

# Teaching Portfolio

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<b>Teaching Statement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Evaluation Summaries</b>	<b>3</b>
Early Modern Philosophy (Spring 2018) . . . . .	4
Introduction to Philosophy (Spring 2018) . . . . .	7
Early Modern Science (Fall 2017) . . . . .	8
Graduate Seminar: Theories of Evidence (Fall 2017) . . . . .	10
Epistemology (Spring 2017) . . . . .	11
History of Early Modern Philosophy (Spring 2017) . . . . .	12
Graduate Seminar: Knowledge-First Epistemology (Fall 2016) . . . . .	14
Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2016) . . . . .	15
Introduction to Philosophy (Spring 2016) . . . . .	18
Introduction to Symbolic Logic (Summer 2014) . . . . .	21
<b>Sample Syllabi</b>	<b>23</b>
Introduction to Philosophy . . . . .	23
Symbolic Logic . . . . .	29
History of Early Modern (Lower Division) . . . . .	31
History of Early Modern (Upper Division) . . . . .	35
Epistemology (Upper Division) . . . . .	39
Seminar: Knowledge-First Epistemology . . . . .	45
Seminar: Evidence . . . . .	50
Seminar: The Factive Turn in Epistemology . . . . .	52

## Teaching Statement

There are at least two good reasons for undergraduates to study philosophy: it's an opportunity to engage meaningfully with issues of deep significance that are often taken for granted or ignored, and it fosters the development of their critical thinking skills. In my teaching I facilitate both by focusing on arguments.

I focus on arguments for two reasons. First, the ability to identify considerations that bear upon a question and then to marshal those considerations into an argument is a skill that's useful well beyond academia. Second, my focus on arguments helps to overcome an obstacle that prevents many students from engaging with important philosophical questions: they don't see how empirical evidence could bear upon those questions, and they can't imagine a non-empirical methodology for figuring out what's true. As a result they imagine that philosophical discussion consists of mere assertion and counter-assertion (or worse). By focusing on the way that relatively uncontroversial considerations bear upon contentious conclusions — by focusing on arguments — I provide students with tools for gauging the likely truth of philosophical claims.

My focus on arguments informs the contents of my lectures. I recently began a lecture on Gettier cases and the JTB analysis of knowledge with a single-question pop quiz: define 'chair'. This led to our discussion of the general project of analyzing concepts in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, and of the role of counterexamples in that project. Next came a second quiz question: provide a counterexample to your definition of 'chair', which in turn sparked a lively series of failed attempts to patch up our analyses. Only then did we turn to the JTB. The approach was a success: our abstract discussion of analyses and counterexamples was made tractable by being rooted in our thinking about an object as familiar as a chair. And once the students were clear about the abstract issues it was relatively easy for them to appreciate the JTB analysis and Gettier's counterexamples to its sufficiency.

A second example of the way that I stress arguments in my lectures: in logic courses I like to show short YouTube clips of a debate or a paragraph of an editorial, extract the argument, and then analyze it using the formal tools that we're studying. Often students will find those arguments to be initially compelling, only to see them fall apart upon closer scrutiny. The revelatory effect of this experience can be dramatic, much like seeing through a deception, and this motivates students to develop the analytical skills that make it possible.

One way that I focus on arguments at the course-design level is to assign relatively short readings, especially for beginning students and non-majors. This helps to focus attention on the portions of the text that are most salient to my teaching goals, thereby increasing the chances that students will read the assigned text while decreasing the chances that they'll be distracted by less salient points. For example, I assign the Euthyphro when my teaching goal is to examine the source of moral normativity. Given that teaching goal, the most salient parts of the text are Euthyphro's proposed analyses of piety and Socrates's objections. Unfortunately, students tend to focus instead plot and character, which are less salient to my objective. As a result, I replace the first few pages of the text with an extremely brief summary of the plot, picking up only when Socrates first demands an analysis of piety.

Finally, my focus on arguments informs my interactions with students. I strongly encourage students to come to my office hours to discuss their essays, where I read the paper out loud to the student line by line, asking questions and making comments. Having clarified the central thesis of the essay I ask the student to describe how each subsequent paragraph or sentence contributes to establishing that thesis. I ask about word choice and phrasing. I encourage students to be aware of why they're writing what they're writing, and to convey this to the reader in the form of signposting in the text (e.g. 'my first premise is' or 'this is important because'). The result is a more persuasive, more coherent, and more concise paper, as well as a better critical thinker.

The in-class role of the lecturer goes beyond providing a clear and engaging presentation of a series of arguments. Also critical to student learning is the creation of a suitable learning environment. Learning frequently requires a sort of vulnerability on the part of the student: ask a question and you expose your ignorance; answer a question and you risk getting it wrong. In a sense the safer course is to sit quietly and never risk exposing your own limitations, but that's very detrimental to real learning. The sensitive nature of the issues discussed in many philosophy courses exacerbates this issue: some students react to any challenge to their deeply held beliefs by withdrawing from the conversation, sitting back in their chairs (literally) with arms crossed.

One thing that I find to be very productive in this regard is simply to arrive to class a few minutes early and chat with the students before the lecture begins. I learn their names and where they grew up. I ask them about their weekends. I frequently pause during the lecture to solicit questions or comments — from everyone, not just extroverted and enthusiastic students — and then make a point of interpreting those questions or comments sympathetically. This helps students to feel comfortable with me and with their fellow students, which in turn makes them more comfortable taking the sorts of risks that intellectual growth requires.

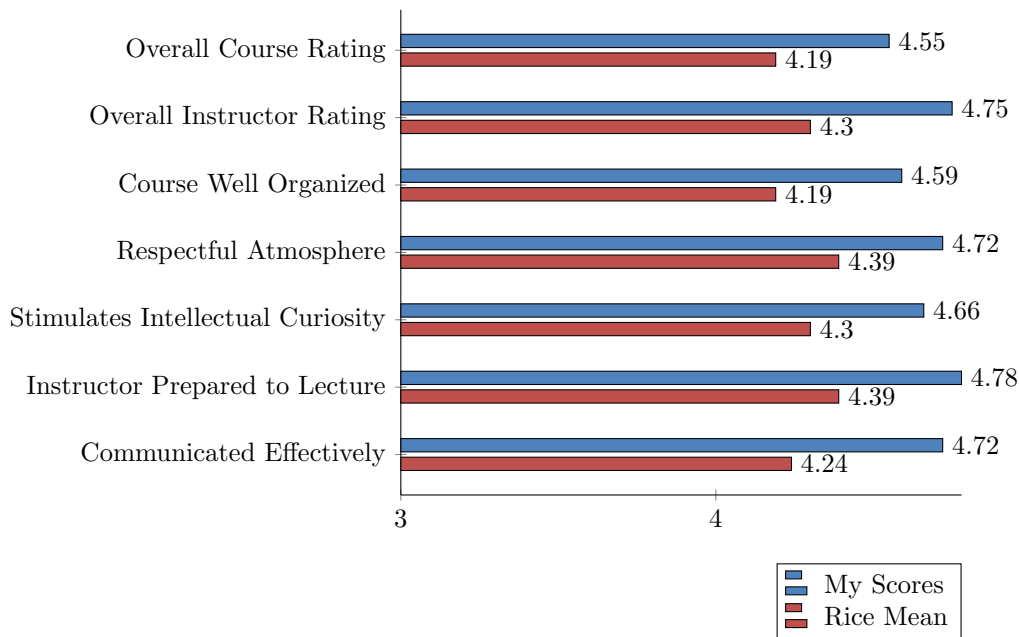
One of my teaching goals is to help my students recognize the value of a philosophical education, both to motivate their current studies and to encourage continued philosophical studies in the future. An indication of my success in this endeavor is the significant number of students who have become philosophy majors after taking one of my courses, either to engage further with the material or to further develop their analytical skills for other pursuits. I've also become involved in UT's Intellectual Entrepreneurship program, in which I volunteered to mentor a student considering graduate studies in philosophy. She became interested in meta-ethics in an Ancient Philosophy course for I was the teaching assistant. The mentorship had two goals: to show my mentee what it's like to study philosophy at the graduate level, and to assist her in producing a high quality essay that she can present at undergraduate conferences or to use as a writing sample when applying to graduate school.

## Early Modern Philosophy

### Rice University, Spring 2018

This course covers the history of western philosophy in the modern period, which for our purposes consists of the 17th and 18th centuries. Medieval Europeans would have taken for granted a worldview originating with Aristotle and refined by his successors, Ptolemy, Aquinas, and the Scholastic Philosophers. In the 16th century that worldview came under assault from advances in both theory (e.g. Copernicus) and observation (e.g. Galileo). Philosophy in the 17th and 18th century is largely devoted to constructing a new way of understanding the world and our place in it. We begin with Descartes and Leibniz, two of the great 17th century continental rationalists. Next we move on 17th and 18th century British empiricists, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. We conclude with Kant's attempted synthesis of rationalism and empiricism.

#### Evaluation Summary:



#### Complete Student Comments:

Great course. I found the material very interesting and the lectures were engaging and interactive. Not much work; the pop quizzes are easy if you keep up with the readings and pay attention in class.

The class was super interesting and super deep. We mainly covered epistemology, the study of knowledge. Take this class if you want to really know if you have hands. For real, it's super deep and super cool.

Class would have probably been interesting if I paid more attention. There are surprise pop quizzes

so you have to go to class every day.

Professor is good at encouraging student participation, which is a critical part of “doing philosophy” and makes the course both enjoyable and beneficial. Readings are well sized and are relevant for class lecture and exams. Assignments and class structure were well considered and organized.

Great course! readings for every class, which could be long but they were manageable, like 11 pop quizzes, 2 exams, and a final paper. It was a super interesting class and we got super in depth in some really cool stuff! I would strongly recommend it for non-philosophy majors!

This classed is well-organized and completes the goals it sets for itself. The course is not too difficult, but it challenged me to challenge these revered figures in philosophy. I felt prepared for all of the exams by coming to class, even though I didn't do all the readings. For the term paper, though, it is helpful to do the readings because you need to have formed an opinion of the content as you go into writing the paper.

This class was really interesting. It provides a really nice summer of early modern period - mainly focusing on epistemology. As someone whose main interest is not epistemology, I still found the basic views really cool to think about, and many of the questions are still relevant today.

This course was extremely well organized and, for an introductory course with 40ish students, contained a nice balance of lecture and some discussion. Prof. Miller did an amazing job explaining the readings and was a very entertaining lecturer. The material itself wasn't always thrilling to me as I'm more interested in ethics and it was mostly metaphysics + epistemology (questions about how we can know what is real, how we can know anything at all, etc.) Overall though it was a solid intro to important thinkers on this topic and provided a great foundation for future courses in philosophy.

This is an interesting class that covers a large number of early modern thinkers. My issue with it is that it is not set up like any other philosophy class at rice. Instead of a having to write a few papers where you can really get into a topic, think it through, and present some of your own ideas, there are two exams. These exams serve some purpose in that they force you to have a decent understanding of all the questions that may be asked on the test, but on the actual exam itself you are just supposed to regurgitate some philosophers ideas on a problem without really even thinking about their ideas or critically analyzing them. The final is an actual paper, but i would have preferred if they all were.

Good course, material in second half is harder. Most important thing is paying attention in class.

This was an informative but not difficult course. Weekly pop quizzes that you self-grade, two exams that you get the possible essay questions to beforehand, and one final paper. Professor Miller posts his notes on canvas, which makes everything much easier.

Great

Dr. Miller is really friendly and engaging lecturer. He really encourages participation in class and

illuminates difficult concepts in ways that are easy to understand.

Dr. Miller is super smart lol. He doesn't make people feel dumb or insecure in class which I think is a great quality to have, given the class itself is already very conceptually demanding as it is. He's a great professor and did a great job teaching the class. I learned a lot from him.

Pretty nice guy but relatively harsh grader.

Class was made meaningful, enjoyable, and memorable by the professor's lecture style. He is fair: he holds students accountable, but is also flexible and considerate – tough balance but he does it well. Really enjoyed this class.

Professor Miller was a great teacher! He was always totally prepared for class and was SO responsive to questions and comments. Sometimes it can be scary to talk in philosophy classes, but he always made sure to validate our contribution, which I so appreciated. The only problem is it took him a while to grade stuff, but that's not a big deal!

Professor Miller was very knowledgeable and willing to make time to meet with students. It was easy to ask him questions either just after class or by making an appointment.

Dr. Miller was a great professor. His lectures are really interesting, and he clearly knew the topic very well. He also was always open to answering questions during class, which would often lead to interesting discussion.

It was always very obvious that Prof. Miller cares a lot about teaching and wanted the course to be the best it can be. His lectures were always extremely well organized, fun to listen to, and informative. He also did a great job facilitating the occasional class discussion and responding to student questions. My only complaint is that he took a really long time to grade some things, but overall, absolutely fantastic!

Professor Miller does an excellent job of presenting complex material in a clear and understandable way.

Miller is engaging, knowledgeable, and approachable. The university needs to hire him for good.

