

Knowledge and Reality

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1 Overview

Week	Topic
1	Metaphysical Necessity
2	Time
3	Persistence
4	Personal Identity
5	Foundationalism, Coherentism and Informatism
6	Reliabilism
7	Internalism
8	Testimony

As part of the *Knowledge and Reality* course, we'll be considering some of the most fundamental questions about the world and our place in it. In doing so, we'll build on the foundations laid down by the *General Philosophy* course. We'll begin by discussing issues that concern what exists (in the world and beyond) and the ways that those things are. Firstly, we'll think about the different ways that things can be, considering how we should understand claims about possibility and impossibility. Then we'll think about questions concerning whether the past and/or the future exist. On a similar note, we'll think about what it means for us things to have existed in the past and to continue to exist into the future. Lastly, we'll think about the kind of things that you and I are.

In the second part of the course, we'll think about how we come to have beliefs about the world that are more than mere guesswork. We'll begin with the idea that reasons provide justification for beliefs and think about whether this applies to all beliefs or not. If so, we'll think about how those reasons need to be structured. Next, we'll think about the various ways in which beliefs might be justified without reasons, focusing on the question of whether or not something that you're unaware of can justify your beliefs. Lastly, we'll apply all of this to the thought that testimony can be a source of justified beliefs.

Each week you will write an essay of around 2000-2500 words for the course. This must be submitted to me by email in advance of the tutorial. For each class, there's a choice of essay question, though the two are obviously closely related. You should arrive at each class prepared to summarise the main points of your essay and we'll take the discussion from there.

2 Website

I'll post the materials for these tutorials on my website as we go along. They can be downloaded at:

www.stephenwrightphilosophy.com on the right-hand side of the page under the 'Knowledge and Reality' link.

3 A Note on the Reading List

For each class I've identified two different types of reading. Readings marked as required are exactly that – they're readings you just have to do. Some of these are hard, but don't worry, we can discuss anything that you don't understand in tutorials. After this, there are some further readings. These you will want to look at in your own time, possibly after the tutorial (or maybe before) and they will help develop your thinking on these subjects further. For the purposes of the tutorial essay, however, I'd like you to focus particularly carefully on the readings that I've identified as required for the class. This is *not* to say that all of the readings for each week will be relevant to every essay for that week. You'll have to use (and develop) your judgement for working out what is and isn't useful in each case. But it is to say that you should read those required readings particularly carefully because I'll be expecting you to know about them in advance of the tutorial.

† denotes required reading.

* denotes background reading.

Lastly, don't be shy about asking me if you find any of the readings hard to get hold of. If you can't find any of the readings, I'll either email you a PDF of it or else replace it on the reading list with something that can be found or sent.

4 Doing Philosophy

During your time doing philosophical work, you'll want to read things that aren't on the reading lists. And it's really important that what you read is good quality. It's very easy to waste a lot of time and energy in philosophy reading stuff that just isn't helpful. If you read stuff from poor sources, you're liable to wind up confused or misinformed. You want to be reading things that are written by people who have, at the very least, more philosophical experience than you. In the case of several sources, though, there's no filtering or checking to make sure that this is the case. Obviously, the reading

lists provided by the faculty are a great place to look. But even they don't contain *everything*. With that in mind, here are some guidelines for you to get you started. As always, do get in touch and ask me if you find yourself in any doubt at all.

Some good places to start your reading are:

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy at <http://plato.stanford.edu> is an excellent resource. It gives you an overview of some of the topics that we'll be working on and also comes with a useful bibliography, all of which is of an appropriate quality for you to be using.

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/> is another excellent online philosophy encyclopedia. Like the Stanford Encyclopedia, its entries are reviewed before they are published and also have useful suggestions for further reading.

Philpapers at <http://www.philpapers.org> is an online collection of philosophy articles that can be searched by category. There are some excellent articles on here and the site is a useful way of finding things to read. This site requires some caution, though. Unlike the above two, anyone can add their papers, regardless of whether or not they have actually been published in journals, or are ever going to be! As a rule of thumb, if you can't see publication details for a paper on this site, then proceed with caution. This notwithstanding, it is an excellent and important source.

