 314.

10 Class Schedule (Subject to Change)

(NB: readings not on the schedule will be suggested during the course.)

- 1/15 - JTB = K (Plato, Chisholm, Ayer)
- 1/22 - Gettier before Gettier (Hindu sources, Russell, Plato)
- 1/29 - Gettier's Argument (Gettier)
- 2/5 - JTB + X responses (Goldman, Lehrer)
- 2/12 - Knowledge first (Williamson, Sutton)
- 2/19 - Anti-Luck (Zagzebski, Pritchard)
- 2/26 - Revisionism (Biro)
- 3/5 - Revisionism (Borges)
- 3/12 - TBD
- 3/19 - Spring break
- 3/26 - The Epistemology of Misinformation (Bostrom)
- 4/2 - AI and Knowledge (Levinstein)
- 4/9 - AI and Knowledge
- 4/16 - Presentations
- 4/23 - Presentations