

**UIO MASTER'S EPISTEMOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE**  
**COURSE**

**OVERVIEW**

This semester the course will focus on three interrelated issues in contemporary epistemology.

We will spend the first 5 weeks investigating the question of whether any non-trivial conditions are 'luminous', where a condition is luminous iff whenever it obtains one is in a position to know that it obtains. In *Knowledge and its Limits* Timothy Williamson famously argues that there are no luminous non-trivial conditions: for any non-trivial condition C, C can obtain without one being in a position to know that it obtains. This includes paradigmatically internal conditions such as feeling pain, believing that p, experiencing the colour red, and so on. Williamson's argument has generated a great deal of discussion, much of it critical. We will look at Williamson's argument, then we will consider a number of objections to it, and possible responses to those objections. Finally we will consider the potential ramifications of Williamson's argument for normative theorising.

In the following 4 weeks we will focus on what impact higher-order evidence - that is, evidence about one's own epistemic position - ought to have on one's first-order doxastic attitudes. If one rationally but mistakenly believes that one's belief that p is not well supported by one's evidence, does this affect whether or not it is rational for one to believe that p? Some epistemologists argue that it does. Others argue that it does not. Others still try to plot a middle course. All of these positions give rise to a number of epistemological puzzles. We will explore some of these puzzles.

In the last 5 weeks we will look at the relationship between knowledge and rational decision making, practical reasoning, and action. Recently several prominent epistemologists have argued that it is epistemically permissible to take a proposition as certain in one's decision making and practical reasoning iff one knows that p is true. This thesis has, in turn, been claimed to support the idea that knowledge is 'pragmatically encroached' upon - that is, whether or not you know that p can depend not only on broadly truth-related factors such as one's evidence, and the reliability of one's belief-formation processes, but also on practical matters such as how much is at stake for you in being right about p. However, the thesis that it is permissible to a proposition as certain in one's decision making and practical reasoning iff one knows that p is true is controversial. We will look at some arguments for and against it.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

- Each week one person will be assigned by me to give a 20 minute presentation on the reading for that seminar. If you have a preference for which week(s) you would like to present, please inform me by email. Presentation slots will be assigned on a first-come-first-served basis. After the

presentation we will discuss the reading together as a class. Since this will be a discussion-format class, rather than a lecture-format class, it is imperative that you contribute to the discussion. The more that you put in to it, the more you will get out of it.

You are expected to read all of the assigned articles. Please read them in the order that they appear on the syllabus, as this will maximise your comprehension and appreciation of the relevant issues.

I advise you to make notes on the readings before class. Laptops will not be allowed in class, so please print out the readings and bring them with you.

My email address is [nickhowellhughes@gmail.com](mailto:nickhowellhughes@gmail.com). Feel free to get in touch if you have any questions.

## THE READINGS

### Anti-Luminosity

#### Week 1

- Alan Hajek - Philosophical Heuristics and Philosophical Creativity (41)
  - *manuscript*
  - Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/pctnr46>
  
- Timothy Williamson - Knowledge and its Limits, Chapters 4 & 5 (41)
  - *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 93, No. 11
  - Available at Oxford Scholarship Online via UiO VPN

#### Week 2

- Selim Berker - 'Luminosity Regained' (22)
  - *Philosophers' Imprint* Vol. 8, No. 2
  - Open access on Philosophers' Imprint website
  
- Brian Weatherson - 'Luminous Margins', (10)
  - *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* Vol 82, No. 3
  - Available via UiO VPN

#### Week 3

- Stewart Cohen - 'Luminosity, Reliability, & Sorites' (12)
  - *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. 81, No. 3
  - Available via UiO VPN
  
- Murali Ramachandran - 'Anti-Luminosity: Four Unsuccessful Strategies' (14)
  - *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 87, No. 4
  - Available via UiO VPN

- Jonathan Vogel - 'Luminosity & Indiscriminability' (25)
- *Philosophical Perspectives* Vol. 24, No. 1
- Available via UiO VPN

Week 4:

- Amia Srinivasan - 'Are we Luminous?' (26)
- *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. 90, No. 2
- Available via UiO VPN

Week 5

- Amia Srinivasan - 'Normativity without Cartesian Privilege' (33)
- Forthcoming, *Philosophical Issues*
- Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ok387wx>

Total pages = 202

### Higher-Order Evidence

Week 6:

- Richard Feldman - 'Respecting the Evidence' (25)
- *Philosophical Perspectives* Vol. 19, No. 1
- Available via UiO VPN
- David Christensen - 'Rational Reflection' (19)
- *Philosophical Perspectives* Vol 24, No. 1
- Available via UiO VPN

Week 7:

- David Christensen 'Higher-Order Evidence' (31)
- *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. 81, No. 1
- Available via UiO VPN
- Adam Elga - 'The Puzzle of the Unmarked Clock and the New Rational Reflection Principle' (13)
- *Philosophical Studies* Vol. 164, No. 1
- Available via UiO VPN

Week 8:

- Maria Lasonen-Aarnio - 'Higher Order Evidence and the Limits of Defeat' (31)
- *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. 88, No. 2
- Available via UiO VPN

Week 9:

- Daniel Greco - 'A Puzzle About Epistemic Akrasia' (19)
  - *Philosophical Studies* Vol. 167, No. 2
  - Available via UiO VPN
- Sophie Horowitz - 'Epistemic Akrasia' (27)
  - *Nous* Vol. 48, No. 4
  - Available via UiO VPN

Total pages = 165

### **Knowledge & Action**

Week 10

- John Hawthorne & Jason Stanley - 'Knowledge & Action' (19)
  - *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 105, No. 10
  - Available via UiO VPN
- Jeremy Fantl & Matthew McGrath - 'On Pragmatic Encroachment in Epistemology' (31)
  - *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. 75, No. 3
  - Available via UiO VPN

Week 11

- Jessica Brown - 'SSI & Knowledge Norm of Practical Reasoning' (22)
  - *Nous* Vol. 42, No. 2
  - Available via UiO VPN
- Ram Neta 'Treating Something As A Reason For Action' (15)
  - *Nous* Vol. 43, No. 4
  - Available via UiO VPN

Week 12

- Mikkel Gerken - 'Warrant and Action' (18)
  - *Synthese* Vol. 178, No. 3
  - Available via UiO VPN
- Igor Douven - 'Knowledge and Practical Reasoning' (17)
  - *Dialectica* Vol. 62, No. 1
  - Available via UiO VPN
- Jennifer Lackey - 'Acting on Knowledge' (21)
  - *Philosophical Perspectives* Vol. 24, No. 1

- Available via UiO VPN

#### Week 13

- Brian Weatherson - 'Knowledge, Bets, and Interests' (28)  
- *Knowledge Ascriptions* (Brown & Gerken eds.) OUP  
- Available at: <http://brian.weatherson.org/KBI.pdf>

- Clayton Littlejohn - 'A Plea For Epistemic Excuses' (28)  
- *manuscript*  
- Available at: <http://philpapers.org/archive/LITAPF.pdf>

#### Week 14

- Sarah Moss - 'Epistemology Formalized' (43)  
- *Philosophical Review* Vol. 122, No. 1  
- Available via UiO VPN

- Jonathan Weisberg - 'Knowledge in Action' (23)  
- *Philosophers' Imprint* Vol. 13, No. 22  
- Open access on Philosophers' Imprint website

Total pages = 265