Google Scholar at <http://scholar.google.co.uk/> is a relatively recent research tool and one that's extremely useful. The best thing that you can use Google Scholar for is finding papers that are relevant to what you've been reading. If you run a search for a paper that you've just read, Google Scholar will help throw up any papers that have cited the paper you searched for. This is extremely useful for helping you figure out where to go next. As with PhilPapers, however, there's no quality filter, so if you are in any doubt about what you've found (as with any of the above resources) feel free to ask me first. Lastly, note that this *is* an acceptable use of Google's resources, where searching for philosophers or themes and then reading what you find absolutely is *not*. Likewise, stay off looking for things on Wikipedia.

5 Preliminary Reading

Anything identified as "introductory" on the reading list (marked with a #) would be a good thing to look at before getting started on the course. For those wanting a particularly good introductory reading to the course as a whole, however, the following would be particularly suitable:

Peter van Inwagen (2009) *Metaphysics* (3rd Edition) Boulder: Westview Press.
Michael Williams (2001) *Problems of Knowledge: A Critical Introduction to Epistemology* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

If you would like to read this, but are unable to get hold of a copy of the book, then please email me for a PDF.

6 Week 1 – Metaphysical Necessity

I'm not left handed, but I could have been. There aren't any three-sided squares and there couldn't have been. The idea is that what is and isn't the case tells us a lot, but it doesn't tell us everything. The study of modality is concerned with the way things might (or might not) and must (or couldn't) have been. In this class, we will think about what grounds these claims – what makes them true. We'll introduce the notion of a *possible world* as a way of thinking about what grounds modality. Possible worlds are a really useful philosophical tool for metaphysical necessity and beyond. If we want to talk about them, though, it would be a good thing to have some idea of what they are. We'll look at various accounts of what a possible world is as well as some competing accounts.

6.1 Readings

- † Lewis, David (1986). *On the Plurality of Worlds*. London: Blackwell, pp. 1-20.
- † Fine, Kit (1994). Essence and Modality, *Philosophical Perspectives* 8:1-16.
- † Sider, Ted (2003). Reductive Theories of Modality. In Michael J. Loux & Dean W. Zimmerman (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics*. Oxford University Press. 180-208.
- * Bricker, Phillip (2008). Concrete Possible Worlds. In Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne & Dean W. Zimmerman (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing pp. 111-134.
- * Zalta, Edward (2006). Essence and Modality, *Mind* 115: 659-693.
- * Melia, Joseph (2003). *Modality*. Chesham: Acumen Press Chapters 6 and 7.
- * Hale, Bob (1997). Modality. in Hale, Bob and Wright, Crispin (eds.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing pp. 487-514.
- * Rosen, Gideon (1990). Modal Fictionalism, *Mind* 99 (395):327-354.

Essay 1: What are possible worlds? What do they have to do with modality?

Essay 2: Critically assess David Lewis' modal realism.

6.2 Study Questions

- (1) How does Lewis' modal realism provide us with an account of the meaning of modal statements?
- (2) In what sense is the explanation that we get a *reductive* explanation?
- (3) What is the *paraphrase argument* that Lewis gives in support of his theory?
- (4) How convincing is the *incredulous stare* objection to Lewis' theory?
- (5) Does the Humphrey objection to Lewis' theory rest on a mistake?
- (6) What do *ersatz* theories of possible worlds have in common?
- (7) In virtue of what are ersatz theories *realist* theories?
- (8) Do ersatz theories fare better in terms of ontological cost than Lewis' theory?
- (9) Why might someone think that ersatz theories don't have the same explanatory power as Lewisian realism?
- (10) Does ersatz realism give rise to unwieldy primitives?
- (11) What is it for something to be an *essential property* of an object?
- (12) Why can't we give a modal account of essential properties?
- (13) What sorts of properties might be essential properties of an object?
- (14) Might the question of which properties are essential be a matter of convention?
- (15) In what sense are essentialist theories *actualist* theories?

