



FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 361 Lec. 01 – “Evidence”**

**Winter Term 2012**

**Course Outline**

**Lectures: T/R 12:30-1:45**

**Room: MS 211**

**Instructor:** Jeremy Fantl

**Office:** SS 1238

**Phone:** 403-220-5022

**Email:** [jfantl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jfantl@ucalgary.ca)

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 2:00-3:30

***Course Description***

We very rarely have decisive evidence for the truth. Yet we nonetheless form beliefs about what is true. And even when we don't have fully fledged beliefs, we nonetheless act in the world on the basis of what seems most likely true. When is it legitimate to take a stand, either in belief or action? How much evidence should we require before we trust others or ourselves – before we act in ways which, if we're wrong, could cause more harm than good? We will look at philosophical discussions of these themes before turning to three real world applications in which those themes present themselves with great force and, often, great consequence.

***Required Text***

Course packet, available at the University Bookstore.

***Evaluation***

- Two ***papers***, the first 3-5 pages long (worth 25%), due March 6<sup>th</sup>, the second 4-6 pages long (worth 25%), due the last day of class (April 12<sup>th</sup>).
- A take-home ***midterm exam*** (worth 25%), due March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- A ***Registrar-scheduled final exam*** (worth 25%).

## Grading Method

Letter Grades translate to numerical values according to the following scheme:

A+: 98.33	B+: 88.33	C+: 78.33	D+: 68.33	F: 55
A+/A: 96.67	B+/B: 86.67	C+/C: 76.67	D+/D: 66.67	
A: 95	B: 85	C: 75	D: 65	
A/A-: 93.33	B/B-: 83.33	C/C-: 73.33	D/D-: 63.33	
A-: 91.67	B-: 81.67	C-: 71.67	D-: 61.67	
A-/B+: 90	B-/C+: 80	C-/D+: 70		

Final Grades are computed by rounding to the nearest recognized letter grade.

## Policy on Late Assignments

You can get an extension on one and only one take-home assignment. You can take this extension for any reason at all. But you must clear it with me at least a day in advance of the due date and, again, you only get one. So save it for when you really need it. **All unexcused late assignments will lose the equivalent of 1/3 full letter grade for each day the assignment is late, to a maximum of the equivalent of 4 full letter grades. Missing assignments receive a zero.** Late midterm exams will not be accepted one week after the official due date.

## Syllabus

### Part I: Theoretical Issues

#### A: Evidence and Knowledge

1/10, Tues: Intro	
1/12, Thurs: The Need for Evidence in Knowledge	Plato, <i>Theaetetus</i> , selection
1/17, Tues: The Insufficiency of Evidence for Knowledge	Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"
1/19, Thurs: Non-Evidential Factors in Knowledge	Hardwig, "The Role of Trust in Knowledge"

#### B: Evidence and Justified Belief

1/24, Tues: The Need for Evidence in Justified Belief – a case study	Hume, "Of Miracles"
1/26, Thurs: An Evidence Requirement for Belief	Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"
1/31, Tues: Against the Evidence Requirement for Belief	James, "The Will to Believe"
2/2, Thurs: Reconciling Trust and Rationality	Baker, "Trust and Rationality"
2/7, Tues: Non-Evidential Factors in Scientific Belief	Rudner, "The Scientist <i>Qua</i> Scientist Makes Value Judgments"
2/9, Thurs: The Expository Essay	Essay #1 Assigned

### C: Evidence and Disagreement

2/14, Tues: What to Do When We Disagree?	Feldman, "Reasonable Religious Disagreements"
2/16, Thurs: What to Do When We Disagree? A Middle Ground	Lackey, "What Should We Do When We Disagree?"
2/28, Tues: Disagreement About Morality	McGrath, "Moral Disagreement and Moral Expertise"

### Part II: Applied Issues

#### A: Conspiracy Theories

3/1, Thurs: A Conspiracy Theory	Oliver Stone's <i>JFK</i> Take-home midterm exam due
3/6, Tues: Problems for Stone's Conspiracy Theory	Posner, <i>Case Closed</i> , selection Essay #1 due
3/8, Thurs: Against Conspiracy Theorizing	Pipes, <i>How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where it Comes From</i> , selection
3/13, Tues: Conspiracy Theorizing, defended	Pigden, "Popper Revisited, or What is Wrong with Conspiracy Theories," selection
3/15, Thurs: Conspiratorial Occamism, defended	Keeley, "Of Conspiracy Theories"
3/20, Tues: How to Integrate Sources	Essay #2 Assigned

#### B: The Precautionary Principle

3/22, Thurs: The Case for the Precautionary Principle	European Environment Agency, "Late lessons from early warnings: the precautionary principle 1896-2000," Preface, Introduction, Chapter 6, and Chapter 12.
3/27, Tues: A Surprising Implication of the Precautionary Principle	Runciman, "The Precautionary Principle"
3/29, Thurs: Clarifying the Precautionary Principle	Sandin, "Dimensions of the Precautionary Principle"
4/3, Tues: The "No-Doubt" Standard	Governor's Council on Capital Punishment, "Report of the Governor's Council"

#### C: Psychic Phenomena

4/5, Thurs: The Case Against Psychic Phenomena	Blackmore, "Psychic Experiences: Psychic Illusions" NOVA, <i>Secrets of the Psychics</i>
4/10, Tues: A Case for Psychic Phenomena	Radin, "On Science and Psychic Phenomena"
4/12, Thurs: Exam Review	Essay #2 due

## **INTELLECTUAL HONESTY**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as **an extremely serious academic offence**, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test);*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

## **FACULTY OF ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING & STUDENT INFORMATION RESOURCES**

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts. Drop in at SS110, phone 403-220-3580 or email at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre at 403-220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.
- Email Contact Addresses for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

[arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca)

[arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca)

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