

COURSE PHIL 2460: EPISTEMOLOGY: DISAGREEMENT, HIGHER-ORDER EVIDENCE, EPISTEMIC PERMISSIVISM, IRRELEVANT INFLUENCES ON BELIEF, & EPISTEMIC AKRASIA

INSTRUCTOR J. Dmitri Gallow  
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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

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

Reading Summaries	15%
Reading Responses	15%
Presentation	10%
Participation	10%
Paper(s)	50%

**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  
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of your fellow classmates. You should take a look at Chalmers'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."
- FELDMAN (2006), "Epistemological Puzzles about Disagreement"
- STREVEN (ms), "Notes on Bayesian Confirmation Theory", §1-4

*Optional:*

- ROSEN (2001), "Nominalism, Naturalism, Epistemic Relativism."
- KELLY (2005), "The Epistemic Significance of Disagreement"

9/10: Peer Disagreement: Conciliationist Views

*Required:*

- CHRISTENSEN (2007), "The Epistemology of Disagreement: The Good News"
- 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.

SCHEDULE  
(CON'T)

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 & JEHL (2009), "What is the Equal Weight View?"
- SHOGENJI (ms), "My Way or Her Way: A Conundrum in Bayesian Epistemology of Disagreement"
- MATHESON (2015), "Are Conciliatory Views of Disagreement Self-Defeating?"

10/1: Peer Disagreement: The Total Evidence View

*Required:*

- KELLY (2010), "Peer Disagreement and Higher Order Evidence"
- CHRISTENSEN (2011), "Disagreement, Question-Begging, and Epistemic Self-Criticism"
- STEEL (msa), "Against Right Reason"

10/8: Higher-Order Evidence

*Required:*

- CHRISTENSEN (2010), "Higher Order Evidence"
- LASONEN-AARNIO (2014), "Higher Order Evidence and the Limits of Defeat"

*Optional:*

- SCHOENFIELD (forthcoming), "A Dilemma for Calibrationism"

10/15: Epistemic Permissivism

*Required:*

- WHITE (2005), "Epistemic Permissiveness"
- KELLY (2014), "Evidence can be Permissive"
- HOROWITZ (2014b), "Immoderately Rational"

*Optional:*

- BRUECKNER & BUNDY (2012), "On 'Epistemic Permissiveness'"
- GRECO & HEDDEN (forthcoming), "Uniqueness and Metaepistemology"

SCHEDULE  
(CON'T)

10/22: Epistemic Permissivism and Precision

*Required:*

- VAN FRAASSEN (1989, ch. 12)
- WHITE (2009a), “Evidential Symmetry and Mushy Credence”
- JOYCE (2010), “A Defense of Imprecise Probabilities in Inference and Decision-Making”

*Optional:*

- MEACHAM (2014), “Impermissive Bayesianism”

10/29: Epistemic Permissivism and Peer Disagreement

*Required:*

- BALLANTYNE & COFFMAN (forthcoming), “Conciliationism and Uniqueness”
- CHRISTENSEN (forthcoming), “Conciliation, Uniqueness, and Rational Toxicity”
- TITELBAUM & KOPEC (ms), “Plausible Permissivism”

*Optional:*

- LEVINSTEIN (2015), “Permissive Rationality and Sensitivity”

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”
- GRECO (2014), “A puzzle about Epistemic Akrasia”
- HOROWITZ (2014a), “Epistemic Akrasia”

*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”
- ELGA (2013), “The puzzle of the unmarked clock and the new rational reflection principle”
- LASONEN-AARNIO (2015), “New Rational Reflection and Internalism about Rationality”

SCHEDULE  
(CONT)

12/3: Epistemic Akrasia & Enkratic Principles

*Required:*

- TITELBAUM ([forthcoming](#)), “Rationality’s Fixed Point”
- LASONEN-AARNIO ([ms](#)), “Enkrasia or Evidentialism?”

## REFERENCES

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