

PHIL 4352/5352 — RATIONALISM VS. EMPIRICISM

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Office Tuesday, 1-2,
Hours & by appointment

This course is based on draft material for a book titled *Foundations: On the Nature of Basic Evidence*. We will cover a good deal of foundational material in epistemology – as evidence by the schedule of topics. However, my overriding goals are to establish two things: (1) that rationalism is the most defensible epistemological theory, and (2) that a general theory of basic evidence can be given that explains the evidentiary status of intuition.

Course Objectives: A significant objective of this course is to provide the students with a genuine sense of philosophy as a living discipline. In addition, students will attain both a better understanding of a number of foundational topics in epistemology and further develop their capacity to critically engage ideas.

Materials:

Optional

- Course Packet of suggested background readings, available on the course site. Google Scholar is also your friend.

Requirements and Expectations

This course is an upper division/graduate philosophy course. Students will be expected to have academic skills commensurate with its level including: the ability to read complex primary source material, the ability to write clear, well-constructed critical essays, and the ability to engage in articulate and respectful discourse. In addition, I expect all students to be prepared and attentive in class. This means coming to class having done reading assignments and having thought about their significance, and while in class being an active listener and contributor. Although I will not take attendance, I do expect you to attend every class meeting. You are responsible for all material and announcements made in class, whether you are present or not. No late assignments will be allowed without a University excuse.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have or suspect you have a physical, learning, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services located in the Union Bldg East, room 106 (747-5148).

Evaluation – PHIL 4352:

- **Critical Essay (15% of total grade):** 2,000 words.
- **Critical Essay (35% of total grade):** 3,000-5,000 words
- **Final and Midterm Exams (20% each):** Take home exams
- **Participation (10%)**

Evaluation – PHIL 5352:

- **Critical Essay (15% of total grade):** 3,500 words.
- **Critical Essay (35% of total grade):** 5,000-7,000 words
- **Final and Midterm Exams (20%)**
- **Participation (10%)**

The grading scale for this class is given below:

A	B	C	D	F
>89.5%	>79.5%	>69.5%	>59.5%	≤59.5%

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a concern for everyone. By joining the UTEP community every student agrees to abide by the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable to another person.

Cheating

- Copying from the test paper of another student
- Communicating with another student during a test
- Giving or seeking aid from another student during a test
- Possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during tests (i.e. Crib notes, class notes, books, etc)
- Substituting for another person to take a test
- Falsifying research data, reports, academic work offered for credit

Plagiarism

- Using someone's work in your assignments without the proper citations
- Submitting the same paper or assignment from a different course, without direct permission of instructors

Collusion

- Unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments

Course Schedule: This is a tentative schedule of topics for the semester. I will provide a rolling list of background reading materials on Blackboard as the semester progresses. This material is designed to help you participate better in class discussion and give you direction for research papers.

Date	Topic
Section 1	The Epistemic Regress Argument
Section 2	Foundationalism
Section 3	Basic Evidence: First Steps
Section 4	Perception
Section 5	Introspection
Section 6	The Cartesian Program
Section 7	Intuition
Section 8	A General Theory of Basic Evidence