



Learning Aims and Curriculum Intent:

Content – Students study the epistemology part of paper of the AQA A Level philosophy. This paper is focused on the definition, acquisition, and limits of knowledge. This paper also introduces A-level students to key-terms and technical philosophical language can be employed in the second year of the course. For example, necessary and sufficient conditions, inductive, deductive, and abductive arguments, validity, soundness, entailment, and the concept of cogency. Through the study of this module students will learn foundational philosophical theories about how knowledge is acquired, theories of conceptual analysis related to knowledge and the problem of scepticism.

Skills – There are a range of skills which are explicitly taught as part of this unit. Students learn to analysis an argument and identify the form and type of argument, for example whether the argument is inductive or deductive. They will then be able to identify whether the argument is valid and/or sound. From this they will be able to assess the quality of the argument. Students will learn to read academic texts closely by reading academic philosophy papers and they will practice interpreting, summarising and explaining the key ideas of the paper, students exhibiting mastery of these skills will be able to synthesis ideas from various papers into new ideas. Students will learn the skills of presentation, debate, and precise articulation of thoughts into both spoken and written forms. By the end of the year students will have confidence in writing precise responses to philosophical questions suitable for the examination including short answer questions, formal arguments and extended philosophical writing in the form of a 25-mark questions.

Term	Content, Key Questions and Knowledge	Skills	Assessment
Michaelmas	<p>What is knowledge?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The distinction between acquaintance knowledge, ability knowledge and propositional knowledge The nature of definition (Zagzebski) and how propositional may be analysed/defined. <u>The Tripartite view of knowledge</u> Necessary and sufficient conditions. <p>Perception as a source of knowledge (Is knowledge acquired through sense experience)</p> <p><u>Direct Realism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view that the immediate objects of perception are mind-independent objects and their properties. This is the view that knowledge of external world is acquired directly through sense experience with any mediation. <u>Issues with this theory:</u> The argument from illusion, The argument from perceptual variation, The argument from hallucination, The time lag argument. <p><u>Indirect Realism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vie that the immediate objections of perceptual experience are mind-dependent objects (sense-data) that are <i>caused</i> by and represent mind-independent objects. Students learn this view through an examination of John Locke’s primary/secondary quality distinction. Students should read sections of original text from Locke. <u>Issues with this theory:</u> The argument that is leads to scepticism about the existence and/or nature of mind-independent objects: Responses: Locke’s argument from the involuntary nature of our experience, the argument from the coherence of various modes of experience (Locke and Trotter Cockburn (attrib)), Russell’s response that the external world is the ‘best hypothesis’. The argument from Berkeley that we cannot know the nature of mind-independent objects because mind-dependent ideas cannot be like mind-independent objects. Here students can also be introduced to Leibniz’s law, which will feature multiple times in philosophy across both years. <p><u>Berkeley’s Idealism</u></p> <p>This is the view that the immediate objects of perceptions are mind-dependent objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arguments for idealism including Berkeley’s attack on the primary/secondary quality distinction and his ‘Master’ argument. This ought to include reading some of Berkeley’s original works in particular sections from the dialogue between Hylas and Philonous. <u>Issues with this theory:</u> Argument from illusion and hallucination. Idealism leading to solipsism. Problems with the role played by God in Berkeley’s idealism. And responses to these issues <p>Extension Material</p> <p>Through this course the learning of students can be extended past the specification primarily by introducing them to more nuanced views held by contemporary philosophers. For example, sophisticated naive realism (Mike Martin) or by introducing them to problem related to other sensory modalities including Sound (Casey O’Callaghan) or smell (Louise Richardson). Students may also choose to engage with ‘edge-cases’ for example perceptual experiences of absence (Roy Sorensen).</p>	<p>Formalising arguments in to premises and conclusion.</p> <p>Analysis of argument form.</p> <p>Textual Analysis</p> <p>Oracy and presentation</p> <p>Group presentation skills</p> <p>Philosophical writing</p> <p>Independent Research and critical thinking.</p> <p>The application of reason and argument.</p> <p>Seminar discussion</p>	<p>Assessment 1: What is knowledge quiz.</p> <p>Assessment 2: Definition of knowledge 5-mark question.</p> <p>Assessment 3: Direct Realism quiz</p> <p>Assessment 4: Direct Realism 12-mark question</p> <p>Assessment 4: Indirect Realism quiz</p> <p>Assessment 5: Indirect Realism 12-mark question</p> <p>Assessment 6: Idealism Quiz</p> <p>Assessment 7: Dialogue presentation between Hylas and Philonous</p> <p>Assessment 8: Idealism 12 mark- question</p> <p>Assessment 9: 25-mark question ‘Is Direct Realism Convincing’.</p> <p>Extension: Can we perceive absences.</p>

