UCLouvain

lfilo1134

2026

Epistemology

5.00 credits	30.0 h	Q2

Teacher(s)	Guay Alexandre ;Modera Astrid (compensates Guay Alexandre) ;
Language :	French
Place of the course	Louvain-la-Neuve
Main themes	This course does not deal with special epistemology, which concerns the fundamentals of a specific type of knowledge (human or natural sciences), but with general epistemology, also known as the theory of knowledge. It will cover the heavily gnoseological thought processes (reasoning, judging, believing, etc.). We will highlight the obstacles to knowledge (doubt, error, sensorial or cognitive illusions, cognitive bias, theoretical load, etc.), as well as some of the means that are supposed to help overcome them. We will present and discuss the main historical epistemological movements (empiricism and rationalism, idealism and realism, the nature of truth, etc.), but also the more contemporary, and in some cases the more recent, positions (internalism and externalism, foundationalism and coherentism, evidence-based knowledge, social constructivism, etc.).
Learning outcomes	**At the end of this learning unit, the student is able to :** By the end of this course, students will have learned the basic concepts of philosophy's great theories of knowledge. They will understand how a debate can, reasonably and critically, claim to be valid. They will realise that there are many answers to the question 'what can I know?' In other words, what are the nature, methods and limits of knowledge?
Teaching methods	The course will be based on lectures. The preferred method will be the systematic comparison of approaches and positions. In addition, students will be expected to prepare for classes through reading. Class participation will therefore be essential.
Content	The objective of this course is to give students a first introduction to general epistemology (understood in its sense of "theory of knowledge"). The course will address in particular the possible ways of defining what knowledge is, as well as the various ways in which it can be considered that it is justified (foundationalism, coherentism, etc.). Various related themes studied will be: skepticism, relativism, truth, limits of knowledge, knowledge by testimony, epistemic virtues, etc.
Inline resources	See Moodle website.
Bibliography	Les différentes ressources bibliographiques seront postées en accès restreint sur la page Moodle du cours.
Faculty or entity in charge	EFIL

Programmes containing this learning unit (UE)

Program title	Acronym	Credits	Prerequisite	Learning outcomes
Certificat universitaire en philosophie (fondements)	FILO9CE	5		
Bachelor in Modern Languages and Literatures: German, Dutch and English	GERM1BA	5		
Bachelor in Ancient and Modern Languages and Literatures	LAFR1BA	5		
Bachelor in Philosophy, Politics and Economics	PPE1BA	5		
Minor in Philosophy	MINFILO	5		
Bachelor in Philosophy	FILO1BA	5		
Bachelor in French and Romance Languages and Literatures : General	ROM1BA	5		
Bachelor in Modern Languages and Literatures : General	ROGE1BA	5		