7 Week 2 – Time

Issues about the nature and reality of time are central to contemporary issues in metaphysics. This class looks at a set of related questions. Firstly, we'll think about what time *is*. We'll think about whether there's anything more to time than the events that occur. In other words, if nothing happened, would time still continue to elapse? We'll also think about the question of whether or not the past, present and future exist.

7.1 Readings

- † Shoemaker, Sydney (1969). Time Without Change. *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (12):363-381.
- † Smart, J. J. C. (2008). The Tenseless Theory of Time. In Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne & Dean W. Zimmerman (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing pp. 226-238.
- † Zimmerman, Dean (2008). The Privileged Present: Defending an "A-Theory" of Time. In Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne & Dean W. Zimmerman (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing pp. 211-225.
- † Maudlin, Tim (2002). Remarks on the Passing of Time. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. 102 (3):237–252.
- * Loux, Michael J. (2006). *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction (3rd Edition)*. London: Routledge, Chapter 7.
- * Lowe, E. J. (2002). *A Survey of Metaphysics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 17.
- * McTaggart, J. M. E. (2004). Selection from "The Nature of Existence". In Tim Crane & Katalin Farkas (eds.), *Metaphysics: A Guide and Anthology*.
- * Williams, D.C. (1951). The Myth of Passage. *Journal of Philosophy* 48 (15):457-472.

Essay 1: Could there be a period of time longer than an instant in which nothing changed?

Essay 2: Is there any good reason to believe that time doesn't pass?

7.2 Study Questions

- (1) What is *presentism* as defended by Zimmerman?
- (2) How do presentist theories of time relate to *actualist* theories of modality?
- (3) In what way might presentist theories have difficulty with facts about the past?
- (4) What argument(s) does Zimmerman give for presentism?
- (5) Could we maintain that time passes, but still hold that the past and future exist?
- (6) What is the difference between *substantivalist* and *relationalist* theories of time?
- (7) What's involved in the *freezes* that Shoemaker describes?
- (8) Can we really make sense of such freezes?
- (9) Under what circumstances does Shoemaker think that we could believe in time without change?
- (10) What competing hypotheses does Shoemaker identify for the claim that there could be time without change?
- (11) At what rate does time pass?
- (12) How might an eternalist theory seek to make sense of the idea that we take differing attitudes to past and future events?
- (13) What do the *Growing Block* and *Shrinking Tree* theories involve?
- (14) Can we make sense of the word 'is' in tenseless terms?
- (15) What is the difference between A-theories and B-theories?

8 Week 3 – Persistence

Whatever we want to say about time, it seems as though we want to make sense of the idea that objects can exist at more than one point in time. In other words, an object can *persist*. Exactly what persistence amounts to depends on what the nature of time amounts to and the ontological status of the future and the past. In this class, we'll look at different accounts of how objects persist. According to one type of theory, objects that persist do so by having *temporal parts* that exist at various different times. According to another theory, the same object exists *wholly* at the various different times that it exists. A third theory combines elements of each of these claims.

8.1 Readings

- † Heller, Mark. (1990). *The Ontology of Physical Objects*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 & 2.
- † van Inwagen, Peter. (1990). Four-Dimensional Objects. *Nous*. 24 (2):245-255.
- † Lowe, E.J. (1983). *Instantiation, Identity and Constitution*. *Philosophical Studies*, 44 (1): 45–59.
- † Sider, Ted (1996). All the World's a Stage. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 74 (3):433-453.
- * Hawthorne, John. (2006). "Three Dimensionalism." In John Hawthorne *Metaphysical Essays*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- * Hawley, Katherine. (2004). *How Things Persist*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Merricks, Trenton. (1994). Endurance and Indiscernibility. *Journal of Philosophy*. 91 (4):165-184.
- * Fine, Kit. (2006). In Defense of Three-Dimensionalism. *Philosophy*. 103 (12):699-714.
- * Loux, Michael J. (2006). *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction (3rd Edition)*. London: Routledge, Chapter 8.
- * McKinnon, Neil. (2002). The Endurance/Perdurance Distinction, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*,. 80: 288–306.

