



# PHIL2056

## Knowledge, Language and Power

Session 2, Weekday attendance, North Ryde 2021

*Department of Philosophy*

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#### **Disclaimer**

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#### **Session 2 Learning and Teaching Update**

The decision has been made to conduct study online for the remainder of Session 2 for all units WITHOUT mandatory on-campus learning activities. Exams for Session 2 will also be online where possible to do so.

This is due to the extension of the lockdown orders and to provide certainty around arrangements for the remainder of Session 2. We hope to return to campus beyond Session 2 as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Some classes/teaching activities cannot be moved online and must be taught on campus. You should already know if you are in one of these classes/teaching activities and your unit convenor will provide you with more information via iLearn. If you want to confirm, see the list of [units with mandatory on-campus classes/teaching activities](#).

Visit the [MQ COVID-19 information page](#) for more detail.

## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor; Lecturer (Parts 1 and 3)

Jennifer Duke-Yonge

[jennifer.duke-yonge@mq.edu.au](mailto:jennifer.duke-yonge@mq.edu.au)

Consultation by arrangement

Lecturer (Part 2)

Mark Alfano

[mark.alfano@mq.edu.au](mailto:mark.alfano@mq.edu.au)

Consultation by arrangement

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

What is knowledge? Why is it valuable? And to what extent is our knowledge of the world affected by social position, power and language? In this unit, we will explore traditional and contemporary approaches to epistemological questions about what we can know, what we should believe, and whom and what we should trust. Can we trust our individual senses or reflection to provide knowledge of the world, or is knowledge inherently social? When our own intuitions clash with what others say, should we trust ourselves or our community? When should we trust and defer to experts, and how can we tell who's really an expert to begin with? We will consider philosophical and practical questions about what it is to be a good or bad epistemic agent, focusing on concepts of epistemic (ir)responsibility and epistemic virtues and vices. We will also examine society-level phenomena that may undermine some people's ability to engage fully as epistemic agents, including systemic material, social, and political patterns that can manifest as epistemic injustice. Through an examination of issues including political language, propaganda and conspiracy theories, we will consider how our epistemic practices and institutions can lead to injustice or corruption, and what can we do about it.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

**ULO1:** apply understanding developed through course material and readings to explain key theoretical and applied problems in Epistemology and responses to them.

**ULO2:** apply skills in critical analysis and reflection to respond to the problems and theories introduced in the unit.

**ULO3:** clearly communicate your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit.

**ULO4:** contribute to the learning of the group by engaging constructively in philosophical discussion and activities.

## General Assessment Information

### Detailed assessment information and rubrics

Detailed information about each of the assessments, including rubrics, will be available in iLearn. Please make sure you read the assessment information carefully, and contact the convenor if you have any questions.

### Submission and return of assessments

Assessments in this unit are to be submitted through the appropriate 'Turnitin' links in the unit website. They will be marked through 'Grademark', which will allow you to access your marked assignments directly through the website. For information about Turnitin and Grademark, see:

<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/tools-and-resources/ilearn/ilearn-quick-guides-for-students/assignments-and-grades>

### Special Consideration

Requests for extensions should be submitted via a Special Consideration request, which is available in the <http://ask.mq.edu.au> portal. Your request should be submitted no later than five days after the due date and should be accompanied by appropriate documentation. Please see the Special Consideration policy in the list of policies at the end of this document for further details.

Read the policy closely as your request may be turned down if you have not followed procedure, or if you have not submitted a request in a timely manner.

### Late Submission Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – **10 marks out of 100 credit will be deducted per day** for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven days (incl. weekends after the original submission date).

### Academic Integrity

In Philosophy, academic honesty is taken very seriously, and a range of methods, including but not restricted to the use of Turnitin, are used to detect plagiarism. Misrepresenting someone else's work as your own may be grounds for referral to the Faculty Disciplinary Committee. If you have questions about how to properly cite work or how to credit sources, please ask the convenor for help and see also the Academic Integrity Policy <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/academic-integrity>

Please note that the policy also prohibits resubmitting work you have already submitted in another unit. This counts as self-plagiarism.

A helpful resource if you would like to know more about referencing and avoiding plagiarism is Macquarie's Academic Integrity Module, available here: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/skills-development>. You will need to complete this Module before accessing the unit content, if you have not already done so. More information is available in iLearn.

### Academic Writing and Study Support

Macquarie University offers a number of services to help with academic writing, referencing and study skills. For details, see: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/skills/assignments>

For information about policies related to Assessment, see *Policies and Procedures* section below.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<a href="#">Tutorial/online discussion</a>	20%	No	Ongoing
<a href="#">Reflective tasks</a>	20%	No	23:59, 08/08/2021; 23:59, 12/09/2021
<a href="#">Essay</a>	35%	No	23:59, 07/11/2021
<a href="#">Online quizzes</a>	25%	No	23:59, Sundays, weekly

### Tutorial/online discussion

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 15 hours

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

Students should be well prepared for tutorial discussion (in class or online). Students should make a constructive contribution to classroom/online discussion and associated activities.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- clearly communicate your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit.
- contribute to the learning of the group by engaging constructively in philosophical discussion and activities.

## Reflective tasks

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Reflective Writing

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 15 hours

Due: **23:59, 08/08/2021; 23:59, 12/09/2021**

Weighting: **20%**

Reflective tasks

On successful completion you will be able to:

- apply understanding developed through course material and readings to explain key theoretical and applied problems in Epistemology and responses to them.
- apply skills in critical analysis and reflection to respond to the problems and theories introduced in the unit.
- clearly communicate your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the unit.

