

PHILOSOPHY 384: APPLIED EPISTEMOLOGY

CONTACT INFO	Sarah Moss ssmoss@umich.edu office: 2232 Angell Hall
DESCRIPTION	This course surveys philosophical theories of knowledge and rationality in order to examine the implications of these theories for our thinking about race, ethnicity, and racism in the United States today. The practical applications of material covered in this course include the epistemology of racial profiling, racial and ethnic disparities in our criminal justice system, the epistemic value of first-personal reports about experiences of discrimination on the basis of race or gender or disability status, definitions of race and ethnicity, and finally, what we should believe when confronting disagreement between different religious or cultural or political views. In short, this course is about epistemology—and yet at the same time, it is about how you should live your life as an agent governed not only by epistemic norms, but also by legal, political, cultural, social, and ethical norms.
PREREQUISITES	A previous course in philosophy is an advisory prerequisite for this course.
MATERIALS	All readings and assignments will be posted on our U-M Canvas course webpage at https://umich.instructure.com/ .
GRADING	Early mid-term exam in lecture: 20% First paper: 20% Second paper: 20% Final exam: 25% Section participation: 15%
DISABILITY	Students requesting academic accommodations for a disability are required to register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. If you need accommodation, please contact both me and your graduate student instructor with an official request for accommodation at the beginning of the course.
READINGS	Gettier cases and the analysis of knowledge 9/8 Nagel 2014: “The Analysis of Knowledge” 9/13 Edelman 2016: “Heffernan v. Paterson and an Absurd First Amendment Doctrine” 9/15 excerpt from United States Supreme Court, <i>Utah v. Strieff</i> , 579 U.S. (2016) Alexander 2012: “The Color of Justice” ¹

¹This reading is chapter 3 of *The New Jim Crow*.

excerpt from Du Bois 1903: *The Souls of Black Folk*
excerpt from Baldwin 1963: *The Fire Next Time*

Probability theory and degrees of belief

- 9/20 Bradley 2015: "Belief and Probability"²
9/22 Strevens 2012: "Notes on Bayesian Confirmation Theory," §1–3.3
9/27 Schneps and Colmez 2013: "Multiplying Non-Independent Probabilities"³
9/29 Schneps and Colmez 2013: "Simpson's Paradox"⁴
Radelet and Pierce 1991: "Choosing Those Who Will Die: Race and the Death Penalty in Florida"
excerpt from Muhammad 2010: "Writing Crime Into Race: Racial Criminalization and the Dawn of Jim Crow"⁵

Bayes' Theorem and the base rate fallacy

- 10/4 Bradley 2015: "Bayes' Theorem and the Base Rate Fallacy"⁶
10/6 Jorgensen and Gotzsche 2010: "Who evaluates public health programmes? A review of the NHS Breast Screening Programme"
Gendler 2001: "On the Epistemic Costs of Implicit Bias"
10/11 *Early mid-term exam in lecture*

Reliabilist theories of knowledge and reference class problems

- 10/11 excerpt from Goldman and Beddor 2015: "Reliabilist Epistemology"
excerpt from Comesaña 2011: "A Well-Founded Solution to the Generality Problem"
James 2016: "Do Races Exist? Contemporary Philosophical Debates"
10/13 Schauer 2003: "Pit Bulls, Golden Retrievers, and Other Dangerous Dogs"⁷
James 2016: "Race versus Ethnicity"
excerpt from West 2002: "A Genealogy of Modern Racism"
10/18 *University of Michigan Fall Study Break*

Sensitivity conditions on knowledge

- 10/20 Nagel 2014: "Internalism and Externalism"⁸
10/25 Thomson 1986: "Liability and Individualized Evidence"
10/27 Enoch, Spectre, and Fisher 2012: "Statistical Evidence, Sensitivity, and the Legal Value of Knowledge"

²This reading is chapter 1 of *A Critical Introduction to Formal Epistemology*.

³This reading is chapter 1 of *Math on Trial: How Numbers Get Used and Abused in the Courtroom*.

⁴This reading is chapter 6 of *Math on Trial: How Numbers Get Used and Abused in the Courtroom*.

⁵This is chapter 2 of *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*.

⁶This reading is the first appendix of *A Critical Introduction to Formal Epistemology*.

⁷This reading is chapter 2 of *Profiles, Probabilities, and Stereotypes*.

⁸This reading is chapter 5 of *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*.

Social choice theory and Arrow's impossibility theorem

- 11/1 Peterson 2009: "Introduction"⁹
11/3 Peterson 2009: "Social Choice Theory"¹⁰
The first paper for this class will be due by the start of lecture on 11/3.
11/8 Ariely 2009: "The Truth About Relativity"¹¹
11/10 Nathanson 1985: "Does it Matter if the Death Penalty is Arbitrarily Administered?"

Testimony and testimonial injustice

- 11/15 Nagel 2014: "Testimony"¹²
11/17 Fricker 2007: "The Central Case of Testimonial Injustice"¹³
11/22 Barnes 2016: "Taking Their Word for It"¹⁴
excerpt from Mills 2015: "Global White Ignorance"
11/24 *University of Michigan Thanksgiving Recess*

Peer disagreement and higher-order evidence

- 11/29 Christensen 2009: "Disagreement as Evidence: The Epistemology of Controversy"
12/1 Feldman 2007: "Reasonable Religious Disagreements"
Lorde 1979: "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House"
12/6 Huemer 2005: "Is Critical Thinking Epistemically Responsible?"
12/8 The final lecture of this course will be reserved for summary and reflection.
The second paper for this class will be due by the start of lecture on 12/8.

⁹This reading is chapter 1 of *An Introduction to Decision Theory*.

¹⁰This reading is chapter 13 of *An Introduction to Decision Theory*.

¹¹This reading is chapter 1 of *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions*.

¹²This reading is chapter 6 of *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*.

¹³This reading is section 1.3 of *Epistemic Injustice*.

¹⁴This reading is chapter 4 of *The Minority Body*.