Essay 1: What are temporal parts and what role do they play in our persistence over time?

Essay 2: Does stage theory offer a viable account of the persistence of objects?

8.2 Study Questions

- (1) What do three dimensionalist theories claim about persistence?
- (2) What is the statue and lump problem for three dimensionalist theories?
- (3) Is there a problem with two things being in the same place at the same time?
- (4) Why is claiming that the statue and lump are identical at the time they exist but not at some later time problematic?
- (5) What are temporal parts?
- (6) How does an appeal to temporal parts purport to solve the statue and lump problem?
- (7) Do temporal parts fare any better with *modal* properties?
- (8) What is *stage theory*?
- (9) How does the notion of a temporal counterpart feature in stage theory?
- (10) What is it that makes someone a temporal counterpart of someone else?
- (11) In what way does *fission* and *fusion* create a puzzle about persistence?
- (12) What is the problem with claiming that one thing becomes *both* of the later things?
- (13) In what way does Sider hope to circumvent this problem?
- (14) How does a four-dimensionalist seek to characterise the fission case?
- (15) Might we claim that *I* don't exist after fission, but nonetheless what matters to me does exist?
- (16) Should we ultimately abandon the idea that identity relations are transitive?

9 Week 4 – Personal Identity

In the same way that objects persist through time, so too do you and I. This class builds on the previous class on persistence by thinking about what it takes for you and I to persist. Relatedly, we'll think about the question of what sort of things that you and I are. It seems that, at the very least, there's a human being that's somehow closely associated with us. One question is whether or not we *are* that human being. Another question is what makes us the same human being over a period of time.

9.1 Readings

- † Olson, Eric (1997). *The Human Animal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press pp. 124-153.
- † Shoemaker, Sydney (1984). Personal Identity and Memory. *Journal of Philosophy*. 56 (22):868-882.
- † Thomson, Judith Jarvis (2008). People and Their Bodies. In Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne & Dean W. Zimmerman (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing pp. 155-176.
- † Carter, W.R. (1999). Will I Be a Dead Person? *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. 59 (1):167-171.
- * Olson, Eric (2004). Animalism and the Corpse Problem. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*. 82 (2):265-74.
- * Parfit, Derek (2008). Persons, Bodies, and Human Beings. In Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne & Dean W. Zimmerman (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing pp. 177-208.
- * Perry, John (ed.) (1975). *Personal Identity*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- * Snowdon, P.F. (1990). Persons, Animals, and Ourselves. In Christopher Gill (ed.), *The Person and the Human Mind: Issues in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * van Inwagen, Peter (1990). *Material Beings*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapters 15&16.

Essay 1: What problems do the metaphysics of corpses present for animalism?

Essay 2: Why does Olson think that each of us is identical to a human animal? How successful are his arguments for this?

9.2 Study Questions

- (1) What is *animalism*?
- (2) How does the master argument for animalism given by Olson go?
- (3) What reason(s) might an animalist give for thinking that you aren't a brain?
- (4) If someone implanted your brain into a different person's body, who would the resulting human being be?
- (5) Does the view that we are animals imply that our persistence is not a matter of psychology?
- (6) What arguments can be given for the idea that our persistence is a matter of psychology?
- (7) Can psychological views of personal identity make sense of the idea that you were once a fetus?
- (8) Is the fact that you were once a fetus a matter of common sense and/or biology?
- (9) What is the corpse problem for animalism?
- (10) Could an animalist respond by denying that there are any such things as corpses?
- (11) What problems might there be with claiming that each of us is identical to a human body?
- (12) How does Shoemaker purport to solve the problem of Locke's psychological view?
- (13) Could you survive losing all of your memories?
- (14) Which part(s) of your body could survive replacement?

