

General Education Course Proposal

Proposed Course: PHIL 150 Foundation of Knowledge Units 3
Prefix No. Title

Department: Philosophy School: Arts and Humanities

GE Category (Indicate one category only):

Foundation: A1___; A2___; A3___; B4___
Breadth: B1___; B2___; C1___; C2___; D___; E___
Integration: B___; CX; D___; International/Multicultural___

Existing Course___; Revised CourseX; New Course___

Course Included in Current GE Program X

New courses require the Undergraduate Course Proposal form in addition to this form.

Revised courses require the Undergraduate Course Change Request in addition to this form.

Proposed catalog description: Limit course description to 40 words using succinct phrases. Include prerequisites, limitations, lecture/lab hours. Indicate former course number, e.g., (Former Biol 105)

Prerequisite: Satisfaction of CORE/FOUNDATION Critical Thinking Requirement. Nature, sources, and limits of human knowledge; roles of perception, reason, memory testimony, authority, and intuition in acquiring rational beliefs the justification of beliefs in all areas; for example: e.g. science, math mathematics, values, the arts, ethics, religion, the past, other minds social issues, psychological states.

Enrollment limit per section: 40

Expected number of sections per semester – Year 1 1; Year 3 1

Attachments:

1. A statement presenting the ways in which this course meets the Specifications provided in the appropriate section of the General Education Policy as well as in the Policies for Inclusion and Evaluation of General Education Courses.
2. A statement of elements common to all sections of this course, identifying content, objectives, required student activities, grading policy, representative texts, and an approximate schedule for the course. Required student activities include such things as papers, research projects, homework, laboratory and/or studio performance, recitations, participation, attendance, and exams.
3. A typical syllabus for a particular offering of the course.
4. Any special cost factors associated with this course.

Approval for Inclusion in General Education

Karen Bell 7/21/98
Department Chair Date

[Signature] 5/4/99
School Curriculum Committee Date

[Signature] 5/14/99
School Dean Date

[Signature] 8/27/99
General Education Subcommittee Date

[Signature] 8/27/99
Associate Provost Date

1/14/98

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Attachment #2: Statement of Elements Common to all Sections of this Course

Catalog description: Nature, sources, and limits of human knowledge; roles of perception, reason, memory, testimony, and intuition in acquiring rational beliefs in all areas, e.g. science, mathematics, values, the arts, religion, social issues, psychological states.

3 units

Prerequisite: Satisfaction of CORE/FOUNDATION Critical Thinking Requirement

General Education: This course meets General Education requirements. For students with catalogs 1997-98 or earlier, it satisfies the Acquisition of Knowledge cluster of the Capstone requirement. For all other students it satisfies the upper division integration requirement for Area C.

Course objectives:

1. Increased understanding of the concepts used in evaluating evidence and beliefs, e.g. knowledge, truth, reasons, evidence, inference, rational
2. Increased understanding of the processes and patterns of reasoning involved in acquiring and supporting our beliefs in all areas
3. Increased understanding of the presuppositions underlying our beliefs in all areas
4. Increased awareness of the most common sources of error, and the degree of reliability of our beliefs in all areas
5. Increased ability to evaluate reasons and evidence
6. Points 2, 3, 4 and 5 will receive emphasis for (a) perceptual beliefs, (b) scientific beliefs, and, depending on the instructor, often for (c) mathematical beliefs, and (d) value judgments of all types.

Course topics:

1. **Basic concepts of logic, reasoning, and the formation of belief.** (2-3 weeks) This includes at least the following:
 - a) Basic concepts of logic and reasoning
 - b) The concept of truth
 - c) Significance of diversity of belief; forms of relativism
 - d) Facts, opinions, and degrees of evidence
2. **What is knowledge? What is a rational belief?** (2-4 weeks) This includes at least the following:
 - a) The concept of knowledge; the concept of rational belief
 - b) The regress of reasons problem; foundationalism vs. coherence
 - c) Reductionism & the foundations of knowledge in particular areas

3. **Basic sources of rational belief (3-5 weeks)** This includes at least the following:
 - a) Psychological and social determinants of belief
 - b) Perception (1-3 weeks)
 - c) Memory
 - d) Testimony
 - e) Reason, intuition,
 - f) Reasoning, inferences

4. **Examination of domains of belief. (6-8 weeks)** This includes at least the following:
 - a) Knowledge in mathematics, logic
 - b) Knowledge in science, explanations, nature of science (2-4 weeks)
 - c) Knowledge of the psychological states of other people
 - d) Knowledge of values; knowledge in ethics (1-3 weeks)
 - e) Aesthetic appraisal
 This may include
 - f) Religious belief, faith
 - g) Historical knowledge, knowledge of the future
 - h) Knowledge in the social science
 - i) Knowledge of causal connections
 - j) Knowledge about social and political issues

Assignments:

1. **Tests.** There will be at least two tests during the semester, and a Final Exam.

