PHIL 570: Seminar in Epistemology  
Fall Semester 2019

**Topic: The Structure of Epistemic Normativity**

Instructors: Maria Lasonen-Aarnio (MLA) and Ralph Wedgwood (RW)
Mondays, 4.30 – 6.50 pm
MHP 102

**Course overview**

The topic of this seminar will be justified or rational belief, as well as the structure of epistemic normativity more generally. One central goal will be to understand how many different ways of evaluating beliefs can be expressed by talking about “justified belief”, and if there is more than one such way of evaluating beliefs, how they differ from each other. Then we shall explore how an understanding of these different kinds of evaluation can illuminate structural questions about justified belief – such as the debate between foundationalism and coherentism, and about whether higher-order evidence can defeat the lower-order justification of beliefs, etc. We will also explore issues having to do with obligations to gather evidence, understanding, and the role of reasons in epistemic normativity.

All of the assigned readings will be made available on the course Blackboard site.

**Work required**

Besides attending class, doing the assigned reading, and participating in class discussions, students who are taking the course for credit should make one class presentation, and write one term paper, on a subject of their choice, which they should choose in consultation with instructors. They should schedule a meeting with RW in the first half of the semester, and with MLA in the second half of the semester, to discuss their term paper plans.

The first draft of the term paper will be due by the last meeting of class (December 2nd); the final draft will be due two weeks later (December 16th).

A student’s grade for the course will be based on the class presentation (25%) and the term paper (75%).
Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability should register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP), and provide us with a statement listing the requested accommodations. (DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8.30 a.m.–5.00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number is (213) 740-0776.)

Schedule of topics and readings

There will be 14 meetings of the class over the semester. Meetings 1–7 and 11 will be led by RW, and meetings 8–10 and 12–14 will be led by MLA.

1. August 26th – RW: Introduction
   September 2nd – No class: Labor Day

2. September 9th – RW: Internalism vs. externalism

3. September 16th – RW: Doxastic vs. propositional justification

4. September 23rd – RW: Foundations vs. coherence

5. September 30th – RW: Evidence and evidentialism
6. October 7th – RW: Synchronic vs. diachronic rationality

7. October 14th – RW: Probabilistic models

8. October 21st – MLA: Guidance and epistemic access


10. November 4th – MLA: Understanding and testimony

11. November 11th – RW: Defeasibility and higher-order evidence

12. November 18th – MLA: Higher-order evidence II

14. December 2nd – MLA: **Perspectivism and Dispositionalism**