10 Week 5 – Foundationalism, Coherentism and Informatism

In this tutorial, we'll look at the *structure* of justification and knowledge. Suppose I ask you for something you believe. You tell me that ϕ . I ask why you believe that ϕ and you come out with some other belief. I then ask about what justifies your other belief and you come out with something else. Ultimately, one of three things happens. Either the structure of reasons goes on forever, or we get a belief that isn't supported by other reasons, or we move in what would appear to be a circle. According to the sceptic, whatever happens, we're in trouble. According to non-sceptics, at least one of these ways yields a justified belief. We'll look at which way, if any, can yield knowledge and justified belief.

10.1 Readings

- † Sosa, Ernest (1980). The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence Versus Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5 (1):3-26.
- † Bonjour, Laurence (1985). *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 3.
- † Klein, Peter (2007). Human Knowledge and the Infinite Progress of Reasoning. *Philosophical Studies* 134 (1):1-17.
- * Goldberg, Sanford (2012). A Reliabilist Foundationalist Coherentism. *Erkenntnis* 77 (2):187-196.
- * Lehrer, Keith (2000). *Theory of Knowledge*. Westview Press.
- * Wright, Stephen (2013). Does Klein's Informatism Offer a Response to Agrippa's Trilemma? *Synthese* 190 (6):1113-1130.
- * Klein, Peter & Warfield, Ted (1994). What Price Coherence? *Analysis* 54 (3):129-132.
- * Huemer, Michael (2010). Foundations and Coherence. In Dancy, Jonathan, Steup, Matthias and Sosa, Ernest (eds.), *A Companion to Epistemology*. Malden: Blackwell 33-42.
- * Kvanvig, Jonathan (2012). Coherentism and Justified Inconsistent Beliefs: A Solution. *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 50 (1):21-41.

Essay 1: Could knowledge have a foundation?

Essay 2: Could knowledge not have a foundation?

10.2 Study Questions

- (1) What do foundationalism, coherentism and infinitism have in common?
- (2) What is the conclusion of the sceptical argument known as Agrippa's Trilemma?
- (3) Might a foundationalist theory claim that *all* beliefs are foundational?
- (4) In what way would beliefs that are nonfoundational need to be connected to foundational beliefs for them to be justified?
- (5) What might mark out a belief as foundationally justified?
- (6) Could empirical knowledge have a single foundation?
- (7) Does justification work in the linear way that foundationalists conceive of?
- (8) What is coherence?
- (9) Does increased coherence make for increased probability?
- (10) Are coherentist theories forced to endorse circular reasoning?
- (11) Could we have sets of beliefs that are equally coherent but not equally justified?
- (12) How might infinitist theories distinguish between good and bad infinite chains?
- (13) What is the *finite minds objection*?
- (14) Does infinitism yield second-order scepticism?
- (15) Should we ultimately endorse scepticism about justified belief?

11 Week 6 – Internalism

In this class, we will look at *internalist* accounts of knowledge and justification. According to internalist theories, justification is a matter of what the individual is aware of, or what the individual has *reflective access* to. We'll look at the kinds of considerations that might motivate an internalist theory of justification and knowledge and some of the key considerations that might push against such theories. In particular, we'll look at the *clairvoyant* and *New Evil Demon* arguments in support of internalism. On the other side, we'll look at Bergmann's dilemma for internalist theories.

11.1 Readings

- † BonJour, Laurence (1985). *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 3.
- † Bergmann, Michael (2006). *Justification Without Awareness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1.
- † Cohen, Stewart (1984). Justification and Truth. *Philosophical Studies* 46 (3):279-95.
- * Conee, Earl and Feldman, Richard (2004). *Evidentialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Comesaña, Juan (2005). We Are (Almost) All Externalists Now. *Philosophical Perspectives* 19 (1):59-76.
- * Gibbons, John (2006). Access Externalism. *Mind* 115 (457):19-39.
- * Lehrer, Keith & Cohen, Stewart (1983). Justification, Truth, and Coherence. *Synthese* 55 (2):191-207.

Essay 1: "Only what is reflectively accessible to us can justify our beliefs." Do you agree?

Essay 2: Does the New Evil Demon Argument make a convincing case for internalism?