2. **Writing Assignment.** While the specific nature of the writing assignment may vary depending on instructor, all sections of Phil. 150 will require at least 4000 words of writing (including essay portions of exams), and students will be graded on quality of writing as well as content. Please see the Typical Syllabus (Attachment 3) which follows for a specific example of a writing assignment.

3. **Classroom discussion** is an essential aspect of the process of clarifying divergent views and working towards reasoned beliefs. **Poor class attendance** will negatively affect one's grade; **good class participation** or extra work on short papers will positively affect one's grade.

Texts: Texts will depend on the instructor. Typical choices include:

An anthology of readings
 Carl Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science*
 Adam Morton, *A Guide through the Theory of Knowledge*
 Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*
 Louis Pojman, *What Can We Know?*
 Charles Landesman, *An Introduction to Epistemology*
 Ralph Baergen, *Contemporary Epistemology*
 Robert Audi, *Epistemology*

Please see Typical Syllabus (Attachment 3) for a complete list of readings in one anthology compiled specifically for this course.

Attachment #3: Typical Syllabus

PHIL. 150 FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

Instructor: Dr. James Slinger
Office: Music Building, Room 112
Office hours: Mon. 1:00-3:00, Tues. 1:00-3:00, Fri. 10:00-11:00, and by appointment
Phone/email: 278-4940 (with voice mail); email address: james@csufresno.edu
Dept. office: Music Building, Room 102; hours: M-F 8:30-12:00, 1:00-5:00
Dept. phone: 278-2621

Catalog description: Nature, sources, and limits of human knowledge; roles of perception, reason, memory, testimony, and intuition in acquiring rational beliefs in all areas, e.g. science, mathematics, values, the arts, religion, social issues, psychological states. Prerequisite: Satisfaction of CORE/FOUNDATION Critical Thinking Requirement.

3 units

General Education: This course meets General Education requirements. For students with catalogs 1997-98 or earlier, it satisfies the Acquisition of Knowledge cluster of the Capstone requirement. For all other students it satisfies the upper division integration requirement for Area C.

Course objectives:

1. Increased understanding of the concepts used in evaluating evidence and beliefs, e.g. knowledge, truth, reasons, evidence, inference, rational
2. Increased understanding of the processes and patterns of reasoning involved in acquiring and supporting our beliefs in all areas
3. Increased understanding of the presuppositions underlying our beliefs in all areas
4. Increased awareness of the most common sources of error, and the degree of reliability of our beliefs in all areas
5. Increased ability to evaluate reasons and evidence
6. Points 2, 3, 4 and 5 will receive emphasis for (a) perceptual beliefs (b) scientific beliefs, (c) moral beliefs and value judgments of all types, and include (d) mathematical beliefs, (e) beliefs about other people's psychological states, and (f) religious beliefs
7. Understanding the ways in which one can and the ways one cannot rationally dispute about issues where some type of relativity or subjectivity is involved.

Texts:

1. Anthology of readings to be purchased from Kennel Bookstore
2. Hempel, Carl, *Philosophy of Natural Science*

Assignments:

1. **Tests.** There will be a short test early in the semester, two longer tests during the semester, and a Final Exam.
2. **Writing Assignment.** Many issues discussed in this course are (a) conceptually difficult, and (b) such that to some extent the best solutions are a matter of controversy. Students are expected to work on developing and expressing their own reasoned views on the problems we will be discussing. A considerable number of short PAPERS (totaling about 12 pages) of this nature are required. The length of a paper may be anything from one paragraph up, but most papers will be 3 pages or less.

These are not research papers. Students are expected to become actively engaged in wrestling with the epistemological problems that we are going to be discussing. The purpose of these papers is to foster students' efforts in developing, clarifying, and arguing for their own ideas about whatever they have chosen to write on. Great original thoughts are not expected. A student may not feel she has arrived at her "final thoughts" on some matter; it is still appropriate to write a short paper. However, unsupported opinions are usually not appropriate. Arguments, reasons in support of one's opinions, are essential to nearly all short papers.

