

## Spring 2025: Philosophy 425/625: Topics in Epistemology Provisional Syllabus, revised 11/22/24

Wednesdays 3:30-5:20, WLH 203

Instructors: K. DeRose, all semester; T. Williamson, after Spring Break

DeRose office hour: Wednesdays (on which Yale classes meet), 1:00-2:00, in room 302 of the Yale Philosophy Building

**Course Description:** A look at recent work in epistemology. Topics vary by semester.

**Course Requirements: For Auditors:** Auditors should do the readings for each meeting, and attend in participate in each week's discussion.

**Course Requirements: For Those taking the course:** Those taking the course:

- do the readings for each meeting, and attend in participate in each week's discussion
- class size permitting [this will be decided after the first meeting of the class, but is likely]: each student taking the course for credit will lead about 55 minutes of a seminar, presenting one of the class readings (or a part thereof), and leading discussion of it
- Written work: before Spring Break, submit by email attachment to [keith.derose@yale.edu](mailto:keith.derose@yale.edu); after Break to both that address and to [timothy.williamson@philosophy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:timothy.williamson@philosophy.ox.ac.uk). There are no tests nor a final exam for this class. The written requirements are:
  - Phil. 425: Two distinct papers, each 2,500-3,500 words (about 7-10 pages) long, on topics directly related to the topics of the course, and each preceded by a brief (about 100 words) topic proposal. Due dates (all Fridays):
    - Proposal for first paper: Feb. 21
    - First paper: due March 7
    - Proposal for second paper: April 18
    - Second paper: May 2
  - Phil. 650: Three options:
    - Two papers, with earlier proposals, just like the Phil. 425 papers above, with the same due dates. Or
    - Two papers: First proposal and paper as above. Second paper: an expansion of the first, 5,000-7,000 words, due on May 2, with a proposal for the expansion due on April 18. Or
    - One paper, 5,000-7,000 words long (about 14-20 pages), due on May 2, preceded by a short (about 100-150 word) proposal, due April 18

**Topics and Readings:** After Spring Break, we will read and discuss work by Williamson: current material on recognitional capacities for properties in relation to moral knowledge, inductive evidence, and on Chalmers on verbal disputes, and likely a paper on issues about evidence in different guises and formats; along with a recently published paper, "Boghossian, Müller-Lyer, the Parrot, and the Nazi."

(Revised, 11/22): The topics that will be covered before Spring Break will hopefully follow student interest, and will be discussed at the opening meeting, but will include David Chalmers's paper "Verbal Disputes" [ [link : https://read.dukeupress.edu/the-philosophical-review/article-pdf/120/4/515/338919/PR1204\\_02Chalmers\\_Fpp.pdf](https://read.dukeupress.edu/the-philosophical-review/article-pdf/120/4/515/338919/PR1204_02Chalmers_Fpp.pdf) ], along with some related material concerning disputes in philosophy, especially in epistemology.

First meeting: For the first meeting, if possible, read:

1. "Verbal Disputes," through the top of p. 543. (We will read all of this paper, but that first part is all that should be read before our first meeting.)
2. "Epistemic Justification Revisited," by Sanford Goldberg [ [link: https://www.academia.edu/3544554/Epistemic\\_Justification\\_Revisited](https://www.academia.edu/3544554/Epistemic_Justification_Revisited) ] (a fairly short paper which discusses William Alston's book, *Beyond Justification: Dimensions of Epistemic Evaluation*, one of main examples cited by Chalmers)
3. Section 1 (so just the first 2-1/2 pages) of "Philosophy Without Belief," by Zach Barnett [ [link: https://academic.oup.com/mind/article/128/509/109/3897540](https://academic.oup.com/mind/article/128/509/109/3897540) ]. (We won't be reading the rest of this paper, unless student interest leads us to do so. We will just be using the first section for a quick and easy statement of disagreement-generated metaphilosophical skepticism.)