He's such a cool guy, really laid back, has an earring, and pretty accommodating. I would take another course with him

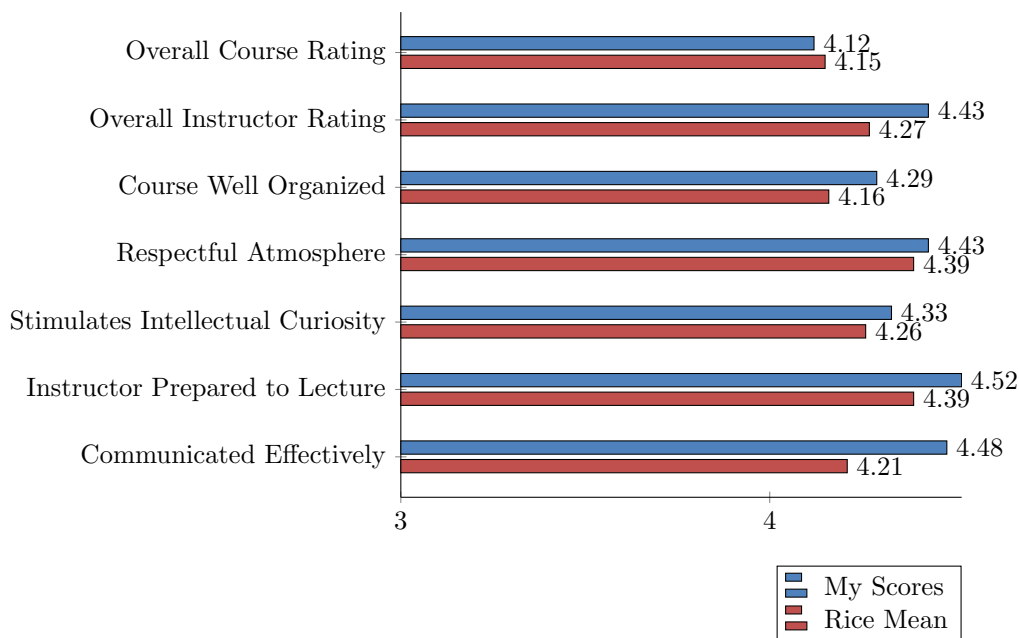
He was a great instructor that made himself available and was willing to answer any questions, related to the specific content at hand or not. He stayed on-topic and went on few tangents and always gave everyone a chance whenever they spoke up about their ideas or questions.

## Introduction to Philosophy

Rice University, Spring 2018

This course is organized topically. It begins with a section on the philosophy of religion, concluding with a discussion of the free will defense to the problem of evil. This leads to a section on free will and moral responsibility. Next we move on to epistemology. After a short discussion of the analysis of knowledge, including selections from the *Theaetetus* and from Gettier, we contrast three varieties of skepticism: Cartesian, Humean, and skeptical worries arising from the apparent impact of implicit biases upon belief formation. The final section of the course is comprised of topics in ethics: the origins and scope of morality, subjectivism and relativism, and the nature of justice.

### Evaluation Summary:



### Complete Student Comments:

Student Comments Total Comments: 11 Really open to meet with students and help students learn. Cant complain at all.

Delivered some of the best lectures I have had the honor of attending. Lectures are really well prepared, there is also some very interesting discussions.

Dr. Miller is very passionate about the material but sometimes talks for too long. He's a fair grader though and I enjoyed the paper writing.

Dr Miller was an outstanding professor! Enjoyed his teaching style a lot as an engineer who came in with no philosophy background

The professor was very careful to ensure everyone understood the talking points in class and often stimulated some very interesting discussions.

Professor Brian is genuinely passionate about Philosophy and the way he explains concepts and ideas can quickly get students excited about the material. I loved his lectures as they were informative and also funny! I would really recommend going to his office hours if you need help with an essay or anything because he really can help you structure your essay so that you aren't repetitive or covering too much material.

Intro to Philosophy with Dr. Miller was the best I have taken at Rice. Dr. Miller selects some of the most relevant and interesting philosophical topics to college students (i.e. existence of god, free will, ethics), and he engages students with these topics in an unbiased, critical, and kind way. Dr. Miller is very willing and excited to meet with students who have further philosophical questions beyond class hours. He also allows and encourages students to write on course-relevant topics of their own interest instead of the course-specified essay topics, which is a great opportunity to explore topics of personal interest. After this course and my conversations with Dr. Miller, I am better able to think critically about arguments in general, and I have also found a love of philosophy that will continue for the rest of my life.

A good professor who genuinely cares if you learn the material.

Prof Miller was very knowledgeable in philosophy and he explained the readings very well. Sometimes, the class was a little boring as some concepts that we learned were not interesting. Nevertheless, he tried his best to make philosophy fun.

Dr. Miller definitely knows his stuff, but sometimes his lectures are really dry. He tends to repeat himself quite a bit, and spends more time than necessary on the easy concepts. He provides lots of insightful feedback on the papers, which is nice and allows you to improve throughout the term.

Dr. Miller was clearly knowledgeable and passionate about teaching phil. I loved how he encouraged questions and class discussions.

## Early Modern Science

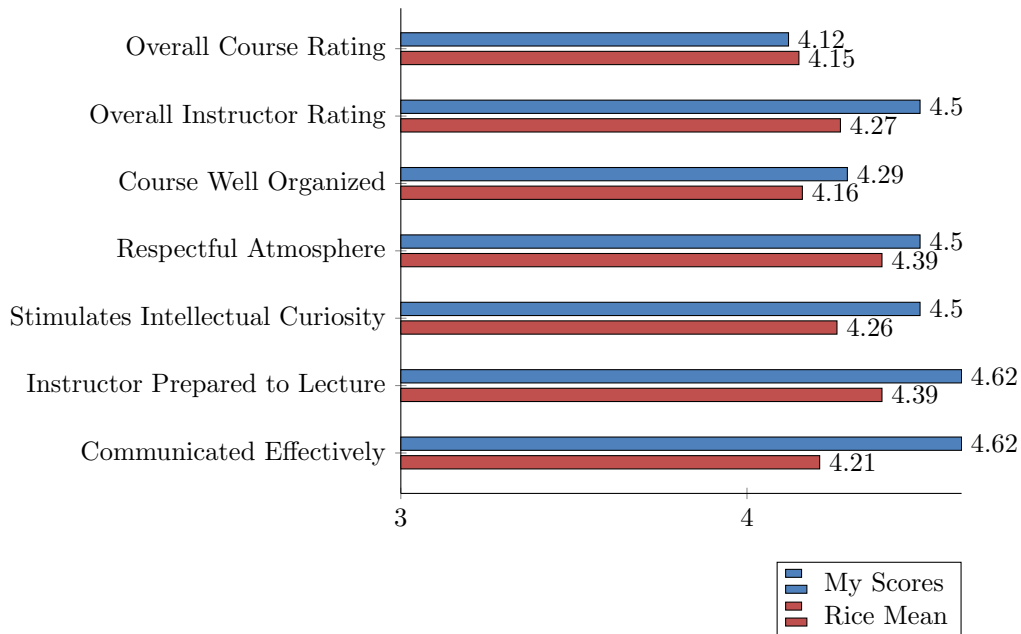
### Rice University, Fall 2017

In the fourth century BCE, Aristotle developed sophisticated accounts of matter, causation, scientific methods, and a wide range of other subjects. This Aristotelian worldview dominated scientific thought throughout Medieval Europe. By the seventeenth century this Aristotelian scientific worldview was attacked as unmotivated, incoherent, and inconsistent with observation. This left the small matter of constructing a scientific new worldview to replace the old one. We begin this course with Aristotle before moving on to the challenges posed by Copernicus's theory and Galileo's tele-



scope. Our focus then shifts to the efforts of Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke to construct a new scientific understanding of their world.

**Evaluation Summary:**



**Complete Student Comments:**

I think this course should only be taken by Philosophy majors. I had never taken a Philosophy course prior to this one and I felt constantly overwhelmed with the ideas and concepts of the course. In addition, there were only 2 graded papers with minimal feedback to enhance the learning experience.

This was my first time taking a philosophy class and I thought the readings were very interesting and intriguing to read.

The material was presented well, and it really opened up my view of the world around me. I switched into this class because I didn't like a different class I was originally taking for fun. It was my first PHIL course and I didn't know what to expect, but I was hooked on the first day. We had 10 three question pop quizzes throughout the semester and two essays.

The pop quizzes were very annoying.

I found Professor Miller to be very unapproachable. Even though I struggled with the material, I turned to fellow students and those who are Philosophy majors rather than Professor Miller for help. He very clearly had favorites and seemed condescending at times. He is no doubt very intelligent and educated in his field, I just did not click with his personality.

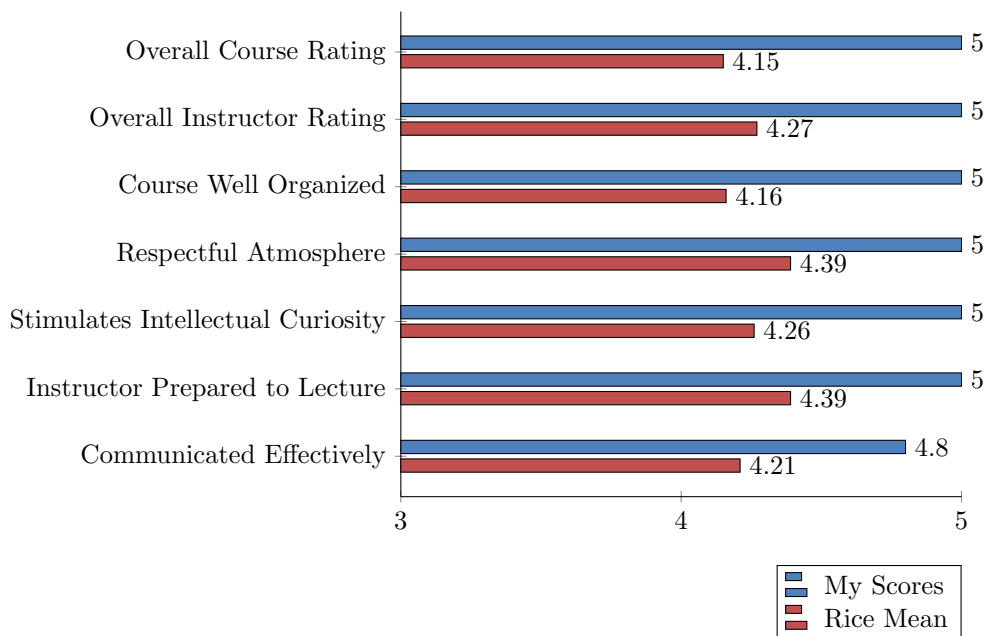
The professor makes the class very engaging with his students. He truly wants to know that you understand the material.

## Graduate Seminar: Theories of Evidence

Rice University, Fall 2017

In this course we will examine a number of questions about evidence. For example, what sort of thing is it (ontologically speaking)? One popular proposal is that all evidence is propositional. Suppose that's right: what's required in order for proposition  $e$  to be part of my evidence? Must I believe it? Believe it with justification? Are all evidence propositions true? Does  $e=k$ , as Timothy Williamson famously argues? It is commonly held that knowing is a binary state: for any proposition  $e$ , either I know  $e$  or I don't. But if  $e=k$ , and knowledge doesn't come in degrees, then the having of evidence doesn't come in degrees either. Is that a problem for Williamson's view? But why think that knowledge doesn't come in degrees? New question: am I always in a position to know what my evidence is – is my evidence 'luminous'? Or are we cognitively homeless? New new question: can evidence undermine the rational support for a belief? New new new question: are there any diachronic norms of rationality?

### Evaluation Summary:



### Complete Student Comments:

The assignments assigned by the instructor were both challenging and helpful. One could tell that the instructor prepared a great deal for their lectures. Also, they encouraged any clarifying questions or push-back.

As, I mentioned on the other form, the instructor was very effective ranging from choosing the class materials, to preparing a detailed outline each week, and entertaining both objections and

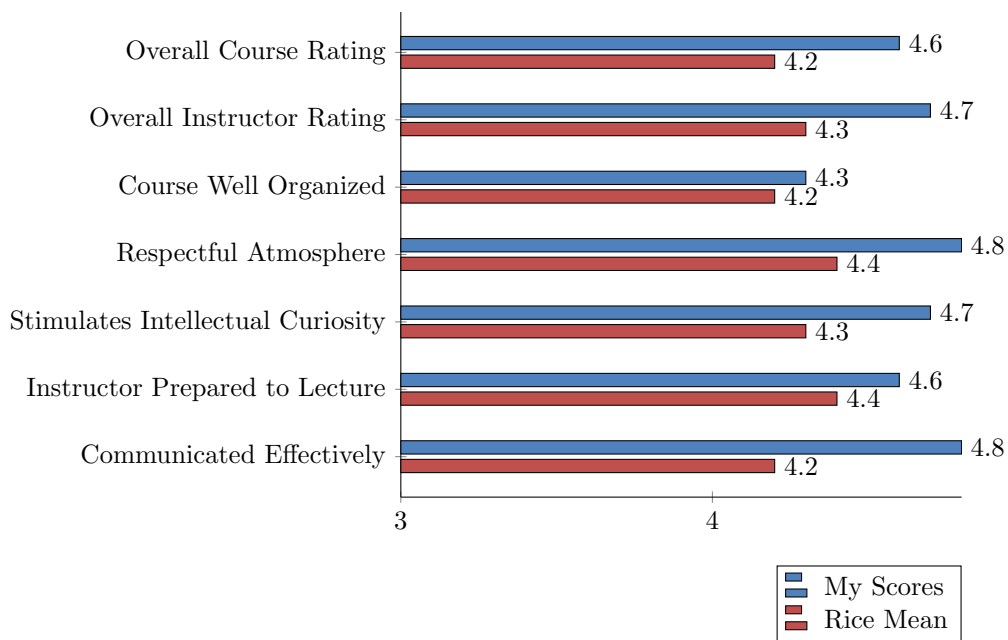
clarifying questions. Very well done.

