

UNIVERSITY of BERGEN  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

FIL 125 Spring 2017

# INTRO TO THEORETICAL PHILOSOPHY

Intro til teoretisk filosofi

Instructors	Sorin Bangu (office rm. 314A) Seminar leaders: Mette Hansen, Pål Antonsen
Time and place	Tuesday 10.15-12, Sydneplassen 12-13, rm 210 First lecture Tue. 17 Jan., SYD 210, 10.15-12 Check <a href="http://www.uib.no/emne/FIL125">http://www.uib.no/emne/FIL125</a> Seminars: Mette – Thursday 12.15-14: SYD 12-13, rm 129 Pål – Tuesday 12.15-14, 16.15-18: SYD 12-13, rm 129
Course website	mitt.uib – you are responsible for the info posted here regularly
Contact	sorin.bangu@uib.no   mette.hansen@uib.no   pal.antonsen@uib.no

**Important: please check your *university email account* often during the course, as this is the only address we will use to communicate with you.**

- **Course description**

The purpose of this course is to offer an overview of some of the central themes in contemporary theoretical philosophy. At the beginning, we'll focus on analytical theory of knowledge (epistemology), but we will also tackle topics in philosophy of mind (mind, consciousness), metaphysics (modality) and philosophy of science (theory-confirmation).

- **Readings (all obligatory, unless marked R = recommended, or optional)**

- D. PRITCHARD: *What is this thing called Knowledge*. Routledge 2014 (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)
- Jen NAGEL: *Knowledge. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford Univ. Press 2015
- Several papers and book chapters. Some of them obligatory, as indicated; pdf copies available on mitt.uib.

- **Evaluation**

- One essay, topics TBA. 3000-5000 words limit, strictly enforced. 4 days allowed to write it (from TBA until TBA), no supervision. Can be written in Norwegian or English.
- Seminars: attendance of minimum 9 and an oral presentation are mandatory
- Alternative requirements for international students: contact Mette & Pål

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS (tentative)

### I. Intro. Overview of the course + a bit of Logic (1 lecture)

- Instructor's handout
- J. Nagel ch. 1

### II. The concept of knowledge. The Gettier problem (1-2 lectures)

- D. Pritchard ch. 1, 2, 3 + (recommended: ch. 16)
- J. Nagel ch. 1, 3, 4
- E. Gettier "Is justified true belief knowledge?"
- R. Feldman "An alleged defect in Gettier Counter-examples" **R**
- Goldman "A Causal Theory of Knowing"
- F. Dretske "Gettier and justified true belief: fifty years on" **R**

- Optional: B. Stroud "Epistemology, the History of Epistemology, Historical Epistemology"

### III. Theories of justification (1 lecture)

- Foundationalism, Coherentism
  - D. Pritchard ch. 4 (especially pp. 49-54)
  - E. Sosa "The Raft and the Pyramid"

### IV. *A Priori* and Modality (1 lecture)

- D. Pritchard ch. 9
- J. Nagel ch. 3

### V. Skepticism (ca. 4 lectures)

- Skepticism in general (radical skepticism, problem of other minds)
  - D. Pritchard ch. 14, 15
  - J. Nagel ch. 2
  - DeRose *Introduction* in DeRose, K., and Warfield, T. (eds.), 1999, *Skepticism: A Contemporary Reader*, OUP.
  - Stroud "Understanding Human Knowledge in General" **R**
  - M. Williams "Skepticism" **R**
    - A response: Contextualism
      - J. Nagel ch. 7
- Skepticism about Induction
  - D. Pritchard ch. 10
  - G. Rosen "The Problem of Induction"
  - P. Vickers "The Problem of Induction" (Except section 5) **R**
- Skepticism about scientific knowledge. Hempel's Raven Paradox

- D. Pritchard ch. 11
- M. Sainsbury “Believing rationally” (pp. 78-81)
- P. Vickers “The Problem of Induction” (Section 5) **R**

➤ Optional: J. Conant “Varieties of Skepticism”, J. Nagel ch. 6, 8.

#### VI. **Mind and Its place in Nature** (2-3 lectures)

- Thinking
  - D. Dennett ‘Can Machines Think?’
  - A. Turing ‘Computing Machinery and Intelligence’ **R**
  - J. Searle ‘Minds, Brains and Computers’
- Consciousness
  - D. Chalmers ‘Consciousness and Its Place in Nature’
  - B. Gertler ‘In Defense of Mind-Body Dualism’
  - T. Nagel ‘What is it Like to be a Bat?’
  - F. Jackson ‘Epiphenomenal Qualia’
  - D. Lewis ‘Mad Pain and Martian Pain’