Lent	<p><u>Reason as a source of knowledge</u></p> <p><u>Innatism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arguments from Plato and Leibniz <u>Empiricist responses:</u> Locke’s argument against innatism The mind as a ‘tabula rasa’ Issues with these responses <p><u>The intuition and deduction thesis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meaning of ‘intuition’ and ‘deduction’ and the distinction between them. Descartes’ notion of ‘clear and distinct ideas’ The cogito as an example of an a priori intuition The argument for the existence of God and proof of the external world as examples of priori deductions <u>Empiricist responses</u> Responses to Descartes’ cogito Responses to Descartes’ argument for the existence of God and his proof of the external world (Including Hume’s Fork) Issues with these responses <p><u>Extension Material</u></p> <p>Innatism is presented as particularly weak position in the specification. Students’ knowledge can be extended by noting how there is scope to make sense of innatism ideas with contemporary neuroscience, for example, the idea that there exists ‘innate schema’ which form the basis of knowledge that is ‘unlocked’ through experience. Students may also examine whether introspection is a reliable source for knowledge generation (Kornblith).</p>	<p>Formalising arguments in to premises and conclusion.</p> <p>Analysis of argument form.</p> <p>Textual Analysis</p> <p>Oracy and presentation</p> <p>Group presentation skills</p> <p>Philosophical writing</p> <p>Independent Research and critical thinking.</p> <p>The application of reason and argument.</p> <p>Seminar Discussion</p>	<p>Assessment 1: Innatism Quiz</p> <p>Assessment 2: Innatism Piaget reading and analysis.</p> <p>Assessment 3: Locke and Leibniz Dialogue presentation</p> <p>Assessment 3: Innatism 12-mark question.</p> <p>Assessment 4: Intuition and deduction thesis quiz</p> <p>Assessment 5: Descartes’ and Hume Dialogue presentation</p> <p>Assessment 6: Intuition and Deduction Thesis 25-mark question</p> <p>Extension: The unreliability of introspection (This can be an essay or textual analysis).</p>
Trinity	<p><u>What is knowledge?</u></p> <p><u>Definition of knowledge re-cap</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary and sufficient conditions and the tripartite view Issues with the view The conditions are not individually necessary The conditions are not sufficient Gettier cases Responses: Strength justification (infallibilism) Add a fourth condition ‘no false lemmas’ Replace ‘justified’ with ‘reliably formed’ (Reliabilism) Replace ‘justified’ with an account of epistemic virtue <p><u>Extension</u></p> <p>Students should read and understand the original Gettier paper, and be able to explain why <i>all</i> conditions are met but we would not want to count the belief as knowledge. Students ought to read extracts from Zagzebski.</p> <p><u>The limits of knowledge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> particular nature of philosophical scepticism and the distinction between philosophical scepticism and normal incredulity. The role/function of philosophical scepticism within epistemology The distinction between local and global scepticism and the (possible) global application of philosophical scepticism Descartes’ sceptical arguments (the three ‘waves of doubt’) Responses to scepticism: the application of the following as responses to the challenge of scepticism: Descartes’ own response empiricist responses (Locke, Berkeley and Russell) reliabilism. <p><u>Extension:</u></p> <p>Introduce students to the G. E. Moore shift and philosophical logic.</p>	<p>Formalising arguments in to premises and conclusion.</p> <p>Analysis of argument form.</p> <p>Textual Analysis</p> <p>Philosophical writing</p> <p>Independent Research and critical thinking.</p> <p>The application of reason and argument.</p> <p>Seminar Discussion</p> <p>Philosophical Logic</p>	<p>Assessment 1: 25-mark question ‘Is knowledge justified true belief’.</p> <p>Assessment 2: Scepticism Quiz</p> <p>Assessment 3: Scepticism 12-mark question</p> <p>Assessment 4: 25-mark question ‘Can we overcome global scepticism’.</p>

What does consolidation look like in this subject?	Practice questions, a grid of practice question is provided on the class team. Reading through the textbook and using it as a study guide. The textbook is a valuable resource and worth spending time reading through. It contains short comprehension activities can be used to guide note taking.	
Examples of Homework	Worksheets of comprehension questions. Reading of set-texts. Practice exam questions. Quizzes. Preparation for seminar discussion. Preparation for presentations.	
Key terminology	A priori / A posteriori, Synthetic / Analytic, Cogent / Valid, Deductive / Inductive / Abductive, Sound, Truth, Belief, Proof, Justification	
Super-curricular enrichment and scholarly extension	Read: An Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology, A Very Short Introduction To: Hume, Locke, Descartes, Watch: Introduction to Epistemology Listen: https://philosophy-gets-schooled.podbean.com/ Visit: https://royalinstitutephilosophy.org/philosophy-events/	
Useful websites	https://plato.stanford.edu/ https://philosophylevel.com/	
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