## Epistemology

### Rice University, Spring 2017

This course is an advanced introduction to some central topics in epistemology: foundationalism and coherentism, internalism and externalism about justification, the analysis of knowledge, responses to Cartesian skepticism, perceptual justification, the problems of induction, and social epistemology.

#### Evaluation Summary:



#### Complete Student Comments:

Brian does a good job of breaking down complex topics. Would recommend taking a class with him

Dr. Miller is a great guy, if he asks questions (which he will), be sure to answer them because it makes the class a lot more enjoyable for both you and him.

Dr. Miller is clearly super knowledgeable about the subject matter and it's clear that he has a great interest in it too. He also does a great job of presenting it to the class.

Professor Miller is well-versed on the sometimes technical and detailed philosophy of epistemology. Class participation was minimal despite his efforts however, as he often is fully prepared to lecture but openly prefers discussion. I feel that class would be less confusing if the professor was less willing to compromise and be more forthright about the class participating, or the opposite, and instead be more rigid in his lecturing.

3 Papers and 10 five minute pop quizzes over the course of the semester. The instructor is very knowledgeable on the details of epistemology, attendance in the class is stressed and a certain level is mandatory. The professor also markedly prefers a good deal of participation but will not force it.

The course was pretty good. How much you enjoy this course will really depend on your interest in the material. Epistemology can get really boring sometimes so it's gonna depend on your interest and commitment to the subject matter

Took it with Brian Miller and he's really invested in the material he teaches, made the lectures much more interesting and participation in this class is key if you want to actually learn.

This class is super cool - there are 3 essay topics each one longer than the next (1100, 1500, 2200 words each) and 10 surprise pop quizzes that are impossible unless you've been paying in attention in class. The class really got me to think a lot about how we KNOW things and what it even means to know anything about the external world. Definitely a really awesome elective class to take.

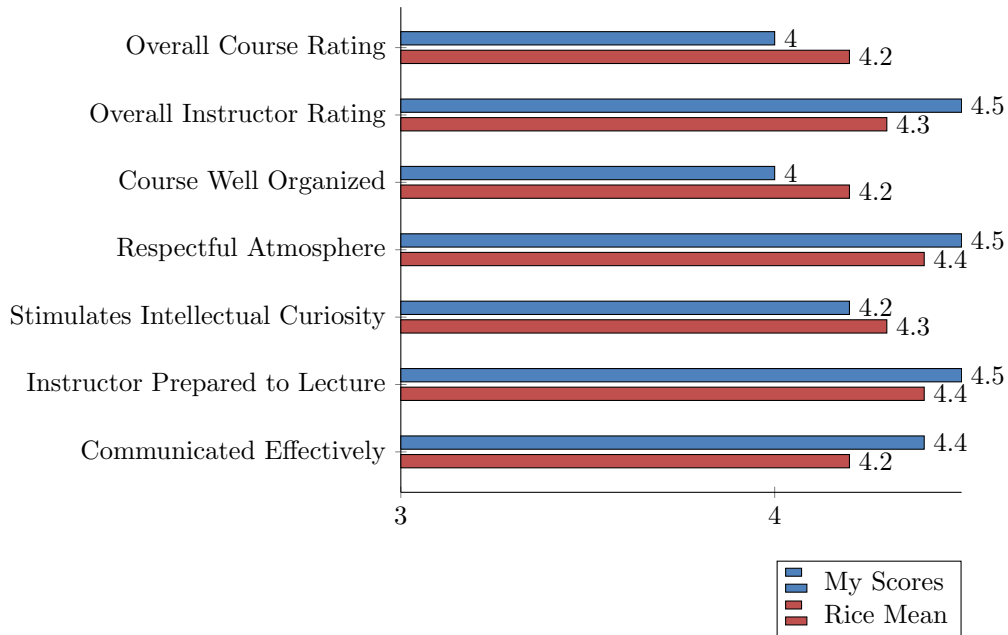
Easy course if you do the readings. Interesting material if you are interested in the subject of knowledge. If you aren't though, this will be a dreadfully boring course.

## **History of Early Modern Philosophy**

This course is a survey of 17th century philosophy, including the works of Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. We began with a brief discussion of the philosophical climate of Western Europe in the first decades of the 17th century, focusing on the emerging problems with the late Scholastic worldview and the intellectual vacuum left by its rejection. This provides context for Descartes's project of providing secure foundations for his alternative scientific approach, as well as Leibniz's struggles with just how much of Scholasticism can be rejected. From here we move across the channel to Locke, with a focus on his empiricist epistemology and constructivist metaphysics. Berkeley and Hume round out our discussion of British Empiricism, leading to Kant's transcendental idealism.

## Rice University, Spring 2017

### Evaluation Summary:



### Complete Student Comments:

The course is engaging, and I'd recommend it for any who are interested in philosophy, not just the majors.

This is a fairly good course if you are at all interested in Philosophy. If you put in the effort to pay attention you will get something out of the lecture. I think the course could be better organized as we spent less than a week covering Kant who was one of the three main philosophers we were supposed to talk about this semester. Two exams and one term paper, so not too much work. However, you will have to come to class as Dr. Miller gave pop quizzes on the reading.

I thought the class was very interesting and the lecture and discussion were awesome. 2 tests and one final paper plus pop quizzes made up your grade.

It was a bit disorganized and we didn't really stick to the syllabus, but all of the readings were super interesting. The lectures were entertaining and informative (especially for some of the more difficult readings which were tough to understand on their own) and the discussions were generally interesting. All in all, pretty impressive for a general overview class that's required for the major.

Since it is history of philosophy, the essays are based on the writings of other philosophers and

simply explaining what they said. I was hoping for more critical thinking opportunities in the assignments.

Professor Miller is excellent. The course is a little heavily focused on epistemology. I am unsure if this is simply because it is Miller's specialty or if the epistemological contributions of the period so outshine any other philosophical content that it is an accurate survey.

Course material was interesting and lectures were helpful, but the reading quizzes were tricky at times and didn't accurately reflect whether a student did the reading or not.

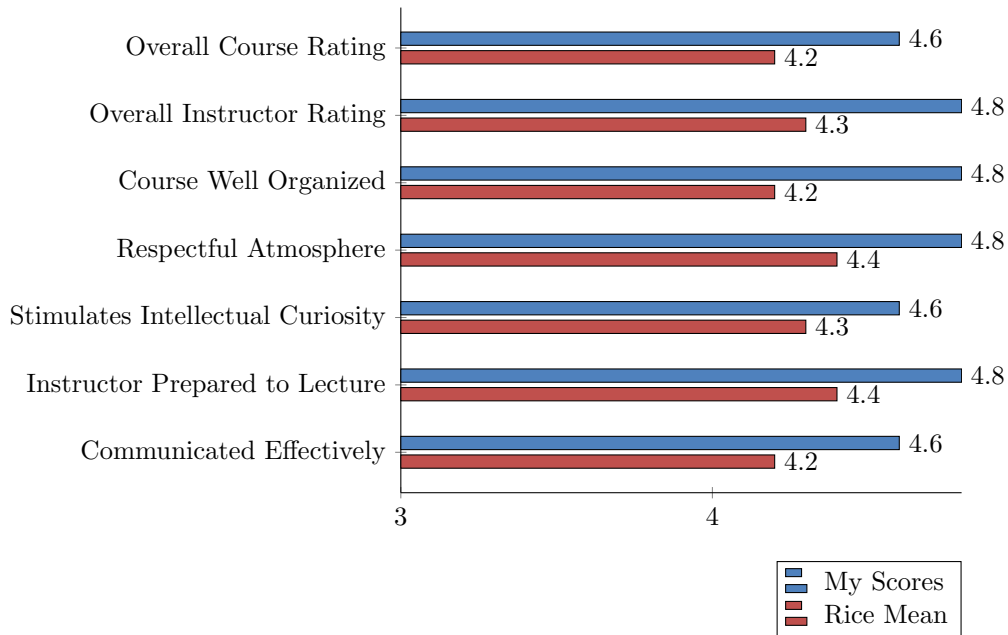
There were a lot of readings, but they were relatively easy to get through and the professor explains any difficult concepts from the readings in class.

This course is pretty good. If you want to learn something you will. If you don't want to learn anything, you can do that too. It's one of those you put in work if you want to classes.

## **Graduate Seminar: Knowledge-First Epistemology**

### **Rice University, Fall 2016**

This seminar is focused on Timothy Williamson's *Knowledge and its Limits*, which is perhaps the most important work of epistemology in the last several decades. Williamson draws on recent developments in the philosophy of mind and philosophy of language as he argues for a number of surprising theses: that knowledge cannot be analyzed into parts (e.g. J+T+B); that knowing is a mental state; that epistemic access to one's own mental states is far more limited than is generally acknowledged; that an agent's evidence consists in all and only those propositions that the agent knows; and that knowledge is the norm of assertion. Our particular focus will be upon the relationship between knowledge and evidence.

**Evaluation Summary:****Complete Student Comments:**

I enjoyed the fact that the professor was very specific about ways in which we could succeed in our discipline.

I'm very fond of his teaching style. Every class I learn a lot from his handout and in-class discussions. He is also very familiar of the contemporary (recent 5-10 years) literature in epistemology.

I felt the course was set up to convey difficult material in a way that I could understand and internalize it.

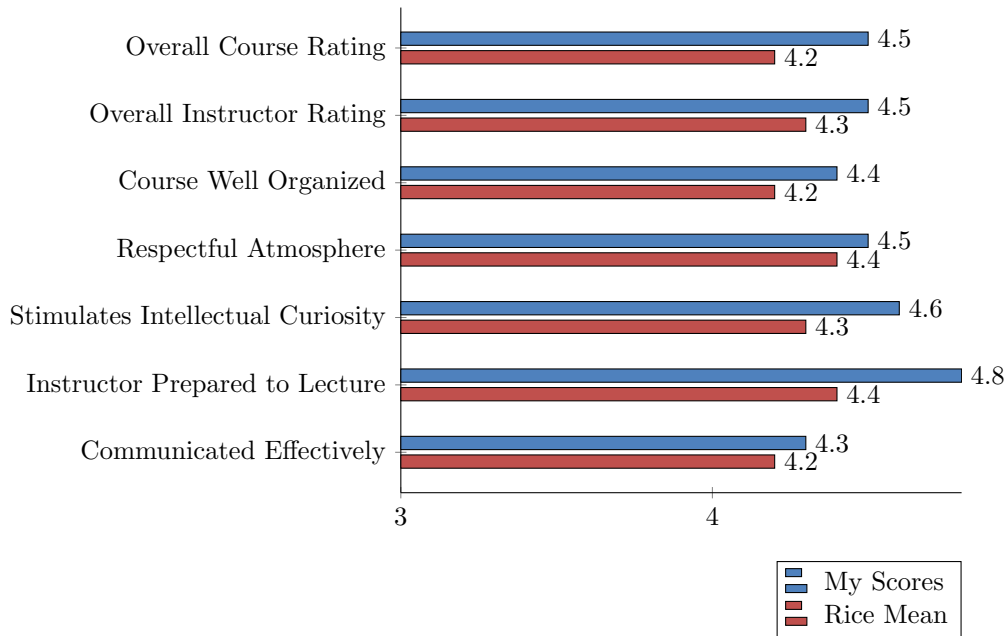
This is a seminar on Timothy Williamson's book Knowledge and Its Limits. I think it is an important book for 21st century epistemology. I highly recommend it.

**Introduction to Philosophy****Rice University, Fall 2016**

This course is organized topically. It begins with a section on the philosophy of religion, concluding with a discussion of the free will defense to the problem of evil. This leads to a section on free will and moral responsibility. Next we move on to epistemology. After a short discussion of the

analysis of knowledge, including selections from the *Theaetetus* and from Gettier, we contrast three varieties of skepticism: Cartesian, Humean, and skeptical worries arising from the apparent impact of implicit biases upon belief formation. The final section of the course is comprised of topics in ethics: the origins and scope of morality, subjectivism and relativism, and the nature of justice.

### Evaluation Summary:



### Complete Student Comments:

Brian is a very knowledgeable professor, he sincerely wants to engage students and it shows. He presents topics in an effective manner. His one fault is his tendency to present arguments in such a way that they seem incontestable, which is good for writing about philosophy, but not great for fostering discussion.

The instructor was knowledgeable about the material, but he allowed a small group of students to dominate the class and often talked for long periods of time without stopping to make sure people understand. I enjoyed the class overall.

Professor Miller made sure to encourage students to come to him with any sorts of questions in terms of classwork or personal curiosity, and that's something I really liked. Fun teacher, class was hardly ever boring to me. If I yawned, it was just because I stayed up late the night before, not because I'd rather be out of the classroom. The only thing I must say caught my attention several times is that I sometimes felt like he put a little too much emphasis on the opinion of well known philosophers or the popular philosophical opinion. Not that these things aren't worth taking into



account, but I felt like these positions were given some degree of invincibility to criticism which I didn't feel was justified. Nevertheless, great intro for people interested in philosophy and would definitely recommend!