## Essay

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Essay

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 30 hours

Due: **23:59, 07/11/2021**

Weighting: **35%**

An argumentative Essay about themes from the unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- apply understanding developed through course material and readings to explain key theoretical and applied problems in Epistemology and responses to them.
- apply skills in critical analysis and reflection to respond to the problems and theories introduced in the unit.
- clearly communicate your own perspective on the views and arguments presented in the

unit.

## Online quizzes

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 15 hours

Due: **23:59, Sundays, weekly**

Weighting: **25%**

Online quizzes

On successful completion you will be able to:

- apply understanding developed through course material and readings to explain key theoretical and applied problems in Epistemology and responses to them.

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<sup>1</sup> If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

<sup>2</sup> Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

## Delivery and Resources

### Lectures

Lecture videos will be available online from Monday of each week. You should make sure you watch the lectures before attending tutorials or engaging in tutorial discussions.

### Tutorials/ discussion

Internal/ Weekday Students will attend one tutorial each week (Weeks 2-11), either on-campus (covid restrictions permitting) or on Zoom. Check the timetable for details (<http://timetables.mq.edu.au>)

External/Fully Online students will engage in tutorial discussions through the discussion forums in iLearn (Weeks 2-11).

### Reading

All the essential readings and some supplementary readings for the course will be available electronically through the library, with links from the 'Leganto' block iLearn. You should do the essential weekly reading before your tutorial/discussion.

## Website

The unit website is available through iLearn (<http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>). It contains essential resources for the unit, and you are expected to log in on a regular basis.

## Student Email

Communications about the unit may be sent to your MQ student email address. Please make sure you check it regularly. For more information about accessing your MQ email, and how to redirect it to a personal email account if you wish to do so, can be found here: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk/student-email>

## Unit Schedule

<p><b>PART 1: Traditional Epistemology: What can I know? (Dr Jenny Duke-Yonge)</b></p> <p>In the first part of the unit, we will explore some traditional approaches to knowledge and belief. What is knowledge? Can we, as individuals, really have knowledge about the world? And if so, how do we get it?</p>		
<p>Week 1</p> <p>(week beginning 26/7)</p>	<p><b>Introduction to Epistemology; The problem of scepticism</b></p> <p>We will begin with the traditional analysis of Knowledge as Justified True Belief, and consider the challenge of the sceptic, who questions whether such knowledge is possible.</p> <p><i>No tutorials or assessed discussion this week</i></p>	
<p>Week 2</p> <p>(w/b 2/8)</p>	<p><b>Foundations for Knowledge: Rationalism and Empiricism</b></p> <p>This week we will look at some traditional answers to the question of how we come to know about the world, and what justifies our claims to know. Does our knowledge come through Reason? Sense experience?</p>	<p>Reflective Task Part 1 (introductory quiz) due Sunday 8/8.</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>(w/b 9/8)</p>	<p><b>Justification: Internalism and Externalism</b></p> <p>We'll begin this week to a challenge to the traditional analysis of knowledge, and the conception of justification that underlies it. How should we understand 'justification'?</p>	
<p>Week 4</p> <p>(w/b 16/8)</p>	<p><b>Epistemic Fallibility, Luck and Responsibility</b></p> <p>The preceding weeks may have given us reason to think that our knowledge is not as secure as we might have supposed. Is it just a matter of luck whether we know anything at all? This week we'll consider how we should respond to our own epistemic fallibility.</p>	
<p><b>PART 2: Social Epistemology (A/Prof Mark Alfano)</b></p> <p>In the second part of the unit, we will explore Social Epistemology, which is based on the idea that to understand knowledge we need to go beyond the individual and consider the social role of the concept of knowledge and our epistemic practices, and how our knowledge is a function of our relations with others.</p>		
<p>Week 5</p> <p>(w/b 23/8)</p>	<p><b>Social Epistemology</b></p> <p>This week introduces social epistemology and Craig's state of nature approach to the analysis of knowledge</p>	

Week 6 (w/b 30/8)	<b>Social networks</b> This week continues Craig's state of nature approach, introduces network models that partially operationalize it, and explores some of the ways in which misinformation spreads.	
Week 7 (w/b 6/9)	<b>Misinformation</b> This week continues the exploration of ways in which misinformation spreads in social networks	Reflective Task Part 2 due Sunday 12/9
Mid-semester break		
Week 8 (w/b 27/9)	<b>Social Epistemology and Virtue Epistemology</b> This week explores the relationship between social epistemology and virtue epistemology	
<p><b>PART 3: Epistemic Pathologies (Dr Jenny Duke-Yonge)</b></p> <p>In the final section, we will explore how social and political inequalities and power relations are connected with distinctively epistemic forms of injustice. We will begin by exploring the concept of Epistemic Injustice, and then consider examples and case studies including speech and silencing, propaganda and gaslighting, and conspiracy theories.</p>		
Week 9 (w/b 4/10)	<b>Epistemic Injustice</b> This week we will introduce the concept of Epistemic Injustice: a distinctive form of injustice that may undermine a person's ability to engage in society as an epistemic agent.	
Week 10 (w/b 11/10)	<b>Language and Power</b> This week, we'll consider how both the use of language and the suppression of language may lead to injustice.	
Week 11 (w/b 18/10)	<b>Abuses of trust: Propaganda and gaslighting</b> This week, we will look at the epistemology of trust, and ways in which which trust can be abused in political and personal contexts, focussing on propaganda and gaslighting as examples.	
Week 12 (w/b 25/10)	<b>Conspiracy theories</b> In the final week we will focus on the epistemology of conspiracy theories. What is the attraction of conspiracy theories? Why can they be so intractable? And how should we respond?  <i>No tutorials or assessed discussion this week</i>	
Week 13 (w/b 1/11)	No lectures: essay writing week  <i>No tutorials or assessed discussion this week</i>	Essay due Sunday 7/11



## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

## Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au) or if you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Getting help with your assignment](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)

- [Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

If you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.