



PHIL2056

Knowledge, Language and Power

Session 2, Online-scheduled-weekday 2022

Department of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor; Lecturer (Wks 1-4, 11-12)

Jennifer Duke-Yonge

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Consultation by arrangement

Lecturer (Wks 5-10)

Mark Alfano

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Consultation by arrangement

Tutor

Noel Clemente

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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 we can 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 here: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration>

Read this information carefully, 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 Assessment Submission Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a **5% penalty (of the**

total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). **Late submission of time sensitive tasks** (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) **will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.**

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.

Note: All assignments in this unit are individual assignments. Collusion (unauthorised collaboration on individual assignments) is a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy. This includes sharing or making use of shared assignments, in person or online. If in doubt, contact a member of teaching staff.

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
Reflective tasks	20%	No	Pt 1: 11.55pm Sun 7/8 (Wk2). Pt 2: 11.55pm Sun 11/9 (Wk7)

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Tutorial/online discussion	20%	No	Ongoing
Essay	35%	No	11.55pm Sunday 6/11 (Wk 13)
Online quizzes	25%	No	11.55pm Sundays, Wks 2-12

Reflective tasks

Assessment Type ¹: Reflective Writing

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **Pt 1: 11.55pm Sun 7/8 (Wk2). Pt 2: 11.55pm Sun 11/9 (Wk7)**

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.

Tutorial/online discussion

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 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.

Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **11.55pm Sunday 6/11 (Wk 13)**

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 ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **11.55pm Sundays, Wks 2-12**

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.

¹ 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.

² 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

Lectures will be delivered live on campus from 9-11 on Mondays, in 4 Western Rd, Room 220. Video lectures will be available shortly afterwards through Echo 360 in iLearn for online students.

Tutorials/ discussion

Students enrolled in "scheduled" offerings of this unit will attend one tutorial each week (Weeks 2-8, 10-12), either on-campus (for "In person scheduled" students) or on Zoom (for "online scheduled" students). Check the timetable for details (<http://timetables.mq.edu.au>)

- **Important note:** You must attend or watch the lectures before attending tutorials or engaging in tutorial discussions, since each week's tutorial will be based on that week's lecture. This means you should only register for the tutorial that immediately follows the lecture if are planning to attend the lecture live each week. Internal students who will not always be able to attend the lecture live should register for a Wednesday tutorial.

"Online flexible" students will engage in tutorial discussions through the discussion forums in iLearn (Weeks 2-8, 10-12).

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>PART 1: Traditional Epistemology: What can I know? (Dr Jenny Duke-Yonge)</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 25/7)</p>	<p>Introduction to Epistemology; The problem of scepticism</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 1/8)</p>	<p>Foundations for Knowledge: Rationalism and Empiricism</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 7/8.</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>(w/b 8/8)</p>	<p>Justification: Internalism and Externalism</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 15/8)</p>	<p>Epistemic Fallibility, Luck and Responsibility</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>PART 2: Social Epistemology (A/Prof Mark Alfano)</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 22/8)</p>	<p>Social Epistemology</p> <p>This week introduces social epistemology and Goldman's question about how to trust which experts.</p>	
<p>Week 6</p> <p>(w/b 29/8)</p>	<p>Social networks</p> <p>This week continues the exploration of social epistemology and asks under what conditions it makes sense to trust scientists.</p>	
<p>Week 7</p> <p>(w/b 5/9)</p>	<p>Misinformation</p> <p>This week continues the exploration social epistemology through the ways in which misinformation spreads in social networks.</p>	<p>Reflective Task Part 2 due Sunday 11/9</p>

Mid-semester break		
Week 8 (w/b 26/9)	Social Epistemology and Virtue Epistemology This week explores the relationship between social epistemology and virtue epistemology	
PART 3: Epistemic Pathologies (A/Prof Mark Alfano - Weeks 9 and 10; Dr Jenny Duke-Yonge - Weeks 11 and 12) What happens when our epistemic practices go wrong? In the final section we will explore how social and political inequalities and power relations are connected with distinctively epistemic forms of injustice, and consider what we might do about it.		
Week 9 (w/b 3/10)	Conspiracy theories This week we will examine the epistemology of conspiracy theories <i>This week the lecture will be delivered as a recorded lecture, and there will be no tutorials or assessed discussion, due to the public holiday on Monday 3/10</i>	
Week 10 (w/b 10/10)	Epistemic Injustice 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 11 (w/b 17/10)	Language and Power This week, we'll consider how both the use of language and the suppression of language may lead to injustice.	
Week 12 (w/b 24/10)	Trust and abuses of trust In the final week we will consider abuses of trust such as gaslighting, and end with some consideration of when, given the issues we've considered through the unit, we can trust our own epistemic abilities.	
Week 13 (w/b 31/10)	No lectures: essay writing week <i>No tutorials or assessed discussion this week</i>	Essay due Sunday 6/11

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](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the 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

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via [AskMQ](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit 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.