Professor Miller was a fantastic professor and fostered discussion very impressively. He obviously knows the material very well and was very easy to approach and talk to. Awesome professor

Professor Miller is a great professor and an extremely personable guy. He tries to present the material in an easy-to-understand format that the students will understand using diagrams and examples. Sometimes his lectures can be a bit dry, but he is constantly advocating for class discussion and is excited to hear everyone's thoughts about the topic. His goal is for everyone to talk and work together to try to develop and improve these different philosophical theories. Professor Miller is also always willing to meet you and talk to you about class and papers at office hours. Just shoot him an email, and it is highly likely that he will be willing and excited to speak with you to help discuss your paper (This is so helpful. Take advantage of it and talk to him about your paper. You will thank yourself when you get a good grade. It's also great to prevent procrastination by setting a date to have at least something down on paper).

Dr. Miller has a ton of knowledge on the subject, but isn't aloof: he'll make the effort to be sure that you understand what you may be shaky on, and he'll do it in a down-to-Earth manner. He organizes his teaching in a way that does involve student discussion, so you have opportunities to voice your questions in class and hear others' perspectives.

This class was awesome! It was really intellectually stimulating and very interesting. Apparently a new teacher teaches it every semester so I don't know how the class is with other professors but Professor Miller was fantastic. The class isn't too hard to get an A in either so that's a nice bonus.

This is a good course that covers a lot of subjects well. The course load is well apportioned

I thought that this course provided an interesting introduction to philosophy. It would have been better to have some overview of paper writing before we wrote papers, and sometimes the lectures were non-interactive and rambling.

The course was pretty low stakes, which is good because it is an introductory philosophy sampler course that broadly covers major points from three branches of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. It was a good course to take for distribution credit and to also expose yourself to some philosophy. All of the class meetings were lecture/discussion-based, with the professor lecturing about the reading and inviting class discussion. After a while, that could get extremely boring, but class discussion made that class much more interesting, so if you do take this, do not be afraid to speak in class. It makes it more interesting for everyone, keeps you more engaged, and allows you to actually attempt some philosophy. There were ten pop quizzes over the course of the semester, but if you pay attention in class and keep up with the reading, they are pretty easy and should not be worried about. I will warn you that there is a fair amount of reading for this class, with several of the assigned articles being between 15-20 pages. There are also three papers you have to write for the class, but that is the only form of assessment. You are given plenty of time

(two weeks) to write the papers, and I did not feel rushed for time writing them. The papers are not too difficult to write, and you can still do well even if you make some errors. Overall, this is not a difficult course, and I would recommend it if you wanted a broad sampler course covering different branches of philosophy.

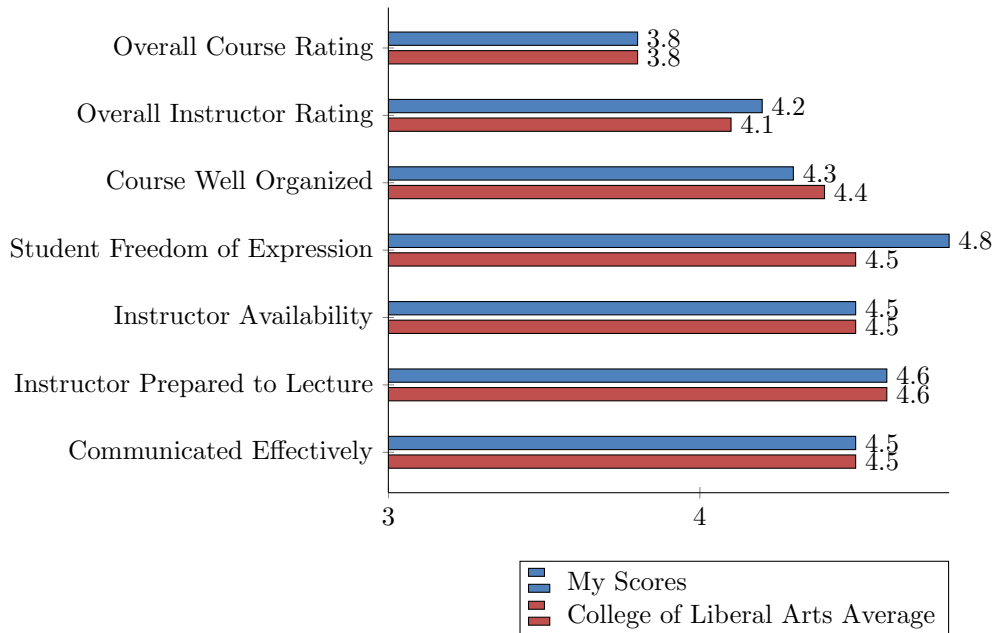
This course helped give me an understanding of the terminology, history, and application of philosophy. I learned how to write philosophical papers and my arguing certainly has improved as well: this is a great class to take for anyone who is interested in philosophy.

I liked the definite structure and direction in the course. I knew what were doing, why, and how it fit into the “bigger” philosophical picture. Most of the issues discussed I had already put a lot of thought into prior to the course, but this was a very nice way of “formalizing” my philosophical education. Makes cuts into important philosophical questions that affect all parts of my worldview. Great introduction into the world of philosophy.

## **Introduction to Philosophy**

### **University of Texas at Austin, Spring 2016**

This course is organized topically. It begins with a section on the philosophy of religion, concluding with a discussion of the free will defense to the problem of evil. This leads to a section on free will and moral responsibility. Next we move on to epistemology. After a short discussion of the analysis of knowledge, including selections from the *Theaetetus* and from Gettier, we contrast three varieties of skepticism: Cartesian, Humean, and skeptical worries arising from the apparent impact of implicit biases upon belief formation. The final section of the course is comprised of topics in ethics: the origins and scope of morality, subjectivism and relativism, and the nature of justice.

**Evaluation Summary:****Complete Student Comments:**

He was very good about explaining unclear subjects/ topics in a new light. He made everyone feel free to comment about everything, even though this is a quiet class.

Altogether a fun course. Exactly what I was looking for in a survey of philosophy. You were always incredibly well-prepared and entertaining, both of which make it much easier to absorb information efficiently. I enjoyed the “existacorn” example.

Good & thorough style of lecturing. Your silly examples of things are the best!

Overall this was a very enjoyable course. I just think the instructor must work on explaining the material more efficiently. I understand that this is a subject the instructor is passionate about and I appreciate that, but some unnecessary details were given during lectures.

There’s only one suggestion I have. You should ask one question per pop quiz relating to the material you asked for us to read that day. Something like the author’s name, title of their work, or one main idea at the end of a pop quiz will incite people to actually do the readings, thus they’ll be more engaged in class discussions.

Such an interesting class!

I’m not saying I deserved a better grade based on my performance on the testing method, but I feel like I learned and retained more information than my grade would suggest, on my own merit and in comparison to my classmates.

In my opinion, although the material is interesting, it would be better if there were powerpoint slides to reference back or something similar. Also, the grading system is very unfair, gives almost no opportunities to students.

Needs other types of assignments than essays/ pop quizzes. Anybody can google the topic and make an essay that fits a rubric if facts are more like busy work than learning.

Great class

Professor Miller seems truly passionate about what he teaches. He makes the material easy to understand, great class!

So much relies on the papers which can be okay in some respects but a slip up allows for no wiggle room in grade received.

Very personable and entertaining lecturer.

Awesome class. Did a great job at getting on Econ major interested in the world of philosophy.

Badass instructor, but PowerPoints or lecture notes would be extremely helpful.

The instructor has a great sense of humor, well informed of the subject matter, and did a great deal to ensure students understood the content.

I took this pass/ fail as an elective. I found writing the philosophy papers were interesting to me.

Overall his teaching style works very well for this class but he could use some sort of tech to help get the whole class involved and paying attention.

Professor Miller did a wonderful job; the only improvement I could suggest is that he could engage the students with more questions to involve them in discussion more consistently overall. Very friendly, knowledgable, and capable.

Your class was my favorite this semester. It was very interesting and you explained things in a way that made them easy to understand, even though they were difficult topics.

Professor Miller was a nice professor who knows a great depth about philosophy. I wish he spaced reading more and weaved more reading into his lecture. There is no outline of his lectures so I do not know what, in specific, we will cover in class.

The workload did not seem to fairly evaluate the knowledge of the course material. Rather it evaluated a select few arguments. I do feel as though essays are a fair way to ensure a high level of understanding of those arguments but for everything else, I don't feel as though I know any more about them than I did before because there is no incentive to retain the information.

Instructor took way too much time on each topic. I think he felt that if he went on longer about each topic, we would understand it further but I think oftentimes that led to more rambling than anything. Smart guy, has potential to be a good professor, but I am walking away unsatisfied.

The instructor was always well prepared, extremely knowledgable and able to present the content in an easily understandable way. His personality and style contributed to a thoroughly enjoyable,

positive and open classroom environment. As an exchange student at UT, I was really impressed with the instruction of this course.

It would be really helpful to use power points. His handwriting is awful and barely legible when he writes on the chalkboard making it hard to follow along.

It would be helpful if he had lecture notes online. Often, I couldn't write fast enough.

Dr. Miller was very good. Made sure the class understood the material and would happily go over it again if not. Kept the class engaged. Didn't really like the way the class was organized. Basically just went over arguments during class.

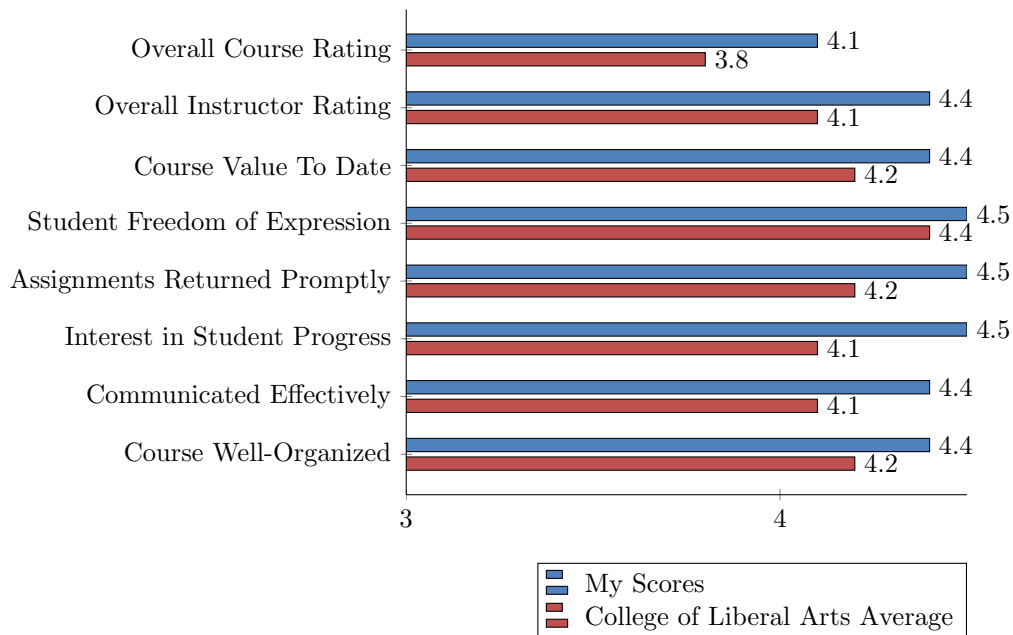
Brian is a great communicator and always encourages us to speak up and generate discussion in class.

I enjoyed all of the readings of the course, but disliked the pace of it, though it is understandable for a short semester.

## **Introduction to Symbolic Logic (Summer 2014)**

### **University of Texas at Austin, Summer 2014**

This course introduces students to sentential and first-order logic. To motivate students to learn a natural language I discussed ambiguity and vagueness in natural language, and to dramatize the need for a formal system of proof we examined examples of compelling yet fallacious arguments. For our text I selected Language, Proof and Logic by Barker-Plummer, Barwise and Etchemendy. Three reasons for this selection: first, it does a nice job of connecting argument forms recognizable from everyday reasoning (proof by cases, indirect proof, modus ponens) with their analogues in a natural deduction system ( $\vee$ -elim,  $\neg$ -intro,  $\rightarrow$ -elim). Second, one of its central themes is the important issue of the proper scope of logic: if '=' is a properly logical predicate, why not ' $\geq$ '? Why not 'ancestor of'? Third, it comes with software that allows students to gain familiarity with the formal language by build simple scenarios against which to test the truth of simple sentences, and also to receive immediate feedback when constructing formal proofs. The students found this to be very helpful.

**Evaluation Summary:****Complete Student Comments:**

Brian Miller was an excellent instructor. He was very knowledgeable about the material and knew how to present it effectively. He cared very deeply that the students understand the material and can apply it to their own lives.

The instructor for this course was very informative and available for any questions I may [have] had. I would recommend him to another student.

The only negative of the course has been the time that the homework was assigned. Usually homework was assigned at 5:30PM. It would have been nice if it was available in class. Otherwise I really enjoyed the speed and style in which the material was presented. Thanks.

I thought that it was a great course. The material was very interesting and the instructor was friendly and good at communicating the information. However, the pace of it drove me crazy. I can think of maybe one day overall that it couldn't have moved twice as fast and still been understandable and informative.

Excellent prof. Seems to really love and care about the subject and that reflects in his teaching style. Everything in this class has been great. I only wish the HW assignments were assigned a little bit earlier so there was more time to work on them. Other than that the lectures and HW have been very valuable and relevant to the course.

**PHIL 100: Problems of Philosophy****Fall 2016**

TTH 9:25–10:40 in SEW 560

Instructor: Brian Miller

Email: brianmiller@rice.edu

Office: Humanities 204

Office hours: by appointment

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to some central issues in philosophy and to the methods that philosophers use to address those issues. We'll be asking three sorts of questions:

**Metaphysical questions:** What sorts of things exist, and what is the fundamental nature of those things?

**Epistemological questions:** What is knowledge? What is required in order to obtain knowledge? What should I believe?

**Ethical questions:** What is valuable in life? How should I act? How should we organize the political institutions in our society?

