

PHIL4036: Mind & Knowledge

Department of Philosophy

Spring 2024-25



University of
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

1. Module Information

Webpage for this module available through Moodle: <https://moodle.nottingham.ac.uk/>

Level: 4

Credits: 20

Module Conveners: Dr Joe Cunningham; Dr Michael Hannon

Drop-in Hours: See Moodle Page

Phone: N/A

Email: Joe.Cunningham@nottingham.ac.uk; Michael.Hannon@nottingham.ac.uk

Note. We should reply to emails within 2 working days. If we are very busy you will be sent an acknowledgement email within 2 working days informing you of when we can reply more fully.

2. Module Description

2.1 Module Outline

The module will discuss a variety of contemporary topics in epistemology and philosophy of mind, concerning, for example: Scepticism; Epistemic Rationality; the Metaphysics of Mind, Knowledge, Consciousness, Sensory Experience, and Action; and whether and in what form we have privileged access to our mental states.

2.2 Module Objectives

The module aims to provide the opportunity for advanced study of topics in epistemology and philosophy of mind, as well as enhancing the skills required to carry out research in philosophy.

3. Staff Response to feedback (SEM/in person) from the last time the module ran

Due to a change in module convenor, this information is forthcoming and will be updated ASAP.

4. Structure of Teaching

A University of Nottingham credit equates to 10 hours of notional study, so this 20 credit module is designed to involve 200 hours of study (including lectures/seminars).

There will be 10 weekly 2-hour seminars. You are able to access your timetable online via <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicsservices/timetabling/view-timetables/viewwebtimetables.aspx>

Material supporting the module, including how the teaching will be delivered, will be available on Moodle.

5. Engagement

Please remember that **in order to get the best from the teaching delivered for this module you need to engage with it.** This means not only *attending* your classes but *participating* in them.

If, for any reason, you are struggling to engage with your studies, please contact the module convenor or your personal tutor, who will be able to direct you to additional sources of support.

Note: The importance of active engagement and discussion in education has been emphasized for a very long time:

Plato on the importance of discussion ("living, ensouled speech") for doing philosophy:

SOCRATES: Yes, because there's something odd about writing, Phaedrus, which makes it exactly like painting. The offspring of painting stand there as if alive, but if you ask them a question they maintain an aloof silence. It's the same with written words: you might think they were speaking as if they had some intelligence, but if you want an explanation of any of the things they're saying and you ask them about it, they just go on and on for ever giving the same single piece of information. Once any account has been written down, you find it all over the place, hobnobbing with completely inappropriate people no less than with those who understand it, and completely failing to know who it should and shouldn't talk to. And faced with rudeness and unfair abuse it always needs its father to come to its assistance, since it is incapable of defending or helping itself.

PHAEDRUS: Again, you're quite right.

SOCRATES: Well, is there any other way of using words? Does the written word have a legitimate brother? Can we see how it is born, and how much better and stronger it grows than its brother?

PHAEDRUS: What is this way of using words? How is it born, do you think?

SOCRATES: It is the kind that is written along with knowledge in the soul of a student. It is capable of defending itself, and it knows how to speak to those it should, and keep silent in the company of those to whom it shouldn't speak.

PHAEDRUS: You're talking about the living, ensouled speech of a man of knowledge. We'd be right to describe the written word as a mere image of this.

SOCRATES: Absolutely.

Plato, Phaedrus (275d-276a)

6. Module Content

6.1 Lecture Topics

In seminars 1-8, we shall cover the topics of the module. The remaining seminars are for student presentations.

Week 1	Scepticism
Week 2	Rationality & Epistemic Normativity
Week 3	Epistemic Styles
Week 4	Social Identity & Epistemic Privilege
Week 5	The Transparency of Self-Knowledge
[Guided Studies]	[Guided Studies Week]
Week 6	The Metaphysics of Sensory Experience
Week 7	The Metaphysics of Consciousness
Week 8	The Problem of Action
Week 9	Student Presentations
Week 10	Students Presentations

6.2 Reading List

All readings, core and supplementary, are linked *via* the Moodle page.

7. Assessment

The information below is specific to this module and may not apply to other modules you are taking.

Further information on assessment—including marking criteria, how to submit work, and information on plagiarism—is contained in the School of Humanities UG Assessment Handbook (https://xerte.nottingham.ac.uk/play_51140#page1).

7.1 Assessment Method

This module carries 20 credits. You will gain these credits by engaging in essential classes and completing the following components of assessment:

1 x 5000-word Essay

For information about when you are required to submit coursework or complete other components of assessment see section 5.3 below.

7.2 Essay Questions

See the Module page for a document containing the essay questions. You are asked to select one (and only one) of these, and write your essay in response to this.

7.3 Deadlines

The deadline for submission of your essay is **Monday 19th May 2025, 3pm**. You are asked to submit your essay *via* the submission boxes on the Moodle page.

7.4 Feedback

Your essay will be returned electronically via Moodle with comments attached. Please make sure you read all the comments – both in-text comments and general comments.

Remember that there will **not** be in-text comments on your end-of-semester essay. However, you *are entitled* to ask for further feedback from your marker.

Qualifying year coursework submitted by the deadline will be returned with feedback within 20 working days of that deadline. All other coursework submitted by the deadline will be returned with feedback within 15 working days of that deadline. (Working days exclude weekends, bank holidays and University closure days.) If, unavoidably, we cannot meet this return date, we will let you know by email.

You will get two kinds of comments on your essay: comments on the qualities of that particular essay and how it could have been improved, and suggestions for how to approach essays in future. Note that you are welcome to discuss these comments with the module convener in person in a further feedback session. To arrange this, please email your convener within two weeks of receiving the essay back.

7.5 Exams

THIS MODULE HAS NO EXAM COMPONENT]

8. Social Media Policy

Please be aware that the University has a social media policy which applies to students. You can find it here: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/governance/documents/social-media-policy-for-students-nov15.pdf>