

Philo 916, Seminar in Epistemology, Spring 2010,

Tuesdays 4:00-6:05

The Point or Purpose of Epistemic Evaluations

(knowledge, justification, that kind of thing)

In this seminar we will explore an idea about methodology in epistemology: that the point(s) and purpose(s) of epistemic evaluation ought to significantly constrain and inform substantive accounts of knowledge and knowledge-related phenomena. Presumably this would be because (a) folk earlier developed epistemic evaluative concepts such as *knowledge* and *justification* in response to epistemic concerns within their epistemic community, and/or (b) we continue to use these concepts in part in response to these epistemic needs or concerns. Edward Craig's *Knowledge and the State of Nature* illustrates one way of articulating and pursuing this sort of methodological shift. We will begin with this short book and then read several pieces commenting on it. Duncan Pritchard has recently begun developing similar ideas, and we look at a short manuscript. Similar ideas about methodology might motivate recent discussions of contextualism and invariantism, as well as discussions about the value of knowledge and even skepticism. Similar themes are evident in the American Pragmatist tradition. One might see some connection here with Fantl and McGrath's view which associates knowledge with what one should act on, a view we will consider. John Greco has discussed the point or purpose of knowledge ascriptions and pursues these issue within his virtue theoretic account of knowledge.

Evaluation:

70% of a student's grade will be determined by a course paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

30% of the grade will be determined by participation. There are two components. One is finding insightful things to say in class. This is a minor portion, but nonnegligible. The bulk is a matter of short response papers, due by 10 AM each Tuesday morning. These might usefully formulate the general idea of the reading for that day and your quick response—questions, concerns, objections.... Typically, these can be about a page in length.

Schedule:

Date	Reading
1-12	Introductory remarks
1-19	Craig, Edward. <i>Knowledge and the State of Nature</i>
1-26	Craig, continued
2-2	Craig, continued
2-9	Kappel, K. "On Saying Someone Knows: Themes from Craig"
2-16	Neta, Ram. "Epistemology Factualized"

2-23	Gerken, Mikkel. "If the Word "Knowledge" Did Not Exist, Would We Need to Invent It?"
3-2	Greco, John, (2009) Knowledge and Success from Ability," <i>Philosophical Studies</i> 142: 17-26. (2008) "What's Wrong with Contextualism?" <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> 58: 416-436. Also available but not assigned: (2007) "The Nature of Ability and Purpose of Knowledge," <i>Philosophical Issues, The Metaphysics of Epistemology</i> , 17: 57-69. (MS) <i>Achieving Knowledge</i> . Oxford University Press.
3-9	Greco, continued
3-16	Spring break
3-23	Pritchard, Duncan, First four chapters from Pritchard, Millar, and Haddock, <i>The Nature and Value of Knowledge</i> . Forthcoming Oxford UP
3-30	Pritchard, continued
4-6	Chrisman, Matthew. "From Epistemic Contextualism to Epistemic Expressivism", "From Epistemic Expressivism to Epistemic Inferentialism.
4-13	Fantl, Jeremy and McGrath, Matthew (2009), "Advice for fallibilists: put knowledge to work." <i>Philosophical Studies</i> 142: 55–66. McGrath, Matthew. "Can Contextualism Keep Us Pure?"
4-20	Henderson, David. "Motivated Contextualism" Grimm, Stephen, "Knowledge, Practical Interests, and Rising Tides"
4-27	Perhaps a very early draft of a descendent paper by Henderson.