**Course Objectives**

This course will introduce students to the methods and the subject matter of philosophy.

**Course Materials**

All readings will be made available through Canvas.

**Evaluation**

Student performance will be evaluated using papers and pop-quizzes:

First Paper	≈ 1100 words	(15% of final grade)
Second Paper	≈ 1500 words	(20% of final grade)
Term Paper	≈ 2200 words	(35% of final grade)
Pop Quizzes	10 quizzes	(3% each = 30% of final grade)

All assignments will be graded on a four-point scale. A+'s will be rare but not impossible.

**IMPORTANT** In order to pass this course you must receive a D or higher on each of the three papers AND you must be present to take at least 6 quizzes (or have a documented excuse for your absence).

Quizzes: The quizzes will be quick and typically pretty easy, provided that you are present in class, have done the reading, and are paying attention to the lecture. They will typically be a surprise, but I might tell you that one is coming up. I might even tell you what the questions will be. In order to take a quiz and receive any credit for it, you must be present when it is administered (or have a document excuse). No make-up quizzes will be offered unless you have a documented excuse!

Papers: I will provide prompts for each of the papers. If you would prefer to come up with your own prompt then you are welcome to do so, but **YOU MUST CLEAR IT WITH ME FIRST**. I'm not trying to crush your creativity here. It's just that picking a good topic for a paper — not too big, not too small, not involving some confusion — is an art in itself and I'd hate for you to get off on the wrong foot.

All papers must be submitted through Canvas. All papers will be graded blind, meaning that the grader will not know whose paper they are grading. For that reason, **PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR OTHER IDENTIFIER ON YOUR PAPER**. Why is this important? It helps to avoid implicit bias and ensure fair grading.

Late papers will be docked 1/3 letter grade per day past the due date.

### **Helpful Resources**

Jim Pryor (NYU) has a helpful guide for reading philosophy and another for writing philosophy. They can be found at:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

and

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Tyler Burge (UCLA) offers the following words of wisdom concerning the study of philosophy:

Whatever the reader's background and interests [...] I offer this council, firmly and insistently: patience. Patience is a primary virtue in philosophy. Genuine understanding is a rare and valuable commodity, not to be obtained on the cheap. One cannot reap philosophy's rewards breathlessly, or by looking for the intellectual equivalents of sound bites. Very large claims are at issue here, claims that bear on understanding some of the matters most important to being human. Understanding requires investing time, close reading, and reflection.

### **Participation**

You are encouraged to ask questions and to discuss the readings. The best way to learn philosophy is by doing philosophy, and part of doing philosophy is talking about philosophy. Come to class ready to talk and don't rely on others to carry the weight. Try answers on for size. Very often



progress is made by first putting a bad answer on the table and then getting an idea of what is wrong with it and how it could be improved upon. Offering a “bad” answer doesn’t make you bad at philosophy or mean you are being dumb or dense. Some of the most important works in philosophy were merely conversation starters, and some of the best and smartest philosophers have offered really “bad” answers to certain questions.

Here are some examples of fantastic questions that I’ve been asked:

“I don’t understand what you just said. Would you please explain it again?”

“You just claimed that X, but I don’t see why I should believe X. What can you say to convince me?”

“You just drew conclusion Y from premise X, but I don’t see how X supports Y. What can you say to convince me?”

“I’ve lost the forest for the trees. Can you zoom out and tell me how this small point that we’ve been discussing fits in to the larger issues?”

And here is a list of every stupid question I’ve ever been asked:

[blank — there are no stupid questions]

### **Attendance Policy**

Your regular attendance is expected. This expectation is reflected in your grace through the quizzes: skip a class in which we have a quiz and you’ll receive a 0 on that quiz (odds are about 1 in 3 that there will be a quiz in any given class meeting — feeling lucky?).

### **Rice Honor Code**

Rice takes its honor code very seriously. All work completed in this course is subject to the Rice Honor Code pledge, which reads:

On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this assignment.

So what’s authorized?

*Citation* Cite anything you’d like, but be sure to cite any sources that you’ve consulted; plagiarism is a heinous crime and will not be tolerated.

*Extent of collaboration* I encourage you to discuss relevant materials with anyone you’d like, and in particular I’d encourage you to discuss them with myself and with your colleagues in the course. I encourage you to solicit feedback on your written work and on your presentations from anyone you’d like. Philosophy is a collaborative enterprise, and it’s really fun to talk about. But write your own essays and be sure to document any ideas that appear in your written work that aren’t

yours (i.e. cite appropriately). Collaboration on quizzes is prohibited. Placing quizzes in a test bank for future students to consult (or anything of that sort) is prohibited.

*Multiple submission* The resubmission any of your own work by that has been used in identical or similar form in fulfillment of any academic requirement at this or another institution is prohibited.

*Notes* Sharing class notes with other students in the class is generous, and I encourage it.

*Sources* All types of sources are permitted in your research. Cite appropriately.

If you're unclear about any of this, please talk to me about it.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Council, and maximum penalties will be sought. For information regarding what constitutes plagiarism, see: [honor.rice.edu](http://honor.rice.edu) or talk to me.

### **Students with Disabilities**

1. Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities will need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.
2. Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will also need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.
3. If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the Disability Support Services Office in the Allen Center.
4. Just as university policy requires me to accommodate all documented disabilities, it prohibits me from accommodating any undocumented disabilities. It also prohibits me from retroactively imposing accommodations. For example, if your disability is first documented halfway through the semester I will not be able to make grade changes or other accommodations for any work completed earlier in the semester. To avoid these issues please be sure to document your disability with Disability Support Services as early as possible.

### **Syllabus Subject to Change!**

This syllabus is subject to change. Reasonable notice will be given. Any changes will be announced in class and/ or posted to Canvas.

### Phones and The Laptops

You are welcome to use your laptop, tablet or phone to take notes or to consult the day's readings. If you must do other things with your devices — text, email, check Facebook — then please sit in back so that you don't distract the more serious students. If your device usage is disruptive then you will be asked to put that device away or to leave.

### Course Schedule:

The following schedule will be revised as we go along. Any changes will be announced in class and/ or via Canvas. Please complete the readings for the date listed.

Date	Topic	Reading
1/8	Introduction, syllabus	none
1/10	Arguments and fallacies	my notes on arguments and fallacies
1/12	God? The Cosmological Argument	Aquinas – The Five Ways (focus on the <i>second</i> way; Clarke – The Cosmological Argument
1/15	MLK Break	none
1/17	God? The Ontological Argument	Anselm – Proslogion §2,3,4,15; Guanilo's reply in same .pdf
1/19	God? Pascal's Wager	Pascal – Pensees; Hacking – The Great Decision
1/22	God? Analogical Teleological Argument	Paley – Natural Theology
1/24	God? Fine-tuned Teleological Argument	Manson – The Fine-tuning Argument p. 271-8
1/26	God? Fine-tuned Teleological Argument	Manson – The Fine-tuning Argument p. 271-4 (again), p. 278-end
1/29	God? Problem of Evil	Mackie – Evil and Omnipotence
1/31	Problem of Free Will	Kane Ch. 1 §4-6
2/2	Compatibilism	Kane Ch. 2
2/5	Compatibilism, Incompatibilism	Kane Ch. 3
2/7	Incompatibilism	review Kane Ch. 3
2/9	Spring recess - no class	none
2/12	Libertarianism	Kane Ch. 4
2/14	Free Will and Moral Responsibility	Kane Ch. 8
2/16	Free will catch-up day	TBA
2/19	Cartesian Skepticism	Descartes – Meditation 1
2/21	Cartesian Skepticism	Descartes – Meditation 2, first two paragraphs of Meditation 3
2/23	Cartesian Skepticism	Descartes – Meditation 6

**First paper due 2/25 by 11:59 PM.** Turn in your paper through Canvas. Do not put your

name on your paper.

Date	Topic	Reading
2/26	Old Riddle of Induction	Hume - Enquiry §4
2/28	Proposed Solutions to the Old Riddle	Salmon – Problem of Induction p. 220-35 (skip II.3 and II.7)
3/2	New Riddle of Induction	Sainsbury – Grue p. 99-107
3/5	Permissive Evidence	Kelly – Evidence Can be Permissive
3/7	Permissive Evidence	White – Evidence Cannot be Permissive
3/9	Discussion	TBA
3/12	Spring break	none
3/14	Spring break	none
3/16	Spring break	none
3/19	Epistemic Goals	Kvanvig – Truth is not the Primary Epistemic Goal
3/21	Epistemic Goals	David – Truth is the Primary Epistemic Goal
3/23	Discussion	TBA
3/26	God and Morality	Plato – Euthyphro
3/28	God and Morality	SEP – Theological Voluntarism §3
3/30	Relativism and Subjectivism	Rachels – Challenge of Cultural Relativism, Subjectivism in Ethics §1-3

**Second paper due 4/1 by 11:59 PM.** Turn in your paper through Canvas. Do not put your name on your paper.

4/2	Utilitarianism	Mill – Utilitarianism (selection)
4/4	Problems for Utilitarianism	Williams – Utilitarianism and Integrity
4/6	Scope of Utilitarianism	Singer – Famine and Affluence
4/9	Kantian Ethics	Velleman – A Brief Introduction to Kantian Ethics
4/11	Problems for Kantian Ethics	Nagel – War and Massacre
4/13	Virtue Ethics	Nagel – Aristotle on Eudaimonia; <b>OPTIONAL:</b> Aristotle – Nicomachian Ethics
4/16	Justice and Politics	Rawls – Theory of Justice
4/18	Justice and Politics	Nozick – Justice and Entitlement
4/20	Discussion	TBA

**Term paper due 4/25 by 11:59 PM.** Turn in your paper through Canvas. Do not put your name on your paper.

There is no final exam.

**PHL 313 — Introduction to Symbolic Logic**

Summer 2014

Instructor: Brian Miller

Email: [briantmiller@utexas.edu](mailto:briantmiller@utexas.edu)

Office: WAG 411

Office Hours: M-Th 3:00-3:30

**Overview of the course:**

This course is an introduction to formal logic. We'll study techniques for translating natural language sentences into the more precise language of first-order logic. The sentences of this formal language lack the ambiguity that is common to natural language expressions, and so allow for a rigorous study of the logical relations that exist between them. That account takes the form of a system of proof: a set of inference rules which allows us to determine precisely when one sentence follows logically from another set of sentences. Hence by learning a system of proof we learn a method for determining the validity of arguments.

**Required text:**

Dave Barker-Plummer, Jon Barwise and John Etchemendy, *Language, Proof and Logic*, 2nd edition, ISBN (Paperback): 978-1-57586-632-1 (second edition)

Important: this text includes software which must be used to complete and turn in your homework. Using that software requires an activation code. Activation codes are included with new textbooks only! Do not buy a used textbook! Be sure to buy the second edition!

If you do not have access to a computer, both a Mac and a PC are available in WAG 316 (hours 8:00AM to 5:00PM weekdays) with the software installed. You will still need your activation code in order to turn in your homework.

**Evaluation:**

First exam: 25%

Second (final) exam: 35%

Homework: 20%

Pop quizzes: 20%

*Class schedule:* There are only two fixed dates for the term:

Midterm: 6/24/14

Final Exam: TBD by the university

The pace of the rest of the course will be whatever feels comfortable. If the material seems relatively easy we'll move quickly, and when it's more difficult we'll slow down. Homework and reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard as we proceed with the semester. We'll cover

at least the core material in the first two sections of the text, and if there's time left over we'll incorporate more.

**Classroom Policies:**

*Special Accommodations:* if you have a disability documented with UT's SSD and require special accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible to ensure that your needs are met.

*Religious Holidays:* if you expect to miss a class meeting due to a conflict with a religious holiday, please let me know in advance.

*Attendance:* attendance is required for this course. Your attendance will be measured by your performance on the exams, your ability to complete the homework assignments, and your presence for pop quizzes. If you are absent on the day of a pop quiz, or arrive after the quiz has been administered, you will receive a zero on that quiz. The only exceptions to this policy will be when the absence is due to a documented emergency or a religious holiday, in which case a make-up quiz will be given.

*Academic dishonesty:* UT characterizes academic dishonesty as any act designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage, such as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration / collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts (e.g. providing false information to postpone an exam, obtain an extended deadline for an assignment, or even gain an unearned financial benefit), or any other acts (or attempted acts) that violate the basic standard of academic integrity. Penalties for acts of academic dishonesty may include grade-related penalties ("F" in the course), suspension or even permanently expulsion from the University. Other potential consequences can be particularly far-reaching, such as the creation of a disciplinary record that may very well impact future opportunities (e.g. you will not be admitted to graduate or professional school). If you have any questions, please see the website of the Dean of Students at: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

*Homework:* each student must complete and turn in his or her own homework assignments. Please do not copy answers from your friends. That said, for some students it is easier to learn logic in a group setting. For this reason you are welcome to work through homework assignments in groups. Please remember that if you are having trouble with the homework then you are sure to have trouble with the exam, so don't rely on your peers for the answers! If you are having trouble please see me in my office hours.

*Electronics:* you are welcome to use a computer during class if you find it to be helpful, though for logic it probably won't be. Please be careful not to distract me or your fellow students.

