course  phil 2460: Epistemology: Disagreement, Higher-Order Evidence, Epistemic Permissivism, Irrelevant Influences on Belief, & Epistemic Akrasia

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meeting times  Thursdays, 17:00–19:30
Cathedral of Learning, Room 1001

office hours  Mondays and Wednesdays, 16:15–17:15, and by appointment
Cathedral of Learning, Room 1009-H

evaluation  Your final grade in this course will be determined by 5 components:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Summaries</td>
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<td>Reading Responses</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Paper(s)</td>
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**Reading Summaries:** If you are taking the course for credit, I will ask you each week to type up a brief, one or two page, summary of any one of the readings from that week (except for the week that you are presenting—see below). This summary should state the central thesis of the article and outline the article’s major argumentative moves. The summary can be of any of the articles assigned that week—including the optional readings. These summaries/responses are due to me, via email, the Wednesday before seminar each week (so that I may start reading them Thursday morning). You may skip as many as three of these summaries without penalty.

**Reading Responses:** Each week, you should post a response to one of the required readings on the course’s Courseweb site. This means that you should raise a clarificatory question, a consequence of an author’s position that you found interesting, or an objection to an author’s position. These responses will be visible to your fellow students, and I encourage you to read your classmate’s responses and respond (respectfully—see Participation below) to the questions or objections your classmates raise. [Note: assuming that Courseweb allows this—I don’t yet have access to the Courseweb site.] Like the summaries, these responses are due on the Wednesday before seminar each week.

**Presentation:** If you are taking the seminar for credit, you should sign up to do a presentation during one of the seminar meetings. The week that you are presenting, your job will just be to briefly summarize the required readings before we discuss them and to have some discussion questions prepared to stimulate discussion (a brief presentation is not longer than ten minutes). You needn’t prepare a handout for this; if you do prepare a handout, it may not be longer than one page front and back. The week that you are presenting, you should also read the optional readings, and you should submit a summary of every required article.

**Participation:** It is important that you come to seminar prepared to actively and respectfully participate in the discussion. This means 1) that you should have done all the required readings; 2) that you should contribute to the discussion; and 3) that you should be respectful
Evaluation (con’t)

of your fellow classmates. You should take a look at Chalmer’s guidelines for respectful, constructive, and inclusive philosophical discussion to get a more concrete idea of what I mean by treating your classmates respectfully.

Paper(s): You may either submit one long research paper (about 6,000 words) or three short response papers (about 2,000 words). If you choose to submit three short response papers, these papers should be handed in within one week of the seminar in which we discuss the readings you are responding to. (So, for instance, if you write a short response to Elga’s “How to Disagree about How to Disagree”, then this must be handed in before 10/1. If you choose to submit one long research paper, then you should meet with me to discuss your ideas before 12/3, and your paper is due before the start of the spring semester.

Schedule

9/3: Course Intro, Introduction to Peer Disagreement, and primer on Bayesian Epistemology

Required:

• Van Inwagen (1996), “It Is Wrong Everywhere, Always, and for Anyone to Believe Anything on Insufficient Evidence.”
• Strevens (ms), “Notes on Bayesian Confirmation Theory”, §1–4

Optional:

• Kelly (2005), “The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement”

9/10: Peer Disagreement: Conciliationist Views

Required:

• Elga (2007), “Reflection and Disagreement”
• Steel (msb), “Anticipating Failure and Avoiding It”

Optional:

• White (2009b), “On Treating Oneself and Others as Thermometers”

9/17: Seminar cancelled—I will be away at a conference. We will schedule a time to make up this meeting later on in the semester.
9/24: Peer Disagreement: Objections to Conciliationism

**Required:**
- Weatherson (2013), “Disagreements, Philosophical and Otherwise”
- Elga (2010), “How to Disagree about How to Disagree”

**Optional:**
- Fitelson & Jehle (2009), “What is the Equal Weight View?”
- Shogenji (ms), “My Way or Her Way: A Conundrum in Bayesian Epistemology of Disagreement”

10/1: Peer Disagreement: The Total Evidence View

**Required:**
- Kelly (2010), “Peer Disagreement and Higher Order Evidence”
- Steel (msa), “Against Right Reason”

10/8: Higher-Order Evidence

**Required:**

**Optional:**
- Schoenfield (forthcoming), “A Dilemma for Calibrationism”

10/15: Epistemic Permissivism

**Required:**
- White (2005), “Epistemic Permissiveness”
- Kelly (2014), “Evidence can be Permissive”

**Optional:**
- Greco & Hedden (forthcoming), “Uniqueness and Metaepistemology”
10/22: Epistemic Permissivism and Precision

Required:
- van Fraassen (1989, ch. 12)

Optional:

10/29: Epistemic Permissivism and Peer Disagreement

Required:
- Christensen (forthcoming), “Conciliation, Uniqueness, and Rational Toxicity”
- Titelbaum & Kopec (ms), “Plausible Permissivism”

Optional:

11/5: Irrelevant Influences on Belief

Required:
- Elga (ms), “Lucky to be Rational”
- White (2010), “You Just Believe that Because...”
- Schoenfield (2014), “Permission to Believe”

11/12: Epistemic Akrasia

Required:
- Egan & Elga (2005), “I can’t believe I’m stupid”

Optional:
- Elga (2005), “On overrating oneself...and knowing it”
- Kelly (2008), “Disagreement, Dogmatism, and Belief Polarization”

11/19: Epistemic Akrasia & Enkratic Principles

Required:
- Christensen (2010), “Rational Reflection”
12/3: Epistemic Akrasia & Enkratic Principles

Required:

- Titelbaum (forthcoming), “Rationality’s Fixed Point”
- Lasonen-Aarnio (ms), “Enkrasia or Evidentialism?”
References


—. ms. “Enkasia or Evidentialism?” [5]


Steel, Robert. msa. “Against Right Reason.” [3]

—. msb. “Anticipating Failure and Avoiding It.” [2]


