

Updated 4 November 2017. See the [MSc Moodle page](#) for additional information

MSc Epistemology A (2017-2018)

J. Adam Carter
University of Glasgow
adam.carter@glasgow.ac.uk

This course will cover a range of topics that are of contemporary interest in mainstream epistemology, including: (i) the regress problem (and more generally, the structure of justified belief); (ii) a priori knowledge and justification; (iii) testimony as a source of knowledge; (iv) the (alleged) distinction between knowledge-how and knowledge-that; (v) radical scepticism; and (vi) epistemic relativism. Formal assessment for the course will consist of one 4000-5000 word essay which is due Friday 14 December 2017 by 11:59 pm. Essay instructions will be posted on the [MSc moodle site](#). Students are encouraged, but not required, to write a 1000-word (max) formative response to the essay question set for each meeting (with the exception of the first meeting) and to send this to me 48 hours before the meeting. Students who submit these formative short essays prior to the meetings will receive written feedback. See below for a full schedule of each of the 6 meetings, all of which are held in my office, which is located in Rm. 525, 69 Oakfield Avenue. With the exception of the 14 November meeting, which is from 12-2, all meetings will be from 1-3pm. Any further updates to the schedule (and more generally, updates to the course and other relevant announcements and information) will be noted on the [MSc moodle site](#). Any questions—just e-mail me at adam.carter@glasgow.ac.uk.

SEMINAR 1: THE REGRESS PROBLEM

- 26/9/17 (1-3pm, Room 525, 69 Oakfield Avenue)

Required reading:

1. Carter, J.A. & Littlejohn, C. 2017. "Chapter 1: The Regress Problem" in *This is Epistemology*, Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming.

Additional reading:

1. Sosa, E. 1980. 'The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence versus Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge'. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5(1): 3-26.1.
2. Turri, J. and Klein, P. 2014. *Ad Infinitum: New Essays on Epistemological Infinitism*, Oxford, OUP ("Introduction", pp. 1-17).
3. Turri, J. 2013. 'Infinitism, Finitude and Normativity' *Philosophical Studies* 163(3): 791-795.

SEMINAR 2: THE A PRIORI

- 10/10/17 (1-3pm, Room 525, 69 Oakfield Avenue)
- Essay question: How does the a priori/a posteriori distinction relate to the following two distinctions: (i) the distinction between necessity and possibility; and (ii) the distinction between the analytic and the synthetic? Furthermore, in what sense is a priori justification 'independent of experience'?

Required reading:

1. Carter, J.A. & Littlejohn, C. 2017. 'Chapter 3: The A Priori' in *This is Epistemology*, Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming.

Additional reading:

1. Casullo, A. 2003. Chapters 1 and 2 of *A Priori Justification*, Oxford: OUP.
2. Bonjour, L. 1998. *In Defence of Pure Reason*. Oxford: OUP.
3. Bealer, G, 1999. 'The a Priori' in J. Greco & E. Sosa (eds.), *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*. Blackwell.

SEMINAR 3: 'TESTIMONY'

- 24/10/17 (1-3pm, Room 525, 69 Oakfield Avenue)
- Essay question: Under what conditions can knowledge be transferred from speaker to hearer? Explain.

Required Reading:

1. Carter, J.A. & Littlejohn, C. 2017. 'Chapter 6: Testimony' in *This is Epistemology*, Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming.

Additional Reading:

1. Lackey, J. 2008. 'Ch. 1: The Nature of Testimony' in *Learning from Words*, Oxford: OUP.
2. Lackey, J. 2008. 'Ch. 2: Rejecting Transmission' in *Learning from Words*, Oxford: OUP.
3. Lackey, J. 2008. 'Ch. 7: Positive Reasons, Defeaters, and the Infant/Child Objection' in *Learning from Words*, Oxford: OUP.

SEMINAR 4: 'KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE'

- 31/10/17 (1-3pm, Room 525, 69 Oakfield Avenue)
- Essay question: Is knowledge-how a species of knowledge-that? Explain.

Required Reading:

1. Carter, J.A. & Littlejohn, C. 2017. 'Chapter 8: Kinds of Knowledge' in *This is Epistemology*, Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming.

Additional reading:

1. Bengson, J. & Moffett, M.A. 2011. 'Two Conceptions of Mind and Action: Knowledge How and the Philosophical Theory of Intelligence' In John Bengson & Marc Moffett (eds.), *Knowing How: Essays on Knowledge, Mind, and Action*. Oxford University Press. pp. 3-55.
2. Farkas, K. 2016. 'Practical Know-Wh'. *Nous*. doi: 10.1111/nous.12152
3. Stanley, J. and Williamson, T.. 2001. 'Knowing How'. *Journal of Philosophy* 98(8): 411-444.
4. Carter, J. A., & Pritchard, D. 2015. 'Knowledge-How and Epistemic Luck'. *Noûs* 49(3): 440-453.

SEMINAR 5: 'SCEPTICISM'

- 14/11/17 (12-2pm, Room 525, 69 Oakfield Avenue)
- Essay question: What is the best response to radical scepticism?

Required Reading:

1. Carter, J.A. & Littlejohn, C. 2017. 'Chapter 11: Scepticism' in *This is Epistemology*, Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming.

Additional reading:

1. Pritchard, D. 2016. 'Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, *Epistemic Angst*', Princeton: Princeton University Press.

SEMINAR 6: 'EPISTEMIC RELATIVISM'

- 28/11/17 (1-3pm, Room 525, 69 Oakfield Avenue)
- Essay question: Explain and critically evaluate Boghossian's critique of epistemic relativism as outlined in *Fear of Knowledge*.

Required Reading:

1. Boghossian, P. 2006. Ch. 5 and Ch. 6 *Fear of Knowledge*, Oxford: OUP.

Additional reading:

1. Baghramian, M. 2004. Ch. 6, *Relativism*, London: Routledge.
2. Kusch, M. 2009. 'Epistemic replacement relativism defended'. In *EPSA Epistemology and Methodology of Science*, pp. 165-175. Springer Netherlands, 2009.
3. Carter, J.A. 2016. Ch. 6, *Metaepistemology and Relativism*, Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire.