

Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy

Course Title	: Philosophical Methodology
Course Code	: PHI4399H
Recommended Study Year	: 2-4 Years
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Sectional
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours/week
Category in Major Programme	: Program Elective – Special Topics
Prerequisite(s)	: At least 1 course in philosophy
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

This course will consist in a critical examination of various aspects of philosophical methodology. We will begin by looking at various theories of the nature of *a priori* knowledge – often considered central to philosophical inquiry. We will then discuss the rise of methodological naturalism, with a focus on illuminating the relationship between philosophical methodology and the methodologies of the sciences. Finally, we will examine recent debates over the use of intuition in philosophical theorizing, as well as the rise of a movement known as ‘experimental philosophy’.

Aims

The goal of the course is to introduce students to historical and contemporary debates regarding the nature of philosophical knowledge and the methods by which it can be achieved. A further goal is to encourage reflection on the students’ own methods of coming to philosophical conclusions.

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn to:

- 1) Distinguish between major theories of the nature of the *a priori*
- 2) Understand the difficulties inherent in explaining the nature of philosophical knowledge and its relationship with the sciences
- 3) Gain familiarity with recent attempts to explain the role of intuition in philosophy
- 4) Gain awareness of the recent ‘experimental philosophy’ movement and the controversies surrounding it.
- 5) Apply ideas and concepts from the course in their future philosophical reasoning

Indicative Content

- 1) Introduction to the problem of the *a priori*
- 2) Rationalist approaches to the *a priori*
- 3) Analyticity and the *a priori*
- 4) Skepticism about the *a priori*
- 5) Introduction to methodological naturalism
- 6) Methodological naturalism: epistemology
- 7) Methodological naturalism: psychology
- 8) Methodological naturalism: ethics
- 9) Philosophy and the sciences
- 10) Intuition and cognitive diversity
- 11) Intuition and reflective equilibrium
- 12) The value of counterexamples

- 13) 'Self-defeat' arguments for intuition
- 14) Intuition vs. perception vs. judgment
- 15) Psychological approaches to philosophical method
- 16) Experimental philosophy: case studies
- 17) Experimental philosophy: controversy

Teaching Method

The course will be in lecture format, with heavy emphasis on discussion.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Students will be assessed on the basis of a mid-term and a final paper (LO's 1-5), as well as on course attendance and participation, which may include contribution to online discussions outside of class (LO's 1-5).

Assessment

Mid-term paper: 30%

Final paper: 50%

Participation and attendance: 20%

Required Readings

Required text:

M. DePaul and W. Ramsey (eds.), *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and Its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Other required readings:

Excerpt from Ayer, A. J., *Language, Truth and Logic*. New York: Dover, 1952.

Boyd, R., "How to be a moral realist," in G. Sayre-McCord (ed.), *Essays on Moral Realism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988.

Churchland, P.M., "Eliminative materialism and the propositional attitudes," *Journal of Philosophy*, 78, 67-90, 1981.

Devitt, M., "There is no a priori," in E. Sosa and M. Steup, eds., *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Gettier, E., "Is justified true belief knowledge?", *Analysis*, 23, 121-23, 1963.

Goldman, A., "Naturalistic epistemology and reliabilism," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 19, 301-320, 1994.

Excerpt from Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith. New York: St. Martin's, 1965.

Kim, J., "What is Naturalized Epistemology?" in J. Tomberlin, ed., *Philosophical Perspectives 2*. Asascadero, CA: Ridgeview, 1988.

Knobe, J., "The Concept of Intentional Action: A Case Study in the Uses of Folk Psychology". *Philosophical Studies*, 130, 203-231, 2006.

Knobe, J., and Nichols, S., "An experimental philosophy manifesto," in J. Knobe and S. Nichols, eds., *Experimental Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Excerpt from Kripke, S., *Naming and Necessity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Excerpt from Moore, G.E., *Principia Ethica*. Cambridge University Press, 1903.

Quine, W. V. O., "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in W.V.O. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951.

Quine, W.V.O., "Epistemology naturalized," In *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

Sosa, E., "A defense of the use of intuitions in philosophy," in M. Bishop and D. Murphy (eds.),

Stich and His Critics. Oxford: Blackwell, 2009.

Weinberg, J., Stich, S., and Nichols, S., "Normativity and epistemic intuitions," *Philosophical Topics*, 29, 429-60, 2001.

Supplementary Readings

Boghossian, P., "Analyticity reconsidered," *Nous*, 30, 360-391, 1996.

Excerpt from Bonjour, L., *In Defense of Pure Reason*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Kauppinen, A., "The rise and fall of experimental philosophy," *Philosophical Explorations*, 10, 95-118, 2006.

Kitcher, P., "The naturalists' return," *Philosophical Review*, 101, 53-114, 1992.

Machery, E., Mallon, R., Nichols, S., and Stich, S., "Semantics, cross-cultural style," *Cognition*, 92, B1-B12, 2004.

Excerpt from Quine, W.V.O., *Theories and Things*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Weatherson, B., "What good are counterexamples?," *Philosophical Studies*, 115, 1-31, 2003.

Important Notes

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>