

# **Frontiers of Epistemology**

## **Master course 2022, Zhejiang University**

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Lectures: Summer Semester, Wednesday, 14:05-17:30 (4 classes).

### **1. Course Description**

This course is focused on Timothy Williamson's book *Knowledge and its Limits*. This is the most important work in epistemology in the last three decades. In this book, Williamson argues for a number of theses that revolutionized contemporary epistemology. Some of these theses include: that knowledge is an unanalyzable mental state; that epistemic access to one's own mental states is far more limited than has been traditionally thought; that evidence consists in what one knows; that knowledge is the norm of assertion.

Students are required to pre-read the assigned text (one chapter per week; see *Course outline* below). In class the teacher will clarify different ideas and arguments in the book and will explain how these connect to traditional debates in epistemology. Clarifications and explanations will be followed by group discussions. The language of the course is English. However questions and discussions in Chinese will not be discouraged.

### **2. Course Materials**

The text for the course is Timothy Williamson's *Knowledge and its Limits*. Oxford University Press. 2002. The book is available on Oxford Scholarship Online. (If you are interested, there are also two Chinese translations of the book). In the Course outline section you also find further readings, but these are optional. You could read them if you would like to know more about some of the topics.

### **3. Evaluation methods and Grading**

*Class Participation: 50%*

Students are expected to regularly attend the course. They will be allowed a total of two unexcused absences. Every unexcused absence after will result in the loss of class participation percentage points (-10% for each absence).

*Essay: 50%*

Enrolled students are expected to write a short paper (around 3000 words) on any of the topics discussed in the seminar.

#### 4. Course outline

Mandatory reading

Optional further readings

<i>Week 1</i>	<i>KAIL - Introduction</i>	SEP “The analysis of Knowledge” ( <a href="https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/">https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/</a> )
<i>Week 2</i>	<i>KAIL – Ch.1. A state of mind</i>	SEP “Externalism about mental content” ( <a href="https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/content-externalism/">https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/content-externalism/</a> )
<i>Week 3</i>	<i>KAIL – Ch.2. Broadness</i>	Fricker M. (2009). “Is Knowing a State of Mind? The Case Against”. ( <a href="#">Link</a> )
<i>Week 4</i>	<i>KAIL – Ch.3. Primeness</i>	Brueckner, T. (2009). “Williamson on the primeness of knowing”.
<i>Week 5</i>	<i>KAIL – Ch.4. Anti-luminosity + Ch.5.1.</i>	IEP “The KK Principle” ( <a href="https://iep.utm.edu/kk-princ/">https://iep.utm.edu/kk-princ/</a> ) Srinivasan, A (2013). “Are We Luminous?” ( <a href="https://users.ox.ac.uk/~corp1468/Research_files/Are%20We%20Luminous_PPR.pdf">https://users.ox.ac.uk/~corp1468/Research_files/Are%20We%20Luminous_PPR.pdf</a> )
<i>Week 6</i>	<i>KAIL – Ch.8. Skepticism.</i>	SEP “Skepticism” ( <a href="https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/skepticism/">https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/skepticism/</a> )
<i>Week 7</i>	<i>KAIL – Ch.9. Evidence.</i>	SEP “Evidence” ( <a href="https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/evidence/">https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/evidence/</a> ) Joyce, J. Williamson on Evidence and Knowledge ( <a href="https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0149.2004.0356c.x">https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0149.2004.0356c.x</a> )
<i>Week 8</i>	<i>KAIL – Ch.11. Assertion.</i>	IEP “Knowledge Norms” ( <a href="https://iep.utm.edu/kn-norms/">https://iep.utm.edu/kn-norms/</a> )