

This is a tentative syllabus, changes before the actual start of classes may occur

## **THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (PH 1065)**

**Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology**

### **MEETING INFORMATION**

**Room:** DSPT

**Time:** Tuesdays at 11.10

**Instructor:** Marga Vega, email: [mvega@dspt.edu](mailto:mvega@dspt.edu)

**Office hours:** By appointment.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a survey of epistemology that brings together Classical philosophy approaches with Contemporary debates. We will study the nature of cognition, perception and rational knowledge as well as the main epistemological problems that concern these sources. We will see how from these sources we can develop, justify and structure our knowledge and deal with questions about inference, truth, skepticism and certainty.

### **STUDENT LEARNING GOALS**

1. Acquire systematic knowledge of the main problems in the Theory of Knowledge (Institutional Goal A2). To achieve this goal, the student will read on selected texts. The student will complete an exam that will help review the general contents of the course.
2. Learn about different traditions and schools of thought and how they have approached different epistemological problems (Institutional Goal A1). To achieve this goal the student will attend lectures that present different historical approaches to Epistemology and actively participate in class.
3. Become familiar with some of Aristotle's and Aquinas' texts on the theory of Knowledge (Institutional Goal A2). To achieve this goal the student will read some texts from Aristotle and Aquinas related to knowledge and truth.
4. Develop critical thought on the problems of the Theory of Knowledge presented (Institutional Goal A3, Institutional Goal B). To achieve this goal the student will write a critical paper on an epistemological topic.
5. Increase the student's background in philosophical readings in the History of Philosophy in what pertains to epistemological problems (Institutional Goal A1, A2). To achieve this goal the student will read key papers on Epistemology.
6. Improve writing and argumentative skills in Philosophy (Institutional Goal A1, A2, A3, Institutional Goal B). To achieve this goal the student will write a critical review paper.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. To goal 1. The student will be able to present the key points on the basic features of cognition, the different sources of knowledge, and epistemological problems like truth, skepticism, and certainty.
2. To goal 2. The student will be able to compare empiricism and rationalism, realism and nominalism, the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition and the contemporary theories of perception.
3. To goal 3. The student will exhibit command of the basic notions of cognition in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition like the notion of act, faculty, operation, proper and common sensibles, and truth as adequacy.
4. To goal 4. The student will be able to present the key points of the subject in a way that shows knowledge of the basic questions and personal criticism.
5. To goal 5. The student will be familiar with texts from Aristotle, Aquinas and contemporary epistemologists.
6. To goal 6. The student will be proficient in the way of articulating a philosophical problem, critically assessing the arguments and providing her personal input.

## **COURSE FORMAT-METHODOLOGY**

This is a hybrid course consisting in a weekly online lecture, and one weekly meeting where we will discuss the topic addressed by the lecture. Active participation is required and implies careful reading of the assigned texts.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES**

EXAMS: on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup>. 40% of the final grade each. The goals of the exams are:

- Review of the course topics.
- Assess that student has an understanding of the main topics of the Theory of Knowledge.
- Prepare for the comprehensive exam (for MA exam option students).

ACADEMIC PAPER JOURNAL ENTRIES: 20% of the final grade. The instructor will provide the papers to be reviewed. The goals of the entries are:

- To become familiar with secondary literature and scholarship on the Theory of Knowledge, as well as the latest research topics in the area.
- To learn the craft and skill of scholarly papers by summarizing one of them.
- To develop writing and argumentative skills.
- To encourage the student's own thinking and critical appraisal.

**READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Aquinas, T., *De Veritate* Question 1, “Truth”.
- Aquinas, T., *Summa Theologiae*. Part I, QQ [16](#), [78](#), [79](#), [84](#), [85](#), [86](#), [87](#). Part I.2, QQ [29](#), [109](#).
- Aristotle, *De Anima*, books II and III.
- Gettier, E., Is Justified True Belief Knowledge? *Analysis*, Vol. 23, No. 6. (Jun., 1963), pp. 121-123.
- Kossman, A. “Substance, Being and Energeia: the Argument of Metaphysics Theta” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, Volume II, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.
- Owens, J. *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry*, University of Notre Dame Press, 1992, chapters 2, 5-10. ISBN-10: 0268007918. ISBN-13: 978-0268007911. [70 \\$](#).
- Searle, J.R. “Perception”, *Mind, A Brief Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 259-278.
- Searle, J.R., *Seeing Things As They Are: A Theory of Perception*. Oxford University Press, 2015, chapters 1 and 6. ISBN-10: 0199385157 | ISBN-13: 978-0199385157. Hardcover: 21.07 \$. Kindle edition: 14.72 \$
- Vega, M. “Habitual Knowledge of God,” *Journal of Polian Studies*, vol. 3, 2016.

Most of the readings will be provided by the instructor.

**Reference Books**

- Audi, R., *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, Routledge, 2002.
- Henle, S.J. *Theory of Knowledge*. Loyola, 1983.
- Huemer, M., *Epistemology: Contemporary Readings*, 2002.
- Moser, Paul K. *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology*. Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Polo, L. *Curso de Teoría del Conocimiento*, vols. 1-6. Universidad de Navarra.
- Steup, M. and E. Sosa eds., *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, Wiley-Blackwell 2005.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1	January 30 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction: What is the Theory of Knowledge How is Cognition Possible at All	Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> , I, II 1-4 Kosman, A. <i>Substance, Being and Energeia</i>
Week 2	February 6 <sup>th</sup>	Sensitive Knowledge I	Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> , II 5-12. Aquinas, ST Q I #78
Week 3	February 13 <sup>th</sup>	Sensitive Knowledge II	Owens, Chapter 2 (The Primacy of the External) Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> , III 1-3.
Week 4	February 20 <sup>st</sup>	Theories of Perception I	Searle, <i>Mind</i> , Chapter 10
Week 5	February 27 <sup>th</sup>	Theories of Perception II	Searle, <i>Seeing</i> , Chapter 6
Week 6	March 6 <sup>th</sup>	Problems of Perception	Searle, <i>Seeing</i> , Chapter 1
Week 7	March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Rational Knowledge: Theoretical Reason I	Aristotle, <i>De Anima</i> , III 4-7 Owens, Chapter 5 (Abstraction) and 6 (Judgement and Reason)
Week 8	March 20 <sup>st</sup>	Rational Knowledge: Theoretical Reason II	Aquinas ST Q #79 Aquinas ST Q I #84 Aquinas ST Q I # 85
Week 9	March 27 <sup>th</sup>	SPRING BREAK	
Week 10	April 3 <sup>th</sup>	EXAM 1	
Week 11	April 10 <sup>th</sup>	Rational Knowledge: Practical Reason Personal and Intellectual Knowledge	Aquinas ST Q #86 Aquinas ST Q #87 Vega
Week 12	April 17 <sup>th</sup>	Theories of Truth	Aquinas ST Q I.2 16 Owens, Chapter 7 (Truth) Owens, Chapter 8 (Assent)

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Week 13	April 24 <sup>th</sup>	Truth	Aquinas ST QQ I.2 29, 109 Aquinas <i>De Veritate</i> 1
Week 14	May 1 <sup>st</sup>	Noetic Problems Skepticism, Relativism, Error, Opinion Evidence and Certainty	Skepticism Videos Owens, Chapter 9 (Certitude) and 10 (Error, opinion, belief)
Week 15	May 8 <sup>th</sup>	Gettier Problem and Answers	Gettier
Week 16	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	EXAM 2	