11.2 Study Questions

- (1) What do internalist theories claim?
- (2) What is the difference between *accessibilist internalism* and *mental-state internalism*?
- (3) What does Bonjour purport to show in discussing clairvoyance?
- (4) Are clairvoyant beliefs irrational?
- (5) Might a belief be irrational and yet still justified?
- (6) Could externalist theories distinguish between cases with countervailing reasons and ones without them?
- (7) Could externalist theories claim that a listener needs reasons but these just put her in touch with the reliable process?
- (8) How does the New Evil Demon Argument work?
- (9) Are the two subjects alike with respect to justification?
- (10) Can the intuition be brought out more strongly by considering a case where one reasons properly and the other doesn't?
- (11) What is Bergmann's dilemma?
- (12) Why does Bergmann think that internalists must have access to a higher-order reason for thinking that something is evidence for p in order to have a justified belief that p ?
- (13) What is wrong with the idea that one might not need access to such a reason, as mentalist theories claim?
- (14) Does mentalism have more in common with accessibilism or externalism?

12 Week 7 – Reliabilism

The most prominent alternative to internalist theories claims that justification and knowledge is a matter of the reliability of the process(es) involved in the production of the listener's belief. These theories are *externalist*, since they deny the claim that only that which is reflectively accessible to a listener can justify her belief. We'll look at what the notion of reliability behind reliabilist theories amounts to and think about two major objections. The first is the *generality* problem. The second is the *problem of easy knowledge*.

12.1 Readings

- † Conee, Earl & Feldman, Richard (1998). The Generality Problem for Reliabilism. *Philosophical Studies* 89 (1):1-29.
- † Vogel, Jonathan (2000). Reliabilism Leveled. *Journal of Philosophy* 97 (11):602-623.
- † Pritchard, Duncan (2012). Anti-Luck Virtue Epistemology. *Journal of Philosophy* 109 (3):247-279.
- † Comesaña, Juan (2011). Reliabilism. In Bernecker, Sven and Pritchard, Duncan (eds.), *Routledge Companion to Epistemology*. New York: Routledge 176-186.
- * Cohen, Stewart (2002). Basic Knowledge and the Problem of Easy Knowledge. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 65 (2):309-329.
- * Alston, William (1993). *The Reliability of Sense Perception*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1.
- * Heller, Mark (1995). The Simple Solution to the Problem of Generality. *Noûs* 29 (4):501-515.
- * van Cleve, James (2003). Is Knowledge Easy – or Impossible? Externalism as the Only Alternative to Skepticism. In Luper, Stephen (ed.), *The Sceptics: Contemporary Essays*. London: Ashgate.
- * Bishop, Michael (2010). Why the Generality Problem is Everybody's Problem. *Philosophical Studies* 151 (2):285-298.

Essay 1: Is the generality problem everybody's problem?

Essay 2: What does reliability have to do with justification?

12.2 Study Questions

- (1) What is reliabilism?
- (2) How might the notion of reliability be understood in different ways?
- (3) What are the two master intuitions that Pritchard identifies?
- (4) What is epistemic luck?
- (5) How does epistemic luck differ from other kinds of luck?
- (6) How do these relate to internalism and externalism?
- (7) What is the *generality problem*?
- (8) Is the generality problem distinctively a reliabilist problem?
- (9) Do reliabilists need to answer the generality problem?
- (10) What is the *Problem of Easy Knowledge*?
- (11) Why don't internalist theories face this problem?
- (12) Is the Problem of Easy Knowledge more pressing than any of the problems facing internalism?
- (13) Should reliabilist theories deny that knowledge is closed under known entailment?
- (14) How does knowledge relate to justification on an externalist view?
- (15) Can a reliabilist provide a compelling rejection of the intuitions behind the New Evil Demon cases?

13 Week 8 – Testimony

It seems relatively uncontroversial that, if we know anything at all, we know things by testimony. This tutorial will involve us looking at various issues in the epistemology of testimony. We'll examine the question of whether an internalist or externalist account of testimony is correct. We'll also look at the question of whether or not the speaker knowing what she says is a necessary condition of the listener's belief in the speaker's testimony amounting to knowledge.