*Late Work:* homework assignments must be submitted before the start of class on the day that they are due. Late work will not be accepted.

**PHIL 202: History of Early Modern Philosophy**  
**Spring 2017**

MWF 11:00–11:50 in SEW 305

Instructor: Brian Miller  
Email: brianmiller@rice.edu  
Office: Humanities 204  
Office hours: by appointment

**Course Description**

This course covers the history of western philosophy in the modern period, which for our purposes consists of the 17th and 18th centuries. Medieval Europeans would have taken for granted a worldview originating with Aristotle and refined by his successors, Ptolemy, Aquinas, and the Scholastic Philosophers. In the 16th century that worldview came under assault from advances in both theory (e.g. Copernicus) and observation (e.g. Galileo). Philosophy in the 17th and 18th century is largely devoted to constructing a new way of understanding the world and our place in it.

We begin with Descartes and Leibniz, two of the great 17th century continental rationalists. Next we move on 17th and 18th century British empiricists, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. We conclude with Kant's attempted synthesis of rationalism and empiricism.

**Course Objectives**

The objective of this course is to gain an understanding of developments in 17th and 18th century European philosophy.

**Course Materials**

Required texts:

Title: Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources Author: Ariew, Roger and Eric Watkins (eds) ISBN: 978-0-87220-978-7

Additional materials will be provided through Canvas.

## Evaluation

Student performance will be evaluated using two in-class exams, ten pop-quizzes, and one term paper.

Exam 1	Due March 2	20 points
Exam 2	Due April 20	20 points
Term Paper	Due April 25	30 points
10 pop-quizzes	[they pop]	3 points each

Exams: One week prior to each exam I will provide a list of possible essay prompts. On exam day you will be asked to respond to **two** of the possible prompts on the list. Exams will be closed-note and closed-book. Exams are non-cumulative. Responses will be written in blue-books (available in the Campus Store in the Student Center – be sure to bring your own blue-books). On exam day do not put your name on your blue-book until I say to.

Term Paper: I will provide prompts for the term paper. If you would prefer to come up with your own prompt then you are encouraged to do so, but **YOU MUST CLEAR IT WITH ME FIRST**. I'm not trying to crush your creativity here. It's just that picking a good topic for a paper — not too big, not too small, not involving some confusion — is an art in itself and I'd hate for you to get off on the wrong foot. The term paper should be around 2000 words (6-7 pages).

All papers must be submitted through Canvas. All papers will be graded blind, meaning that I will not know whose paper I am grading. For that reason, **PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR OTHER IDENTIFIER ON YOUR PAPER**. Why is this important? It helps to avoid implicit bias and ensure fair grading.

Late papers will be docked 1/3 letter grade per day past the due date.

Pop-quizzes: The quizzes will be quick and typically pretty easy, provided that you are present in class, have done the reading, and are paying attention to the lecture. They will typically be a surprise, but I might tell you that one is coming up. I might even tell you what the questions will be. In order to take a quiz and receive any credit for it, you must be present when it is administered (or have a document excuse). No make-up quizzes will be offered unless you have a documented excuse!

Eleven quizzes will be given, and your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Quizzes are graded coarsely: only full letter grades are possible (no +'s or -'s). Three correct answers is an A+, two correct answers is a B, one is a C, zero is a D, and quizzes not taken receive a 0. There's a big difference between a D (=1.98/ 3) and a 0 (=0/ 3), so come to class!

**\*\*\*Content omitted for space – see Intro to Philosophy syllabus (above)\*\*\***



**Course Schedule:**

The following schedule will be revised as we go along. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via Canvas. Please complete all readings for the date listed. Note: ‘MP’ refers to our textbook: Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources; all other readings are posted to Canvas.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
1/8	Introduction, syllabus	none
1/10	European philosophy in 1600 CE	SEP - Form vs. Matter, Dewitt – Worldviews §9,12 (on Canvas)
1/12	European philosophy in 1600 CE	Dewitt – Worldviews §17,18 (on Canvas)
1/15	MLK Break	none
1/17	Cartesian Skepticism	Meditation 1 (MS 40-3); Secondary: MP 35-40
1/19	Cartesian Skepticism	Meditation 1 (again)
1/22	The Cogito	Meditation 2 (MP 43-7)
1/24	The Cogito	Meditation 2 (again)
1/26	Descartes’s Cosmological Argument	Meditation 3 (MP 47-54)
1/29	Descartes’s Problem of Evil Error	Meditation 4 (MP 54-8)
1/31	Error, Descartes’s Ontological Argument	Meditation 4 (again), Meditation 5 (MP 58-61)
2/2	Descartes’s Ontological Argument	Meditation 5 (again)
2/5	Cartesian Circle	SEP - Descartes’ Epistemology (on Canvas)
2/7	Minds and Bodies	Meditation 6 (MP 61-8)
2/9	Spring recess - no class	
2/12	Minds and Bodies	Meditation 6 (again)
2/14	Mind/ Body Problem	Princess Elizabeth, Descartes - letters (selection)
2/16	Mind/ Body Problem	Princess Elizabeth, Descartes - letters (selection)
2/19	Leibniz on God	Monadology §31-46 (MP 278-9)
2/21	Leibniz on God	Discourse on Metaphysics §1-7 (MP 224-228)
2/23	Leibniz on God and Truth	Discourse on Metaphysics §1-7 (again), §8-13 (MP 228-31)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
2/26	Leibniz on Truth	Discourse on Metaphysics §8-13 (again)
2/28	Leibniz on Freedom	Discourse on Metaphysics §8-13 (again)
3/2	<b>FIRST EXAM</b>	none
3/5	Locke on Innate Ideas	Essay Ch. I (MP 316-28)
3/7	Locke on Primary and Secondary Ideas	Essay Ch. VIII (MP 332-7)
3/9	Locke on Substance	Essay Ch. XXIII (MP 359-67)
3/12	Spring break	none
3/14	Spring break	none
3/16	Spring break	none
3/19	Berkeley's Idealism	Dialogue 1 (MP 454-74)
3/21	Berkeley's Idealism	Dialogue 2 (MP 475-84)
3/23	Berkeley's Idealism	Dialogue 3 (MP 484-503)
3/26	Hume's Empiricism	Enquiry §1-3 (MP 533-42)
3/28	Hume's Skeptical Doubts	Enquiry §4 (MP 542-8)
3/30	Hume's Skeptical Doubts	Enquiry §4 (again)
4/2	Hume's Skeptical Solution	Enquiry §5 (MP 548-55)
4/4	Hume on Testimony and Miracles	Enquiry §10.1 (MP 577-80)
4/6	Hume on Testimony and Miracles	Enquiry §10.1 (again), §10.2 (MP 580-86)
4/9	Kant's Analytic/ Synthetic Distinction	Critique: Intro §IV-VII (MP 724-9)
4/11	Kant's Analytic/ Synthetic Distinction	Critique: Intro §IV-VII (again)
4/13	Kant on Space and Time	Critique: Transcendental Deduction of the Elements part 1 (MP 729-737)
4/16	Kant on Space and Time	Critique: Transcendental Deduction of the Elements part 1 (MP 729-737)
4/18	Kant [catch-up day]	TBA
4/20	<b>SECOND EXAM</b>	none

Your **term paper** is due April 25 by 11:59PM. Turn in your paper through Canvas. Do not put your name on your paper.

There is no final exam.

**PHIL 302: Modern Philosophy – The New Science**  
**Fall 2017**

Instructor: Brian Miller  
Email: brianmiller@rice.edu  
Office: Humanities 204  
Office hours: by appointment

**Course Description**

In the fourth century BCE, Aristotle developed sophisticated accounts of matter, causation, scientific methods, and a wide range of other subjects. This Aristotelian worldview dominated scientific thought throughout Medieval Europe. By the seventeenth century this Aristotelian scientific worldview was attacked as unmotivated, incoherent, and inconsistent with observation. This left the small matter of constructing a scientific new worldview to replace the old one. We begin this course with Aristotle before moving on to the challenges posed by Copernicus's theory and Galileo's telescope. Our focus then shifts to Descartes and to Locke.

**Course Objectives**

The objective of this course is to gain an understanding of critical scientific and philosophical developments of the seventeenth century.

**Course Materials**

There are no required texts – all readings will be provided through Canvas.

**Evaluation**

Student performance will be evaluated using two essays and ten pop-quizzes.

First Essay (2000-ish words): due October 6 by 11:59pm – 30 points

Second Essay (2500-ish words): due December 1 by 11:59pm – 40 points

Pop quizzes: 3 points each

All papers must be submitted through Canvas. All papers will be graded blind, meaning that I will not know whose paper I am grading. For that reason, PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR OTHER IDENTIFIER ON YOUR PAPER. Why is this important? It helps to avoid implicit bias and ensure fair grading.

Late papers will be docked 1/3 letter grade per day past the due date.

Pop-quizzes: The quizzes will be quick and typically pretty easy, provided that you are present in class, have done the reading, and are paying attention to the lecture. They will typically be a surprise, but I might tell you that one is coming up. I might even tell you what the questions will be. In order to take a quiz and receive any credit for it, you must be present when it is administered

(or have a document excuse). No make-up quizzes will be offered unless you have a documented excuse!

\*\*\*Content omitted for space – see Intro to Philosophy syllabus (above)\*\*\*

### Course Schedule:

The following schedule will be revised as we go along. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via Canvas. Please complete all primary readings for the date listed. Secondary readings are optional.

Date	Topic	Primary Reading	Secondary Reading
8/20	Introduction, Syllabus	none	none
8/22	Aristotle's Metaphysics	Aristotle - Physics 1.1, 1.5-9	SEP - Form vs. Matter
8/24	Aristotle's Metaphysics	Aristotle - Physics 2	Pasnau - Metaphysical Themes (section 3.1)
8/27	Aristotle's Metaphysics	Aristotle- Physics 2, cont'd	SEP - Aristotle on Causality
8/29	Aristotle's Scientific Method	Aristotle - Posterior Analytics 1.1-1.14	Losee - Aristotle's Philosophy of Science
8/31	Aristotle's Scientific Method	Aristotle - Posterior Analytics 1.31-34, 2.1-4, 2.19	Smith - Logic (29-33, 47-51)
9/3	Labor Day	none	none
9/5	catch up day		
9/5	catch up day		
9/10	Ancient Astronomy	Aristotle - Heavenly Spheres; Ptolemy - Earth	DeWitt - Worldviews (81-98)
9/12	Copernicus	Copernicus - Motion of the Earth	DeWitt - Worldviews (99-134)
9/14	Galileo	Galileo - Dialogue 190-213	DeWitt - Worldviews (148-174)
9/17	Galileo	Galileo - Dialogue (211-13) (again), SEP - Simplicity §3,4	
9/19	Galileo	Galileo - Dialogue (213-33)	DeWitt - Worldviews (148-174)
9/21	Galileo	Galileo - Dialogue (233-50)	DeWitt - Worldviews (148-174)

Date	Topic	Primary Reading	Secondary Reading
9/24	Atoms and Corpuscles	Lucretius - Explanatory Power of Atomism; Boyle - The 'Corpuscular' Hypothesis	Diogenes - Atoms; Epicurus - Letter;
9/26	Skepticism	Descartes - Letter, Preface, Synopsis, Meditation 1	Larmore - Descartes and Skepticism
9/28	Skepticism, Cogito	Descartes - Meditation 2	Curley - Cogito and the Foundations of Knowledge
10/1	Minds, Bodies, Wax	Descartes - Meditation 2 (cont'd)	Pasnau - Metaphysical Themes (§8.2)
10/3	Clear and distinct ideas, causal argument	Descartes, Meditation 3	Nadler - The Doctrine of Ideas
10/5	Causal Argument <b>first paper due!!!</b>	Descartes - Meditation 3	Nolan, Nelson - Proofs for the Existence of God (104-12)
10/8	Midterm Recess - no class	none	none
10/10	Problem of Error	Descartes - Meditation 4	SEP - The Problem of Evil (§1, 4, 7.2)
10/12	Problem of Error	Descartes - Meditation 4	SEP - The Problem of Evil (§1, 4, 7.2)
10/15	Ontological Argument	Descartes - Meditation 5	Nolan, Nelson - Proofs for the Existence of God (112-end)
10/17	Cartesian Circle	Hatfield - The Cartesian Circle	Frankfurt - Descartes and the Consistency of Reason
10/19	Cartesian Circle	Hatfield - The Cartesian Circle continued	Frankfurt - Descartes and the Consistency of Reason
10/22	Mind/ Body Distinction	Descartes - Meditation 6	none
10/24	Mind/ Body Distinction	Descartes - Meditation 6	none
10/26	The existence of matter	Clarke - Descartes's Proof of the Existence of Matter	Descartes - Meditation 6
10/29	The existence of matter	Sorell - <i>Scientia</i> and the Sciences in Descartes	Descartes - Meditation 6
10/31	Minds and bodies	Princess Elizabeth, Descartes - Letters (selection); Treatise on Light ch. 2	Cottingham - The Mind-Body Relation
11/2	Minds and bodies	Garber - Understanding Interaction	Descartes - Meditation 6

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Primary Reading</b>	<b>Secondary Reading</b>
11/5	Hobbes	Leviathan (selection)	
11/7	Hobbes	Leviathan (selection)	
11/9	Hobbes	Leviathan (selection)	
11/12	Locke: empiricism	Locke - Essay (316-28)	Rickless - Locke's Polemic against Nativism
11/14	Locke: empiricism	Locke - Essay (316-28)	Rickless - Locke's Polemic against Nativism
11/16	Locke: primary/ secondary qualities	Locke - Essay (332-7)	Jacovides - Locke's Primary and Secondary Qualities
11/19	Locke: substance	Locke - Essay (359-67)	McCann - Locke on Substance
11/21	Locke: substance	Locke - Essay (359-67)	McCann - Locke on Substance
11/23	Thanksgiving Holiday	none	none
11/26	Locke's corpuscular problems	TBA	
11/28	Locke's corpuscular problems	TBA	
11/30	Locke's corpuscular problems <b>Term Paper Due!!!</b>	TBA	

**PHIL 303: Theory of Knowledge**  
**Spring 2017**  
MWF 10:00–10:50 in SEW 305

Instructor: Brian Miller  
Email: brianmiller@rice.edu  
Office: Humanities 204  
Office hours: by appointment

### **Course Description**

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of knowledge, reasoning, and rationality. Where ethicists are concerned with questions of what one ought to *do*, epistemologists are mostly concerned with what one ought to *believe*.