Papers may be of three types:

- (1) Constructive solutions to some philosophical problem discussed in class. These papers are the hardest to write, but the most encouraged. If of good quality, they will receive more credit than other papers.
- (2) Critical papers directed towards showing that some view or argument presented in class or in the readings is mistaken. In particular, anytime that a student disagrees with anything the instructor says, that is an especially good short paper topic.
- (3) Expository papers, which simply clarify some view expressed in class or in the readings. This is also an acceptable paper provided that what is being clarified is really obscure and the correct interpretation is somewhat controversial.

The quality of papers will be measured principally by (a) clarity of organization, (b) merits of arguments employed, (c) originality, and (d) quality of writing.

(*Note: This assignment will require about 3000 words writing; more than 1000 additional words will result from essay portions of tests. Thus all students will be satisfying the 4000 word writing requirement.)

3. **Classroom discussion** is an essential aspect of the process of clarifying divergent views and working towards reasoned beliefs. Poor class attendance will negatively affect one's grade; good class participation or extra work on short papers will positively affect one's grade.

Grading Policy:

1. First Test 10%
- Second Test: 20%
- Third Test: 20%
- Final Exam 30%
- *Short Papers 20% (*Extra Credit available)

Good attendance and classroom participation will favorably affect one's grade, poor attendance will negatively affect one's grade.

General Information:

1. **Cheating and plagiarism** will be treated very seriously. The student is referred to the University Policy, as stated in the *Catalog* and in the *Schedule of Courses*. Depending on the seriousness of the action, the student may be penalized by an 'F' on the assignment or quiz, an 'F' in the course, and/or the filing of a Cheating/Plagiarism Report to be placed in the student's permanent academic record.
2. **Students with disabilities.** If you have a disability, be sure to identify yourself to the university and the instructor so that reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation within the course can be made. Please contact Services to Students with Disabilities, Library Room 1049, 278-2811.

Course Calendar (Reading assignments are in parentheses)

Week Topic & Assignment

- 1 A Reasons, presuppositions, and the foundations of knowledge. What is philosophy?
 B Logic, reasoning, and evidence: basic concepts and distinctions. (Black #2, Slinger #3)
 C Logic & reasoning continued (Slinger #3, Copi 4)
- 2 A Psychological and social determinants of belief (Bem #5, Baron #6)
 B Propositions, truth, and relativism (Slinger #7 Chap. 2)
 C Is truth relative to time, place, or circumstances? (Slinger #7 Chap. 3)
- 3 A Diversity of belief and relativism. Is truth relative to belief? (Slinger #7 Chap. 4)
 B Facts and Opinions (Slinger #7 Chap. 5)
 C Test #1. Traditional skepticism: is it always possible to be mistaken? (Phillips #8, Descartes #9)
- 4 A More Descartes. Self-awareness knowledge. Verbal mistakes. (Slinger #10)
 B What is knowledge? What is a rational belief? (Hospers #11)
 C The regress of reasons problem; the foundations of knowledge; "direct knowledge" through experience (Carroll #12, Slinger #13)
- 5 A Foundationalism & Reliabilism. (Slinger #13, Russell #14)
 B Coherence and the "web of belief" (Slinger #13)
 C Mix of foundational and coherence elements in a theory of knowledge, knowing that we know, knowledge of inferences, enumerative induction (Slinger #13, Russell 15)
- 6 A Sources of rational belief: experience, memory, perception, reason, inferences, testimony, intuition, ??? (Quine & Ullian #16)
 B Foundations of knowledge in particular areas: Reductionism (Slinger #13)
 C Test #2
- 7 A What is "directly perceived"? Observation and inference in perception judgment; "physiological inferences" (Maclachlan #17)
 B Direct vs. causal theories of perception; dispositional properties (Slinger #18, Locke #19)
 C More on theories of perception; Projection Fallacy (Slinger #18)
- 8 A Perception and reality; epistemology of perception (Russell #20)
 B Summary: epistemology of perception
 A Priori knowledge; traditional rationalism and empiricism (Hume #21)
 C Nature and scope of a priori elements in obtaining knowledge (Beardsley #22, Leibniz #23)
- 9 A More on nature and scope of a priori knowledge; mathematical knowledge, knowledge of logic (Slinger #24)
 B Inductive inferences, hypotheses and explanation (Hempel, Ch. 1 & 2)
 C Hypothetico-deductive reasoning, confirmation and disconfirmation of hypotheses (Hempel, Ch. 3)

