

Syllabus for
THE 455—Intensive Studies: Epistemology
3.0 Credit Hours
Fall 2005

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey of the history and development of classical epistemological problems, including possible solutions to those problems. In addition to the classical literature, we will also spend quite a bit of time considering the fields of virtue epistemology and religious epistemology.
Prerequisite: None

II. COURSE GOALS

The purpose of this course is to enable the student to do the following:

- A. Obtain an overview of major historical figures and problems in epistemology.
- B. Study the relationship of faith and reason, asking the particular question: Is faith a knowing?
- C. Review the strengths and shortcomings of different epistemological systems.
- D. Form an understanding of a broad range of doctrines, issues and ideas integral for a reflective study of philosophy and thereby enable the student to intelligently “dig deeper” after the close of the semester.
- E. Acquire critical-thinking skills useful for future academic and vocational pursuits.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE

Successful completion of this course will enable the student to do the following:

- A. Demonstrate, in writing, a working knowledge of epistemology.
- B. Discuss and define key problems, issues, concepts, and developments in epistemology.
- C. Discuss significant philosophers and their contribution to epistemological thought.
- D. State the function of epistemology from a Christian perspective.

IV. TEXTBOOKS

A. Required Texts

Bonjour, Laurence. *Epistemology: Classic Problems and Contemporary Responses*.
Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Landham, MD. 2002.

Geivett, R. Douglas and Brendan Sweetman eds *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*. Oxford University Press. New York, NY. 1993.

B. Recommended Reading

Platinga, Alvin. *Warranted Christian Belief*. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Swinburne, Richard. *Faith and Reason*. Oxford University Press, 1984.

Zagzebski, Linda. *Virtues of the Mind*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. University Policies and Procedures

1. Attendance at each class or laboratory is mandatory at Oral Roberts University.
2. Double cuts will be assessed for absences immediately preceding or following holidays.
3. Excessive absences can reduce a student's grade or deny credit for the course.
4. Students taking a late exam because of an unauthorized absence will be charged a late exam fee.
5. Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print, video, multimedia, or computer software.
6. Final exams cannot be given before their scheduled times. Students need to check the final exam schedule before planning return flights or other events at the end of the semester.

B. Department Policies and Procedures

Note: Attendance policy is enforced. Excessive absences will affect your grade. See syllabus attendance policy.

1. Completion of a Course

- a. All assignments are due on the dates established in the course calendar, which is published in the syllabus or assigned in class. **Any assignments turned in after the scheduled due date will be penalized five percent (5%) of the original value per day including weekends, breaks, and holidays.**
- b. **No work** is accepted after the final date of regular classes.

2. Incompletes

- a. An incomplete is given only after the student establishes with the instructor and the department chair by written petition that his or her work is incomplete for good cause (i.e., lengthy illness, death in the family). **Incompletes are rarely granted.** Only those absences that are incurred within the time period of the extenuating circumstances prompting an incomplete will be excused. The student is still accountable for any other absences and will be penalized for them according to the attendance policy.
- b. A Petition for Incomplete Grade with all supporting documentation must be submitted for approval at least one week prior to the end of normal classes. The submitting of a petition does not automatically ensure the granting of an incomplete. The petition must be approved by the appropriate academic committee of the Undergraduate Theology Department.

3. Examinations and Other Assignments
 - a. Early examinations **are not** allowed.
 - b. Late examinations are administered only when extenuating circumstances are present (such as a death in the family the week before exams, sudden and major illness the week of exams that is documented by a physician). In fairness to all students, some persons should not have more time to prepare for an examination than others. **The granting of a late examination request is rare.**
 - c. A Petition for Late Examination without penalty must be signed by the professor and the chair. Proper documentation must accompany the petition and must be submitted to the Undergraduate Theology Department. The student must schedule the makeup exam with the professor of the course. The exam must be taken no later than five (5) calendar days after the approval of the petition. **Grade penalties may be applied as indicated by the Academic Affairs Committee.**
 - d. **All** exams will be given as scheduled. It is the student's responsibility when purchasing airline tickets, for example, to take this schedule into consideration. **Not being present for the final examination automatically results in failure of the course.**
 - e. These requirements apply to all quizzes, tests, and examinations administered by the Undergraduate Theology Department.
4. Attendance
 - a. The Official Attendance Policy for the Undergraduate Theology Department is as follows for a three-semester hour class:
 - (1) If the class meets three times a week, the missing of 6 class sessions will result in a grade reduction of one letter grade. Missing 12 class sessions will automatically result in a grade of "F."
 - (2) If a class meets twice a week, the missing of 4 class sessions will result in a grade reduction of one letter grade. Missing 8 sessions will automatically result in a grade of "F."
 - (3) If the class meets once a week, then missing 2 class sessions will result in a grade reduction of one letter grade. Missing 4 class sessions will automatically result in a grade of "F."
 - b. **The absences allowed prior to grade reduction are designed to allow for emergencies and illnesses, and are not designed for indiscriminate use.** Many students incorrectly assume that they may use these allowable absences as unexcused "cuts" from class. Administrative excuses are granted only when a student is on official University business and has received approval in advance from the University administration.
 - c. Students are expected to be prompt for classes. **Two tardies will equal one absence.**
- C. Course Procedures
 1. Requirements:

Attendance/Participation	20%
Weekly Reading Responses	30%
Mid-term	25%
Final	25%

2. Grade Scale:
90+ = A; 80+ =B; 70+ = C; 60+ = D; 59- =F

VII. COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1	Introduction
Week 2	Descartes
Week 3	Descartes
Week 4	Sense perception
Week 5	Sense perception
Week 6	Skepticism
Week 7	Skepticism
Week 8	A priori reasoning
Week 9	A priori reasoning
Week 10-12	Virtue Epistemology
Week 13-15	Religious Epistemology

Course Inventory for ORU's Student Learning Outcomes
THE 455—Epistemology
Fall 2005

This course contributes to the ORU student learning outcomes as indicated below:

Significant Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly and includes targeted assessment.

Moderate Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly or indirectly and includes some assessment.

Minimal Contribution – Addresses the outcome indirectly and includes little or no assessment.

No Contribution – Does not address the outcome.

The Student Learning Glossary at <http://ir.oru.edu/doc/glossary.pdf> defines each outcome and each of the proficiencies/capacities.

OUTCOMES & Proficiencies/Capacities		Significant Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Minimal Contribution	No Contribution
1	Outcome #1 – Spiritually Alive Proficiencies/Capacities				
1A	Biblical knowledge	X			
1B	Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit	X			
1C	Evangelistic capability	X			
1D	Ethical behavior	X			
2	Outcome #2 – Intellectually Alert Proficiencies/Capacities				
2A	Evangelistic capability	X			
2B	Ethical behavior	X			
2C	Global & historical perspectives	X			
2D	Aesthetic appreciation	X			
2E	Intellectual creativity	X			
3	Outcome #3 – Physically Disciplined Proficiencies/Capacities				
3A	Healthy lifestyle				X
3B	Physically disciplined lifestyle			X	
4	Outcome #4 – Socially Adept Proficiencies/Capacities				
4A	Communication skills	X			
4B	Interpersonal skills	X			
4C	Appreciation of cultural & linguistic differences	X			
4D	Responsible citizenship		X		
4E	Leadership capacity		X		