THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (PH 1065)
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology

MEETING INFORMATION
Room: DSPT 3
Time: Thursdays at 11.10
Instructor: Marga Vega, email: mvega@dspt.edu
Office hours: By appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of epistemology that brings together Classical philosophy approaches with Contemporary debates. We will study the nature of cognition as well as the main epistemological problems that concern the sources of knowledge: perception, memory, testimony, reason. We will see how from these sources we can develop, justify and structure our knowledge and deal with questions about inference, truth, skepticism and certainty.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

1. Acquire systematic knowledge of the main problems in the Theory of Knowledge (Institutional Goal A2). To achieve this goal, the student will read on selected texts. The student will complete an exam that will help review the general contents of the course.
2. Learn about different traditions and schools of thought and how they have approached different epistemological problems (Institutional Goal A1). To achieve this goal the student will attend lectures that present different historical approaches to Epistemology and actively participate in class.
3. Become familiar with some of Aristotle's and Aquinas’ texts on the theory of Knowledge (Institutional Goal A2). To achieve this goal the student will read some texts from Aristotle and Aquinas related to knowledge and truth.
4. Develop critical thought on the problems of the Theory of Knowledge presented (Institutional Goal A3, Institutional Goal B). To achieve this goal the student will write a critical paper on an epistemological topic.
5. Increase the student's background in philosophical readings in the History of Philosophy in what pertains to the theory of knowledge (Institutional Goal A1, A2). To achieve this goal the student will read key papers on the subject.
6. Improve writing and argumentative skills in Philosophy (Institutional Goal A1, A2, A3, Institutional Goal B). To achieve this goal the student will write a critical review paper.
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To goal 1. The student will be able to present the key points on the basic features of cognition, the different sources of knowledge, and topics like truth, skepticism, and certainty.

2. To goal 2. The student will be able to compare empiricism and rationalism, realism and nominalism, the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition and the contemporary theories of perception.

3. To goal 3. The student will exhibit command of the basic notions of cognition in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition like the notion of act, faculty, operation, proper and common sensibles, and truth as adequacy.

4. To goal 4. The student will be able to present the key points of the subject in a way that shows knowledge of the basic questions and personal criticism.

5. To goal 5. The student will be familiar with texts from Aristotle, Aquinas and contemporary epistemologists.

6. To goal 6. The student will be proficient in the way of articulating a philosophical problem, critically assessing the arguments and providing her personal input.

COURSE FORMAT-METHODOLOGY

This is a hybrid course consisting in a weekly online lecture, and one weekly meeting where we will discuss the topic addressed by the lecture. Active participation is essential and requires careful reading of the assigned texts and online lecture.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

EXAM: on April 16th. 50% of the final grade. The goals of the exam are:

- Review of the course topics.
- Assess that student has an understanding of the main topics of the Theory of Knowledge.
- Prepare for the comprehensive exam (for MA exam option students).

PAPER: on May 21st. 50% of the final grade. The paper will be a “critical review paper”. The paper should have an argumentative nature not merely expository. The goals of the paper are:

- To become familiar with secondary literature and scholarship in the theory of knowledge, as well as the latest research topics in the area.
- To learn the craft and skill of scholarly papers by reviewing one of them.
- To develop writing and argumentative skills.
- To encourage the student’s own thinking and critical appraisal.
READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

• Aquinas, T., *De Veritate* Question 1, “Truth”.
• Aristotle, *De Anima*, books II and III.

Most of the readings will be provided by the instructor.

Reference Books

• Gilson, E., Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge, Ignatius Press, 1986 [2012].
• Polo, L. *Curso de Teoría del Conocimiento*, vols. 1-6. Universidad de Navarra.
<p>| Week 1       | February 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; | Introduction: What is the Theory of Knowledge |  |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|  |
| Week 2      | February 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;| How is Cognition Possible at All              | Aristotle, <em>De Anima</em>, I, II 1-4 Kosman Vega 2014 |
| Week 3      | February 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;| Sensitive Knowledge I                         | Aristotle, <em>De Anima</em>, II 5-12. Aquinas, ST Q I #78 |
| Week 4      | February 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;| Sensitive Knowledge II                        | Owens, Chapter 2 (The Primacy of the External) Aristotle, <em>De Anima</em>, III 1-3. |
| Week 5      | March 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;    | Theories of Perception                         | Searle, <em>Mind</em>, Chapter 10 Searle, <em>Seeing</em>, Chapter 6 |
| Week 6      | March 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;   | Problems of Perception                         | Searle, <em>Seeing</em>, Chapter 1 |
| Week 7      | March 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;   | Rational Knowledge: Theoretical Reason         | Aristotle, <em>De Anima</em>, III 4-7 Owens, Chapter 5 (Abstraction) and 6 (Judgement and Reason) Aquinas ST Q #79 Aquinas ST Q I #84 Aquinas ST Q I # 85 |
| Week 8      | March 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;   | SPRING BREAK                                   |  |
| Week 9      | April 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;    | Truth                                          | Aquinas ST QQ I.2 29, 109 Aquinas <em>De Veritate</em> 1 |
| Week 10     | April 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;    | Theories of Truth                              | Aquinas ST Q I.2 16 Owens, Chapter 7 (Truth) Owens, Chapter 8 (Assent) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>April 16th</td>
<td>EXAM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>April 23rd</td>
<td>Noetic Problems, Skepticism, Relativism, Error, Opinion, Evidence</td>
<td>Skepticism Videos, Owens, Chapter 9 (Certitude)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and Certainty</td>
<td>and 10 (Error, opinion, belief)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>April 30th</td>
<td>Rational Knowledge: Practical Reason, Personal and Intellectual</td>
<td>Aquinas ST Q #86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Aquinas ST Q #87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vega 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>May 7th</td>
<td>Gettier Problem and Answers</td>
<td>Gettier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>May 14th</td>
<td>Review/Papers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
<td>May 21st</td>
<td>PAPER DUE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>