

# Philosophy 513/Topics in Recent and Contemporary Philosophy: Epistemology

Princeton University  
Fall 2023  
Fridays 10:00-12:50  
Wooten 201

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**Overview:** A critical examination of select recent work in epistemology. After reviewing some relevant background, we will be especially concerned with a number of ideas that have their most familiar or traditional home in ethics (or more broadly, in the practical sphere) but which have recently been claimed to have fruitful application in epistemology. These include the distinction between *excuses* and *justifications*, the principle that *ought implies can*, and concepts such as *wrongdoing*, *harm*, *partiality*, *humility*, *alienation*, and *sin*. How deep does the distinction between *justified belief* and *justified action* cut, with respect to the kinds of considerations that justify each?

**If you plan to attend the seminar**, even sporadically...please sign up on the Canvas site. Thank you!

**Note for the first meeting:** Particularly if you've never read them before, please read the Gettier paper and the relevant sections of the Cohen paper in advance. (This reading sums to fewer than ten pages.)

Readings are available at the links below, and/or under "Files" on the course Canvas site.

**Schedule** (subject to the change at the discretion of the instructor)

## 1. September 8th. Overview, and some background

- Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* (1963).  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3326922>
- Stewart Cohen, "Justification and Truth" *Philosophical Studies* (1984).  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4319711>  
**Please read pp. 279-284, i.e., parts I&II.**

## 2. September 15th. Evidence

- Timothy Williamson, “Evidence.” Chapter 9 of his book *Knowledge and Its Limits* (2000). <https://doi.org/10.1093/019925656X.003.0010>

## 3. September 22nd. Excuses and Justifications

- Daniel Greco, “Justification and Excuses in Epistemology,” *Nous* (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1111/nous.12309>
- Clayton Littlejohn, “A Plea for Epistemic Excuses” (forthcoming). <https://philarchive.org/rec/LITAPE>
- [See also: Williamson, “Justification, Excuses, and Skeptical Scenarios” (forthcoming) <https://philpapers.org/rec/WILJEA-2>

## 4. September 29th. Radical Deception

- Thomas Kelly, “The New Evil Demon Problem and the Nature of Evidence” (manuscript)

## 5. \*October 6th. Does Ought Imply Can?

- Nomy Arpaly, “Ought Implies Can? An Argument from Epistemology.” Chapter 3 of her *Merit, Meaning and Human Bondage: An Essay On Free Will* (2006). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400824502.86>
- Ralph Wedgwood, “Rational ‘Ought’ Implies ‘Can.’” *Philosophical Issues* (2013). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26382643>

## 6. October 13th. Wronging

- Rima Basu and Mark Schroeder, “Doxastic Wronging.” In *Pragmatic Encroachment in Epistemology* (2019). <https://philarchive.org/rec/BASDW>
- David Enoch and Levi Spectre, “There is No Such Thing as Doxastic Wrongdoing” (forthcoming). <https://philarchive.org/rec/ENOTIN>

**October 20th—NO CLASS (Princeton University fall break)**

**October 27th—NO CLASS (Class will be made up on Dec. 15th)**

### 7. November 3rd. Sin and Alienation

- Mark Schroeder, “Sins of Thought.” *Faith and Philosophy* (2020).  
<https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy/vol37/iss3/1>
- David Hunter, “Alienated Belief.” *Dialectica* (2011).  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/42971248>

### 8. November 10th. Friendship and Partiality

- Simon Keller, “Friendship and Belief” *Philosophical Papers* (2004). □  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/05568640409485146>
- Nomy Arpaly and Anna Brinkerheroff, “Why Epistemic Partiality is Overrated” *Philosophical Topics* (2018). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26529449>

### 9. November 17th. Pragmatism, for and against

- Susanna Rinard, “There Are Practical Reasons for Belief” (forthcoming)
- Cohen and Kelly, “There Are No Practical Reasons for Belief” (forthcoming)
- Nomy Arpaly, “Practical Reasons to Believe, Epistemic Reasons to Act, and the Baffled Action Theorist.” *Philosophical Issues* (2023).  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/phis.12239>

**November 24th. No Class, PU Thanksgiving Break.**

### 10. December 1st. Against Moderation

- Juan Comesaña and Matthew McGrath, “Pragmatism, Evidentialism, and Dilemmas” (manuscript)
- Alex Worsnip, “Can Pragmatists be Moderate?” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12673>

### 11. December 8th. Belief, Action, and Inquiry

- Jane Friedman, “Why Suspend Judging?” *Nous* (2017).  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/nous.12137>
- Friedman, “The Epistemic and the Zetetic” *Philosophical Review* (2020).  
<https://doi.org/10.1215/00318108-8540918>

### 12. December 15th. Intellectual Humility

- Readings TBA
- Note: this is the Friday of reading period, which makes up for the rescheduled class that would have taken place on October 27th.