In this course we will examine the following topics:

- Is it ever rational to reason in a circle?
- Can I tell when I'm being irrational?
- What's the criteria for *knowing*?
- I know that it *looks like* I have hands, but can I know that I *really do* have hands? How?
- Can we trust our own judgments, given what psychologists tell us about implicit bias?
- When should I trust the judgment of experts rather than my own judgment? What if *I am* an expert and another expert disagrees with my judgments?
- The scientific community believes that human activity is altering the climate. But what does it mean for a *community* to believe something? What's the relationship between the beliefs of a group and the beliefs of its members? What's the relationship between the *rationality* of a group and the rationality of its members?

### **Course Objectives**

The objective to this course is to introduce students to central topics in contemporary epistemology.

### **Course Materials**

Required texts:

Title: Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction (1st Edition)  
Authors: Alvin I. Goldman, Matthew McGrath  
ISBN: 978-0199981120

Additional materials will be provided through Canvas.

### Evaluation

Student performance will be evaluated using three papers and ten pop-quizzes.

First Paper ( $\approx$ 1100 words)	Due 2/19	15% of final grade
Second Paper ( $\approx$ 1500 words)	Due 4/2	20% of final grade
Term Paper ( $\approx$ 2200 words)	Due 4/28	35% of final grade
10 Pop Quizzes	[they pop]	3% each = 30% of final grade

Papers: I will provide prompts for the papers. If you would prefer to come up with your own prompt then you are encouraged to do so, but **YOU MUST CLEAR IT WITH ME FIRST**. I'm not trying to crush your creativity here. It's just that picking a good topic for a paper — not too big, not too small, not involving some confusion — is an art in itself and I'd hate for you to get off on the wrong foot.

All papers must be submitted through Canvas. All papers will be graded blind, meaning that I will not know whose paper I am grading. For that reason, **PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR OTHER IDENTIFIER ON YOUR PAPER**. Why is this important? It helps to avoid implicit bias and ensure fair grading.

Late papers will be docked 1/3 letter grade per day past the due date.

Pop-quizzes: The quizzes will be quick and typically pretty easy, provided that you are present in class, have done the reading, and are paying attention to the lecture. They will typically be a surprise, but I might tell you that one is coming up. I might even tell you what the questions will be. In order to take a quiz and receive any credit for it, you must be present when it is administered (or have a document excuse). No make-up quizzes will be offered unless you have a documented excuse!

**\*\*\*Content omitted for space – see Intro to Philosophy syllabus (above)\*\*\***

### Course Schedule:

The following schedule will be revised as we go along. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via Canvas. Please complete the readings for the date listed.

**Week 1:** The structure of justification

1/9/17 Introduction

1/11/17 The regress problem

- Epistemology: a Contemporary Introduction (ECI) 1.1 – 1.4



**1/13/17** Coherentism

- SEK 87 – 101
- optional: SEK 117 – 124

**Week 2:** Structure of justification cont'd**1/16/17 MLK Holiday - no class****1/18/17** Foundationalism: Bonjour and Alston

- ECI 1.5 – 1.7; SEK 30 – 33; Alston – Level Confusions (selection)

**1/20/17** Foundationalism: defeaters and Inference

- ECI 1.8 – 1.9
- Optional: Audi – Inference and the Extension of Knowledge

**Week 3:** Foundationalism; evidentialism vs. reliabilism**1/23/17** Foundherentism?

- Haack – A Foundherentist Theory of Epistemic Justification

**1/25/17** Evidence and evidentialism

- ECI 2.1 – 2.2
- Optional: Feldman, Conee – Evidentialism

**1/27/17** Process reliabilism

- ECI 2.3 – 2.5
- Optional: Goldman – What is Justified Belief?

**Week 4:** Internalism and externalism; the analysis of knowledge**1/30/17** Internalism and externalism 1

- ECI 2.6 – 2.7; Greco – Justification is Not Internal

**2/1/17** Internalism and externalism 2

- Feldman – Justification is Internal (plus responses)

**2/3/17** JTB and Gettier

- ECI 3.1 – 3.2; Gettier – Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?

**Week 5:** The analysis of knowledge**2/6/17** Reliability solutions to the Gettier problem

- ECI 3.4

**2/8/17** Relevant alternatives solutions to the Gettier problem

- ECI 3.5, 3.7

**2/10/17 Spring Recess – no class****Week 6: Skepticism****2/13/17** Cartesian skepticism

- ECI 4 – 4.1; Bonjour – Descartes Epistemology

**2/15/17** Response to skepticism 1: rejecting closure

- ECI 4.2 – 4.2.2

**2/17/17** Response to skepticism 2: Reid's a priori proposal

- ECI 4.3 – 4.4; Reid – Essays on the Intellectual Powers (selection)

**First paper due by 11:59PM on 2/19****Week 7: Skepticism cont'd; Contextualism****2/20/17** Response to skepticism 3: the straightforward a posteriori proposal

- ECI 4.5; SEP on Abduction (sections 1 and 2)

**2/22/17** Response to skepticism 4: Moore's bold a posteriori proposal

- ECI 4.6 – 4.7; Moore – Hume's Theory Examined (selection)

**2/24/17** Contextualism

- ECI 5.1

**Week 8: Contextualism and pragmatic encroachment; perceptual justification****2/27/17** Contextualism; pragmatic encroachment

- ECI 5.2

**3/1/17** Pragmatic encroachment

- ECI 5.2 cont'd

**3/3/17** Sellarsian dilemma

- ECI 6.1 – 6.2.1

**Week 9: Perceptual justification****3/6/17** The structure of perceptual justification

- ECI 6.3 – 6.4; Pryor – The Skeptic and the Dogmatist (selection)

**3/8/17** Dogmatism and cognitive penetration

- ECI 6.5 – 6.5.1

**3/10/17** Dogmatism and the speckled hen

- ECI 6.5.2

**Spring Break 3/13 – 3/17****Week 10:** Perceptual justification cont'd; skepticism about induction

**3/10/17** Dogmatism and easy knowledge

- ECI 6.6 – 6.7

**3/22/17** The old riddle of induction

- Russell – On Induction

**3/24/17** A response to the old riddle

- Decisions Under Ignorance [read this one first and make sure that you understand the difference between weakly and strongly dominant strategies]; Reichenbach – A Pragmatic Justification of Induction

**Week 11:** Skepticism about induction cont'd; implicit bias

**3/27/17** The new riddle of induction

- Sainsbury – “Grue” (just p. 99 - 107 – I’ve include some additional pages for reference)
- Optional: Goodman – The New Riddle of Induction

**3/29/17** What is implicit bias?

- Saul – Skepticism and Implicit Bias (selection)

**3/31/17** Implicit bias as a source of skepticism

- Antony – Implicit Bias: Friend or Foe?

**Second paper due by 11:59PM on 4/2**

**Week 12:** Social epistemology

**4/3/17** Testimony: reductionism and non-reductionism

- ECI 9.1 – 9.2; Hume – Of Miracles (part 1)

**4/5/17** Testimony – the interpersonal view

- ECI 9.3; Lackey – Learning From Words (selection)

**4/7/17** Learning from experts

- ECI 9.5

**Week 13:** Social epistemology cont'd

**4/10/17** Peer disagreement

- Kelly – The Epistemic Significance of Peer Disagreement (selection)

**4/12/17** Peer disagreement

- Christensen – The Epistemology of Disagreement: the Good News (selection)

4/14/17 Peer disagreement

- Kelly and Christensen cont'd

**Week 14:** Social epistemology cont'd

4/17/17 Belief and justification aggregation

- ECI 10.2 – 10.4

4/19/17 Institutions and systems

- ECI 10.7 – 10.8.3

4/21/17 Institutions and systems

- ECI 10.7 – 10.8.3 cont'd

**Term paper due by 11:59 on 4/28**

**Seminar: Knowledge-First Epistemology**  
**Fall 2016**

Mondays 2:30–5:00 in HUM 227

Instructor: Brian Miller  
Email: brianmiller@rice.edu  
Office: Humanities 204  
Office hours: by appointment

**Course Description**

This course is focused on Timothy Williamson's *Knowledge and its Limits*, which is perhaps the most important work of epistemology in the last several decades. Williamson draws on recent developments in the philosophy of mind and philosophy of language as he argues for a number of surprising theses: that knowledge cannot be analyzed into parts (e.g. J+T+B); that knowing is a mental state; that epistemic access to one's own mental states is far more limited than is generally acknowledged; that an agent's evidence consists in all and only those propositions that the agent knows; and that knowledge is the norm of assertion. Our particular focus will be upon the relationship between knowledge and evidence.

**Course Objectives**

We will closely read Timothy Williamson's *Knowledge and its Limits* and some secondary literature. The objectives are:

1. Better understand how recent developments in the philosophy of mind and philosophy of language are shaping recent epistemology
2. Write and present an original paper with the eventual goal of conference presentation and publication

**Attendance Policies**

I will not be taking attendance, but if you find yourself missing a seminar meeting without a very good reason you might want to reconsider your priorities.

**List of Required Texts**

All texts will be provided electronically via Canvas: [canvas.rice.edu](https://canvas.rice.edu).

**Evaluation**

Each student will write one essay of around 6000 words and include an abstract of not more than 150 words. Pay close attention to your abstract: this is your opportunity to advertise your work to potential readers!

Essay with abstract: 70%

Students will present each of their papers to the class at our final meeting (Nov 28). If we don't have time for all of the presentations then we will schedule an additional meeting. Presentations should last approximately 15 minutes (this is short – part of your job is to be concise), followed by 15 minutes of questions from the room (this is also short), and should be modeled after standard conference or colloquium talks.

Presentation: 10%

For each course meeting (except the last) there will be one primary reading that we discuss. Students will write an abstract of not more than 150 words for each of these primary readings, due before the meeting in which that reading is discussed. (No abstract due for our first meeting.)

Abstracts of primary readings: 20%

### **Rice Honor Code**

Rice takes its honor code very seriously. All work completed in this course is subject to the Rice Honor Code pledge, which reads:

On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this assignment.

So what's authorized?

*Citation* Cite anything you'd like.

*Extent of collaboration* I encourage you to discuss relevant materials with anyone you'd like, and in particular I'd encourage you to discuss them with myself and with your colleagues in the seminar. I encourage you to solicit feedback on your written work and on your presentations from anyone you'd like. Philosophy is a collaborative enterprise. But write your own essays and abstracts.

*Multiple submission* The resubmission of any of your own work by that has been used in identical or similar form in fulfillment of any academic requirement at this or another institution is prohibited. Nonetheless, overlap between what your present time-slice is thinking and that of some past you-slice is inevitable. If you're unsure, talk to me about it.

*Notes* Sharing class notes with other students in the class is generous, and I encourage it.

*Sources* All types of sources are permitted in your research. Cite appropriately.

If you're unclear about any of this, please talk to me about it.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Instances of plagiarism will be reported to the

Honor Council, and maximum penalties will be sought. For information regarding what constitutes plagiarism, see: [honor.rice.edu](http://honor.rice.edu) or talk to me.

### **Students with Disabilities**

1. Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities will need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.
2. Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will also need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.
3. If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the Disability Support Services Office in the Allen Center.
4. Just as university policy requires me to accommodate all documented disabilities, it prohibits me from accommodating any undocumented disabilities. It also prohibits me from retroactively imposing accommodations. For example, if your disability is first documented halfway through the semester I will not be able to make grade changes or other accommodations for any work completed earlier in the semester. To avoid these issues please be sure to document your disability with Disability Support Services as early as possible.

### **Syllabus Subject to Change!**

This syllabus is subject to change. Reasonable notice will be given. Any changes will be announced in class and/ or posted to Canvas.

### **Course Materials**

All readings will be made available through Canvas. However, we will be spending a lot of quality time with Timothy Williamson's *Knowledge and its Limits*, so if you prefer to read a hard copy you can find one at Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss\\_2?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=knowledge+and+its+limits](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=knowledge+and+its+limits)

### **Helpful Resources**

Jim Pryor (NYU) has a helpful guides for reading philosophy and another for writing philosophy. They can be found at:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>  
and

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

### Phones and The Laptops

You are welcome to use your laptop, tablet or phone to take notes or to consult the day's readings. If you must do other things with your devices — text, email, check Facebook — then please sit in back so that you don't distract the more serious students. If your device usage is disruptive then you will be asked to put that device away or to leave.

