

Applied Epistemology: An Introduction

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Supplemental Content

Definitions

Case studies: Short scenarios that could be used for small-group discussion, to apply theoretical concepts from the readings.

External resources: Materials that may be used to supplement lectures by showing them to the class as a whole and leading large-group discussions based on the issues they raise.

Primary texts: Additional readings to be assigned outside of class, to allow students to study key concepts or important texts mentioned in each chapter in more depth.

General Resources

[The Applied Epistemology Project @ UNC](#)

Chapter 1: Trusting Others

Case study: [Can We Trust Ancient Historical Accounts? – Discentes](#)

External resource: [How Did Theranos' Holmes Fool So Many Smart People? | MedPage Today](#)

Primary texts: (1) Kenyon, Tim. 2013. "The Informational Richness of Testimonial Contexts."

Philosophical Quarterly 63, no. 250: 58-80; (2) Shieber, Joseph. 2012. "Against Credibility."

Australasian Journal of Philosophy 90, no. 1: 1-18.

Chapter 2: Deferring to Experts

Case study: [SMOKING: A RETROSPECTIVE ON THE DISCOVERY OF THE LINK BETWEEN CIGARETTES AND LUNG CANCER](#) — The Dish on Science

External resource: [Remembering Alice Stewart](#)

Primary texts: (1) Grundmann, Thomas. 2021. “Facing Epistemic Authorities: Where Democratic Ideals and Critical Thinking Mislead Cognition”. In Sven Bernecker, Amy K. Flowerree & Thomas Grundmann, *The Epistemology of Fake News*. New York, NY: Oxford; (2) Contessa, Gabriele. 2023. “It Takes a Village to Trust Science: Towards a (Thoroughly) Social Approach to Public Trust in Science.” *Erkenntnis* 88, no. 7: 2941-2966.

Chapter 3: Responding to Disagreement

Case study: [Debate: Gun Control in the United States - PMC](#)

External resources: [How Are the Brains of Liberals and Conservatives Different? \[update\] - A-Mark Foundation](#)

Primary texts: (1) Carter, J. Adam. (2018). “On Behalf of Controversial View Agnosticism”. *European Journal of Philosophy* 26, no. 4:1358-1370. (2) Hallsson, Bjorn G. and Klemens Kappel. 2020. “Disagreement and the Division of Epistemic Labor.” *Synthese* 197, no. 7: 2823-2847.

Chapter 4: Acknowledging Bias

Case study: [Trapped by a Mindset: The Iraq WMD Intelligence Failure](#)

External content: [List of Cognitive Biases | Comprehensive Guide](#)

Primary texts: (1) Ballantyne, Nathan. 2015. “Debunking Biased Thinkers (Including Ourselves)”. *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* : 141-162. (2) Carter, J. Adam & McKenna, Robin. (2020). “Skepticism Motivated: On the Skeptical Import of Motivated Reasoning”. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 50, no. 6:702-718. (2)

Chapter 5: The Threat of Polarization

Case study: [News consumers are more influenced by political alignment than by truth, new study shows | Stanford Report](#)

External resource: [Misperception Is Reality: The Psychology of Political Polarization in the United States - Democratic Erosion](#)

Primary texts: (1) Worsnip, Alex. 2018. “The Obligation to Diversify One’s Sources: Against Epistemic Partisanship in the Consumption of News Media”. In Joe Saunders & Carl Fox, *Media Ethics, Free Speech and the Requirements of Democracy*. New York: Routledge: 240-264. (2) Begby, Endre. 2022. “From belief polarization to echo chambers: A rationalizing account”. *Episteme* 21, no. 2 :519-539.

Chapter 6: Propaganda, Nudging and Big Data

Case study: [“Reds Driven Off”: the US Media’s Propaganda During the Gulf of Tonkin Incident](#)

External resource: [How to Know What’s Really Propaganda - The Atlantic](#)

Primary texts: (1) Godber, Amelia & Gloria Origgi. 2023. “Telling Propaganda from Legitimate Political Persuasion”. *Episteme* 20, no. 3: 778-797. (2) Blake-Turner, Christopher. 2020. “Fake News, Relevant Alternatives, and the Degradation of Our Epistemic Environment.” *Inquiry*: 1-21.

Chapter 7: Artificial Intelligence and Human Understanding

Case study: [Smart Enough to Know Better? How AI Handles Legal Questions - Information Sciences Institute](#)

External resource: [What is a Large Language Model \(LLM\) - GeeksforGeeks](#)

Primary texts: (1) Durán, Juan Manuel & Jongsma, Karin Rolanda. 2021. “Who is Afraid of Black Box Algorithms? On the Epistemological and Ethical Basis of Trust in Medical AI”. *Journal of Medical Ethics* 47, no. 5: 329–335. (2) Koskinen, Inkeri. 2024. “We Have No Satisfactory Social Epistemology of AI-Based Science”. *Social Epistemology* 38, no. 4: 458-475.

Chapter 8: Thinking about Conspiracy Theories

Case study: [Opinion | The Epstein Conspiracy Is the Horror Story of Our Age - POLITICO](#)

External resource: The Conspiratorial Mind: <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/bul-bul0000392.pdf>

Primary texts: (1) Worsnip, Alex. 2021. "The Skeptic and the Climate Change Skeptic". In Michael Hannon & Jeroen de Ridder, *The Routledge Handbook of Political Epistemology*. New York: Routledge. (2) Harris, Keith. 2023. "Conspiracy Theories, Populism, and Epistemic Autonomy". *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 9, no. 1 :21-36.