- 10 A More on confirmation and disconfirmation of hypotheses, puzzles of confirmation, Raven Paradox (Hempel, Ch. 3)
 B Theoretical support for hypotheses, other evidence for hypotheses (Hempel, Ch. 4)
 C Science, observation, explanation, and prediction; nature of scientific theories, knowledge of causal connections, interrelationship of beliefs
- 11 A Test #3
 B Correlations, knowledge of the future, historical knowledge
 C Knowledge in the social sciences; knowledge of the psychological states of other people; partial vs. complete reductionism (Mill #26, 27, 28)
- 12 A More on reductionism and knowledge of other minds
 B Reasoning about values; intrinsic vs. instrumental values; value judgments and criteria (Slinger #29)
 C Experiential values, value theories (Russell #30, Blanshard #31)
- 13 A Disputing about experiential values, matters of taste (Beardsley #32, Slinger #29)
 B Rational judgments in aesthetics (Meynell #33)
 C Intro. to rational moral beliefs; Moral rules and circumstances, "situation ethics," generalization in ethics; Relativism in ethics, theological reductionism; Institutional facts (Davis #34)
- 14 A Naturalistic theories of ethics & reductionism, utilitarianism (Bentham #35)
 B Intuitionism in ethics; coherence and ethical theory; comparison of scientific theories and ethical theories (Reid #36, Ross #37, Gass #38)
 C Overview of foundations of knowledge in ethics
 Utility, fairness, and social/political issues
- 15 A Rational religious belief, faith (Aquinas #39, Taylor #40)
 B Review of reductionism issues
 The significance of "other belief systems," another look at dogmatism, skepticism, skepticism, relativism, openmindedness, tolerance, and the search for truth
 C Overview of the course
 Review of applications of a theory of knowledge, identifying presuppositions of knowledge claims
 The "ethics of belief" (Clifford #41)

The above schedule and procedures for this course are subject to change, minor changes to provide more or less time on a topic, major changes if extenuating circumstances.

150 ANTHOLOGY TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Elizabeth & Monroe Beardsley, "The Nature of Philosophical Thinking"
2. Max Black, "Principles of Really Sound Reasoning"
3. James Slinger, Notes: Basic Concepts of Logic/Reasoning
4. Irving M. Copi, "Truth and Validity"
5. Daryl Bem, "Social Foundations of Beliefs and Attitudes"
6. Jonathan Baron, "Effects of Prior Belief," "Biases and Belief"
7. James Slinger, Relativism, Subjectivism, & Truth (Chap. 2-5)
8. Rog Phillips, "The Yellow Pill"
9. Rene Descartes, "Skepticism and the Self"
10. James Slinger, Notes: Outline on Skepticism
11. John Hospers, "What is Knowledge?"
12. Lewis Carroll, "What the Tortoise Said to Achilles"
13. James Slinger, Notes: The Foundations of Knowledge
14. Bertrand Russell, "On Intuitive Knowledge"
15. Bertrand Russell, "The Problem of Induction"
16. W. V. Quine & J. S. Ullian, "Testimony"
17. D. L. C. MacLachlan, "What Do We Really Hear?"
18. James Slinger, "Notes: Perception"
19. John Locke, "Sense Experiences Caused by Objects"
20. Bertrand Russell, "Knowledge of Facts and Knowledge of Laws"
21. David Hume, "Two Kinds of Knowledge"
22. Elizabeth & Monroe Beardsley, "Necessary Truth"
23. G. W. Leibniz, "The Natural Light"
24. James Slinger, "Notes: A Priori Knowledge"
25. A. J. Ayer, "Only Analytic Statements are Knowable A Priori"
26. John Stuart Mill, "Science and Human Nature"
27. John Stuart Mill, "Free Will"
28. John Stuart Mill, "Knowledge of Other Minds"
29. James Slinger, "Reasoning about Values"
30. Bertrand Russell, "Science and Ethics"
31. Brand Blanshard, "The New Subjectivism in Ethics"
32. Monroe Beardsley, "Can We Dispute About Tastes?"
33. Hugo Meynell, "Aesthetic Satisfaction"
34. Thomas Davis, "The Land of Certus"
35. Jeremy Bentham, "Hedonistic Utilitarianism"
36. Thomas Reid, "Intuitive Knowledge of Ethical Facts"
37. W. D. Ross, "Intuitionism"
38. William Gass, "The Case of the Obliging Stranger"
39. Thomas Aquinas, "Five Proofs of the Existence of God"
40. Richard Taylor, "Faith"
41. W. K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"