

PHILOSOPHY OF KNOWLEDGE
05:514 - FALL 2021



Tuesdays and Fridays, 10:00 to 11:15 am
LOCATION: G158

Dr. Chris Hackett
OFFICE: G232 / PHONE: x6406 / EMAIL: chackett@saintmeinrad.edu
Office Hours by appointment

Dr. Hackett's webex meeting page:
<https://saintmeinrad.webex.com/meet/chackett>

Course Description

This course is a historical and analytical study of epistemology. Its central theme will be the overcoming of skepticism as attempted by the main epistemological thinkers, especially Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel and Dewey.

Course Goals

Seminarians who successfully complete this course will be better able to:

- narrate a broad history of epistemology, from ancient to contemporary;
- analyze how some theories of knowledge support or undermine faith;
- link the philosophical concept of mind and the religious concept of soul;
- diagnose secular philosophical challenges to religious belief.

This course addresses the following MA (Catholic Philosophical Studies) Degree Outcomes:

- interpret philosophical and theological texts in light of the broad Western Christian tradition;
- understand the philosophical background of terms and theories that are found in the basic framework of Catholic theology.
- analyze and critique contemporary issues in light of the Catholic intellectual tradition.
- express arguments logically and concisely in written and oral form;

Required Reading

- Augustine, *St. Against the Academicians/On the Teacher*. Peter King (trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995.
- Aquinas, St. Thomas, *On Spiritual Creatures*. Marquette University Press, 1949.
- Heidegger, Martin, *The Essence of the Truth*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Other texts uploaded to class Blackbaud page.

Recommended Reading

- Taylor, Charles, *The Language Animal*. Harvard University Press, 2016.

Assignments

There are four assignments in this course totaling 100 points.

Thomas Commentary. 25 points. You will submit, at the end of the semester, a one-page summary of each of the eleven questions of St. Thomas' *On Spiritual Creatures*. We will be studying these questions over a four-week period, and you are expected to have read and taken notes on the questions assigned as specified in the course schedule. This four-week period of study will form the groundwork for your final submission.

Exams. 75 points. There are three exams in this class, pertaining to St. Augustine (*On the Teacher*), Plato (*Theaetetus*) and Heidegger (*Essence of the Truth*). Exams will contain short essay questions focused on the course readings and taken in class on the day assigned in the course schedule. You should use concepts learned in the lectures and class discussions to answer the questions.

Course Schedule

[N. B. Changes to the course schedule will be communicated in class. If the student misses class for any reason it is his responsibility to communicate with Dr. Hackett regarding missed material and potential changes to the schedule.]

Section 1 / Introductory: Distinctions, Science, Religion

Week 1 / Introduction to Epistemology: The Play of Distinctions

Lecture 1 (T /) Introduction

Tutorial 2 (F /) / Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A. 1-2 (Blackbaud)

SEPTEMBER

Week 2 / Framing Knowledge: The Contemporary Frame: Modern Science and the Constriction of Knowledge

Lecture 3 (M /) Framing Knowledge: Science and Faith

Tutorial 4 (F /) / Michel Henry, "What Science Does Not Know" (Blackbaud)

Section 2 / Classical Christian Accounts of Knowledge

Week 3 / Ancient 1

Lecture 5 (M /) Ancient lecture 1

Tutorial 6 (F /) / Augustine, *The Teacher*, 94-122

Week 4 / Ancient 2

Lecture 7 (M /) Ancient lecture 2; Augustine, *The Teacher*, 122-146

F/ NO CLASS / LONG WEEKEND

Week 5 / Ancient 3

Lecture 8 (T /) **Augustine exam**; Ancient lecture 3

OCTOBER

Tutorial 9 (F /) Thomas, On Spiritual Creatures, articles 1-2

Week 6 / Ancient 4 : Medieval

Lecture 10 (T/) Ancient lecture 4

Tutorial 11 (F /) Thomas, On Spiritual Creatures, articles 3-5

Week 7 / Ancient 5: Medieval

Lecture 12 (T /) Ancient lecture 5; Thomas, On Spiritual Creatures, articles 6-8

F / Oct 16: NO CLASS. LONG WEEKEND

Week 8 / Ancient 6: Medieval

Lecture 13 (T /) Ancient lecture 6

Tutorial 14 (F /) Thomas, On Spiritual Creatures, articles 9-11

Section 3 / Contrasts: Plato and Heidegger

Week 9 / Contrast 1: Plato, Theaetetus

Lecture 15 (T /) Modern lecture 1

Tutorial 16 (F /) Plato, Theaetetus, (Complete Works, 158-196)

NOVEMBER

Week 10 / Contrast 1.b: Plato Theaetetus

Lecture 17 (T /) modern lecture 2

Tutorial 18 (F /) Plato, Theaetetus, (Complete Works, 197-234)

Week 11/ 3 Contrast 2: Heidegger

Lecture 19 (T /) **Theaetetus exam**; Modern lecture 3

Tutorial 20 (F /) Heidegger, Essence 1-34 [in class reading: Plato, Republic 514a-521c (Cave; Complete Works, 1132-1138)]

Week 12 / Contrast 2b: Heidegger

Lecture 21 (T /) Modern lecture 4

Tutorial 22 (F /) Heidegger, Essence, 35-68

THANKSGIVING BREAK (Sat November 20- Sun 28)

Week 13 / Contrast 2c: Heidegger

Lecture 23 (T /) Modern lecture 5

Tutorial 24 (F/) Heidegger, Essence, 69-106

Section 4/ Revisiting and Revising

Week 14 / Choose Your Own Adventure

Lecture 25 (T/) **Heidegger exam**; Open Topic Chosen by Class

DECEMBER

Tutorial 26 (F/) Open Topic

Week 15 / Choose Your Own Adventure
Lecture 27 (T/) Open Topic
Tutorial 28 (F/). Last Day of Class. **Thomas Commentary due.**

Grading Scale

For this course grading will be undertaken on a 100-point scale as follows:

- A 93 and above
- A- 90-92
- B+ 87-89
- B 83-86
- B- 80-82
- C+ 77-79
- C 73-76
- C- 70-72
- D 60-69
- F 59 and below

These grades correspond to the 4-point scale with descriptions within the Academic Regulations. See:

<https://www.saintmeinrad.edu/student-resources/academic-regulations/>

Statement on Academic Integrity

Please consult carefully the seminary's statement on academic integrity. It includes a definition of plagiarism with examples.

<https://www.saintmeinrad.edu/student-resources/academic-regulations/academic-integrity/>