### Very Tentative Schedule

8/22 Syllabus, overview of the project of *Knowledge and its Limits* (KAIL)

**Primary reading** KAIL Ch. 0 – Introduction

**Optional background reading** SEP article: Externalism About Mental Content

**Optional background reading** SEP article: The Analysis of Knowledge

**Optional background reading** Greco, Feldman – Is Justification Internal?

8/29 Knowledge as a Mental State 1

**Primary reading** KAIL Ch. 1 – A State of Mind

**Optional background reading** SEP article: Externalism About Mental Content

**Optional background reading** SEP article: The Analysis of Knowledge

**Optional background reading** Greco, Feldman – Is Justification Internal?

9/5 LABOR DAY – NO CLASS MEETING

9/12 Knowledge as a Mental State 2

**Primary reading** KAIL Ch. 2 – Broadness

**Optional Reading** Kim – Psychological Supervenience

9/19 Knowledge as a Mental State 3

**Primary reading** KAIL Ch. 3 – Primeness

**Optional reading** Jackson – Primeness, Internalism, Explanation (plus Williamson's response)

**Optional reading** Fricker – Is Knowing a State of Mind? The Case Against (plus Williamson's response)

9/26 Cognitive Homes

**Primary reading** KAIL Ch. 4 – Anti-Luminosity

**Optional Reading** KAIL Ch. 5.1 – Knowing that one Knows



**10/3** Cognitive Homes?

**Primary reading** Steup – Are Mental States Luminous? (plus Williamson's response)

**Optional Reading** Conee – The Comforts of Home

**10/10** MIDTERM RECESS – NO CLASS MEETING**10/17** Skepticism

**Primary reading** KAIL Ch. 8 – Scepticism

**Optional reading** Schiffer – Evidence = Knowledge: Williamson's Solution to Skepticism  
(plus Williamson's response)

**10/24** Evidence 1: E=K

**Primary reading** KAIL Ch. 9 – Evidence

**10/31** - Evidence 2 – E=K?

**Primary reading** Littlejohn – How and Why Knowledge is First

**Optional reading** Comesana, McGrath – Perceptual Reasons

**11/7** Evidence Formalized

**Primary reading** KAIL Ch. 10 – Evidential Probability

**Optional reading** Kaplan – Williamson's Casual Approach to Probabilism (plus Williamson's response)

**11/14** Evidence 4

Note: Susanna Schellenberg visits 11/18!

**Primary reading** Schellenberg – Phenomenal Evidence and Factive Evidence

**Optional reading** Pautz – What is my evidence this is a cup?

**11/21** The Knowledge Norm of Assertion

**Primary reading** KAIL Ch. 11 – Assertion

**Optional reading** Goldberg – The Knowledge Account of Assertion and the Nature of Testimony

**11/28** Presentations

**No assigned reading**

Papers are due a few days before I have to submit final grades to the university, but certainly not before our scheduled final-exam-period-during-which-there-will-be-no-final-exam time.

**Seminar: Evidence**  
**Fall 2017**

Instructor: Brian Miller  
Email: [briantmiller@rice.edu](mailto:briantmiller@rice.edu)  
Office: Humanities 204  
Office hours: by appointment

**Course Description**

In this course we will examine a number of questions about evidence. For example, what sort of thing is it (ontologically speaking)? One popular proposal is that all evidence is propositional. Suppose that's right: what's required in order for proposition  $e$  to be part of my evidence? Must I believe it? Believe it with justification? Are all evidence propositions true? Does  $e=k$ , as Timothy Williamson famously argues? It is commonly held that knowing is a binary state: for any proposition  $e$ , either I know  $e$  or I don't. But if  $e=k$ , and knowledge doesn't come in degrees, then the having of evidence doesn't come in degrees either. Is that a problem for Williamson's view? But why think that knowledge doesn't come in degrees? New question: am I always in a position to know what my evidence is – is my evidence 'luminous'? Or are we cognitively homeless? New new question: can evidence undermine the rational support for a belief? New new new question: are there any diachronic norms of rationality?

**Course Objectives**

The objective of this course is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of evidence.

**Attendance Policies**

I will not be taking attendance, but if you find yourself missing a seminar meeting without a very good reason you might want to reconsider your priorities.

**List of Required Texts**

All texts will be provided electronically via Canvas: [canvas.rice.edu](https://canvas.rice.edu).

**Evaluation**

Each student will write one essay of around 6000 words and include an abstract of not more than 150 words, due December 6 by the end of the day. Pay close attention to your abstract: this is your opportunity to advertise your work to potential readers!

Essay with abstract: 80%

Students will present each of their papers to the class at our final meeting (Nov 29). If we don't have time for all of the presentations then we will schedule an additional meeting. Presentations should last approximately 15 minutes (this is short – part of your job is to be concise), followed

by 15 minutes of questions from the room, and should be modeled after standard conference or colloquium talks.

Presentation: 20%

**\*\*\*Content omitted for space – see Seminar: Knowledge First Epistemology syllabus (above)\*\*\***

### **Tentative Schedule:**

The following schedule will be revised as we go along. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via Canvas. Please complete the readings for the date listed.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
8/23	Introduction	Kelly - Evidence
8/30	Harvey!	
9/6	e=k	KAIL ch 9
9/13	Experience as evidence	Turri - Ontology of epistemic reasons
9/20	False evidence?	Littlejohn - No evidence is false; Comensana, McGrath - Perceptual reasons
9/27	Having evidence	Schroeder - What does it take to “have” a reason? Schroeder - Having reasons
10/4	Graduated having	Joyce - Timothy Williamson on evidence and knowledge (with Williamson’s response) Joyce - How probabilities reflect evidence
10/11	Probabilistic mental states	Morrison - Perceptual confidence
10/18	Probabilistic mental states	Moss - Probabilistic knowledge (selection)
10/25	Luminosity	KAIL ch 4
11/1	Luminosity	Berker - Luminosity regained? Srinivasan - Are we luminous?
11/8	Undermining	Lasonen-Aarnio - Higher order evidence and the limits of defeat
11/15	Epistemic akrasia	Horowitz - Epistemic Akrasia
11/22	Diachronic norms	Hedden - Time-slice rationality; Optional: Podogorski - A reply to the synchronist
11/29	Presentations	none

**PHIL 503: Seminar: The Factive Turn in Epistemology**  
**Fall 2018**

Instructor: Brian Miller

Seminar meetings: Wednesdays 2:30-5:00 in HUM 227

Email: brianmiller@rice.edu

Office: Humanities 204

Office hours: by appointment

**Course Description**

Historically, many epistemologists have understood evidence/ reasons for belief as non-factive: a visual experience as of a red sock is good evidence that the sock is red, regardless of whether that experience is veridical or hallucinatory. On this picture, you and your mental-state duplicate who happens to be a brain in a vat are also epistemic duplicates.

Recent decades have witnessed a factive turn in epistemology: a turn towards conceiving of evidence/ reasons for belief as being importantly constrained by facts about your environment. On this way of thinking, you and your BIV duplicate are not epistemic duplicates: your environment really does include the cat on the mat, so perceptual experience as of the cat on the mat is accurate, and your belief that the cat on the mat is true. Your BIV duplicate's environment does not include a cat on a mat, so its experiences are inaccurate/ beliefs are not true. As a result, claims the factivist, the BIV lacks evidence that you possess, and has less rational beliefs.

This semester we'll examine three related manifestation of factive turn. First is Williamson's knowledge-first programme, on which one's evidence consists in all and only the propositions that one knows. Since knowledge is factive, those propositions must be true. The second is Dancy's theory of reasons, no which only facts can serve as reasons for belief and action. The third manifestation is disjunctivism, of which there are two main types. *Metaphysical* disjunctivism is the thesis that facts about the environment can serve to individuate subjectively indistinguishable experiences, e.g. it might distinguish between your cat-on-the-mat experiences and those of your duplicate. In contrast, *Epistemic disjunctivists* hold that you are in a better epistemic position than your BIV duplicate, but they needn't make any claims about differences in your mental states. Clearly epistemic and metaphysical disjunctivism are natural allies, though they can come apart.

**Course Objectives**

The objective of this course is to gain a deeper understanding of the factive turn in epistemology.

**Attendance Policies**

I will not be taking attendance, but if you find yourself missing a seminar meeting without a very good reason you might want to reconsider your priorities.

### List of Required Texts

All texts will be provided electronically via Canvas: [canvas.rice.edu](https://canvas.rice.edu).

### Evaluation

Each student will write three papers of not more than 2000 words, one paper for each of our three versions of factivism (Williamson's, Dancy's, and Pritchard's), each worth 1/3 of your final grade. The word limit is strict, but the paper topics are flexible as long as you talk to me about it first and you have a reasonable proposal.

First essay due September 30

Second essay due November 4

Third essay due December 2

Note: 2000 words is very short, and my expectations are high. You will need to pay particular attention to the structure and word choice. No wasted words, no digressions. Your goal is to establish some substantial thesis, and every word of your essay should further that goal. Some exposition of your opponent's view might be necessary, but keep it to a minimum. My advice is to write a 5000 word essay and then start editing. Seriously: no wasted words.

Why this unorthodox grading scheme?

First, concision is a virtue. Someday an editor will demand that you cut 3000 words from your beloved 10,000 word article and you'll be in no position to argue; get some practice now. Second, some journals only accept shorter papers (e.g. *Analysis*, *Thought*). Third, and most important, is that an excellent 2000-word paper can easily turn into a publishable 7000-word article. Many published articles are built around a single insight, idea, or argument, one that can be expressed in just a few pages. Once you have your central idea clearly and concisely stated, adding the other fifteen pages of stage-setting and context are easy. By writing a short paper you can focus your efforts on your one big idea, and by writing three short papers there's a good chance you'll come up with an idea worth developing further. Ideally you'll come out of this semester with the nucleus of a future publication or conference presentation.

### Rice Honor Code

Rice takes its honor code very seriously. All work completed in this course is subject to the Rice Honor Code pledge, which reads:

On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this assignment.

So what's authorized?

*Citation* Cite anything you'd like.

*Extent of collaboration* I encourage you to discuss relevant materials with anyone you'd like, and in particular I'd encourage you to discuss them with myself and with your colleagues in the seminar.

I encourage you to solicit feedback on your written work and on your presentations from anyone you'd like. Philosophy is a collaborative enterprise. But write your own essays and abstracts.

*Multiple submission* The resubmission of your own work by that has been used in identical or similar form in fulfillment of any academic requirement at this or another institution is prohibited. Nonetheless, overlap between what your present time-slice is thinking and that of some past you-slice is inevitable. If you're unsure, talk to me about it.

*Notes* Sharing class notes with other students in the class is generous, and I encourage it.

*Sources* All types of sources are permitted in your research. Cite appropriately.

If you're unclear about any of this, please talk to me about it.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Council, and maximum penalties will be sought. For information regarding what constitutes plagiarism, see: [honor.rice.edu](http://honor.rice.edu) or talk to me.

### **Students with Disabilities**

1. Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities will need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.
2. Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will also need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.
3. If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the Disability Support Services Office in the Allen Center.
4. Just as university policy requires me to accommodate all documented disabilities, it prohibits me from accommodating any undocumented disabilities. It also prohibits me from retroactively imposing accommodations. For example, if your disability is first documented halfway through the semester I will not be able to make grade changes or other accommodations for any work completed earlier in the semester. To avoid these issues please be sure to document your disability with Disability Support Services as early as possible.

### **Syllabus Subject to Change!**

This syllabus is subject to change. Reasonable notice will be given. Any changes will be announced in class and/ or posted to Canvas.

\*\*\*Content omitted for space – see Seminar: Knowledge First Epistemology syllabus (above)\*\*\*

**Tentative Schedule:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Primary Reading</b>	<b>Secondary Reading</b>
8/22	Introduction	Kelly - Evidence	none
8/29	Knowing as a mental state	Williamson – KAIL Introduction (read quickly), Ch. 1 (read carefully)	KAIL ch. 2,3
9/5	E=K	Williamson – KAIL ch. 9	Kail ch. 4.1-4.5
9/12	Knowledge First	Littlejohn – How and why knowledge is first	Littlejohn – The unity of reason
9/19	Knowing as a mental state?	Smith – The cost of treating knowledge as a mental state	Fricker – Is knowing a state of mind?
9/26	E=K and Perceptual Justification	Brueckner – E=K and perceptual knowledge, Williamson – Reply to Anthony Brueckner	Millar – Reasons for belief, perception, and reflective knowledge
	>>>>>>>>>>	<b>First essay due 9/30</b>	<<<<<<<<<<<
10/3	Practical Reasons	Dancy – Practical Reality (selection)	none
10/10	Practical Reasons	Dancy – Practical Reality (selection)	none
10/17	Practical Reasons	Dancy – Practical Reality (selection)	none
10/24	Practical Reasons	McDowell – Acting in light of a fact	Drake – Motivating reason to slow the factive turn in epistemology
10/31	Practical Reasons	Comesaña and McGrath – Having False Reasons	Schroeder – Having Reasons
	>>>>>>>>>>	<b>Second essay due 11/4</b>	<<<<<<<<<<<
11/7	Disjunctivism	Byrne and Logue – Either/ or	none
11/14	Disjunctivism	Pritchard – Epistemic Disjunctivism Part 1	none
11/21	Disjunctivism	Pritchard – Epistemic Disjunctivism Part 2	none
11/28	Disjunctivism	Pritchard – Epistemic Disjunctivism Part 3	none
	>>>>>>>>>>	<b>Third essay due 12/2</b>	<<<<<<<<<<<