13.1 Readings

- † Fricker, Elizabeth (1995). Critical Notice: Telling and Trusting: Reductionism and Anti-Reductionism in the Epistemology of Testimony. *Mind* 104 (414):393-411.
- † Lackey, Jennifer (1999). Testimonial Knowledge and Transmission. *Philosophical Quarterly* 50 (197):471-490.
- † Sosa, Ernest (2006). Knowledge: Instrumental and Testimonial. In Lackey, Jennifer & Sosa, Ernest (eds.), *The Epistemology of Testimony*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 116-123.
- * Goldberg, Sanford (2005). Testimonial Knowledge Through Unsafe Testimony. *Analysis* 65 (288):302–311.
- * Wright, Stephen (2014). Sosa on Knowledge From Testimony. *Analysis* 74 (2):249-254.
- * Stevenson, Leslie (1993). Why Believe What People Say? *Synthese* 94 (3):429-451.
- * Lackey, Jennifer (2006). It Takes Two to Tango: Beyond Reductionism and Non-Reductionism in the Epistemology of Testimony. In Lackey, Jennifer & Sosa, Ernest (eds.), *The Epistemology of Testimony*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 160-89.
- * Faulkner, Paul (2000). The Social Character of Testimonial Knowledge. *Journal of Philosophy* 97 (11):581-601.

Essay 1: Does testimony transmit justification?

Essay 2: What are the implications of testimony for the debate between EITHER (i) internalist and externalist theories of justification OR (ii) foundationalist and coherentist theories of knowledge?

13.2 Study Questions

- (1) What sorts of things count as testimony?
- (2) What are the questions in the epistemology of testimony?
- (3) How do these two questions relate to one another?
- (4) How does the dispute between *reductionist* and *nonreductionist* theories connect to the dispute between *internalist* and *externalist* theories?
- (5) Are the intuitions about testimony particularly stronger or weaker than intuitions about justification more generally?
- (6) Is global reductionism excessively demanding?
- (7) Would a local version of reductionism be any more plausible?
- (8) What does it mean to say that testimony transmits knowledge?
- (9) How is knowledge transmission related to justification transmission?
- (10) Does Lackey offer a compelling rejection of transmission theories?
- (11) How does Sosa claim that we get knowledge and justified belief from testimony?
- (12) Is Sosa correct in claiming that our justification from testimony is of the same species as our justification from instruments?
- (13) Might there be any justification made available by testimony that doesn't reduce to reliable processes?
- (14) What is the psychologically correct account of how we respond to what speakers say?
- (15) How does this connect to the epistemology of testimony?

14 Revision Reading

Below is some reading to get you started on your revision. It is, however, only designed as a starting point on the stuff we've covered during the course. You'll certainly want to be using your notes and going over past papers and looking at the readings for the tutorials for the areas you want to work up as part of your revision. But this stuff should nonetheless be useful to help you jog your memory and get started on the areas that you choose to focus on.

14.1 Modality

Chihara, Charles S. (2001). *The Worlds of Possibility: Modal Realism and the Semantics of Modal Logic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 3.

14.2 Time

Le Poidevin, Robin (2004). *Travels in Four Dimensions: The Enigmas of Space and Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 2 and 8.

14.3 Persistence

Sider, Ted (2003). *Four-Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence over Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 5.

14.4 Personal Identity

Parfit, Derek (1971). Personal Identity. *Philosophical Review* 80 (1):3-27.

14.5 Foundationalism, Coherentism and Infallibilism

van Cleve, James (1979). Foundations, Epistemic Principles, and the Cartesian Circle. *Philosophical Review* 88 (1):55-91.

14.6 Internalism

Rogers, Jason and Matheson, Jonathan (2011). Bergmann's Dilemma: Exit Strategies for Internalists. *Philosophical Studies* 152 (1):55-80.

14.7 Reliabilism

Audi, Robert (1980). Defeated Knowledge, Reliability, and Justification. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5 (1):75-96.

14.8 Testimony

Lackey, Jennifer (2006). Knowing from Testimony. *Philosophy Compass* 1 (5):432-448.