

**PROCESS A** NON-GENERAL EDUCATION ~ CURRICULUM PROPOSAL  
LIBRARY RESOURCE FORM REQUIRED

SCC #04-05- 601

**Deadlines**

October 8, 2004 to be implemented Fall 2005 ~ February 11, 2005 to be implemented Spring 2006

PROPOSAL TITLE: Epistemology

Sponsor(s): Matthew P. Lund E-Mail: lund@vcu.edu Ext: 4539

Department of Philosophy + Religion E-Mail: clawney@vcu.edu Ext: 4075

DEPARTMENT: Philosophy and Religion

COLLEGE: Liberal Arts and Sciences

If Liberal Arts & Sciences CHECK :  History/Humanities  Math/Sciences  Social/Behavioral Sciences

UNDERGRADUATE  GRADUATE

THE ATTACHED **NON-GEN-ED** PROPOSAL IS BEST DESCRIBED BY THE ITEM(s) CHECKED

New non gen-ed course  Minor curricular changes (fewer than three) to:

Short-term non gen-ed course  Existing non gen-ed course

Non gen-ed degree requirements

Major

Minor, specialization, concentration, track, certificate program

THE FOLLOWING SIGNATURES REPRESENT APPROVAL

Department Chair: David W. Downey Date: 10/7/04

Department Curriculum Chair: [Signature] Date: 10/7/04

Academic Dean: [Signature] Date: 10/8/04

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

OPEN HEARING Date: 1/29/05 Approved  Not Approved

COLLEGE CURRICULUM CHAIR: [Signature]

Senate Curriculum Chair Signature: [Signature] Date: Senate Announcement 1/31/05

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST Signature: [Signature] Date: 3/29/05

Approved  Not Approved

Date: 3/31/05 Course Description Received & Approved ~ Hegis Taxonomy & Course #: 1509370  
1509371

Registrar Signature: [Signature]

NOTIFICATION FORWARD

SCC Chair  Academic Dean  Department Chair  Registrar  IR  CAP  
 VP Student Affairs  Others

1509370  
1509371  
3/31/05

ROWAN UNIVERSITY  
Glassboro, New Jersey

Department of Philosophy and Religion

**EPISTEMOLOGY**

I. Details

- a. Course Title: Epistemology
- b. Sponsors:  
Matthew D. Lund, Assistant Professor, Philosophy and Religion  
Philosophy and Religion Department
- c. Credit Hours: 3
- d. Course Level: Junior (300 level)
- e. Prerequisites: At least one class in philosophy.
- f. Implementation:
  - 1. Time of implementation: Fall Semester 2005
  - 2. Scale of implementation: One section every two years, depending on demand. With the implementation of the major, this course will perhaps be offered once a year.

II. Curricular Effect

- a. Offerings:  
This course will be offered as part of the major in philosophy and religion, and as such will represent an extension of the curriculum and will not be replacing any other courses.
- b. Adequacy:  
No additional staff or resources will be required for implementation of this course. Regarding space, one classroom with seating for thirty students will be needed for one semester every two years.
- c. Recommended Library Resources: See attached form.
- d. Short-term Evaluations: N/A

III. Rationale

The Philosophy and Religion department has developed, and plans to implement in the next two years, a Major in Philosophy and Religion. Given the centrality of the study of philosophy and religion to the idea of a liberal education, the provision of a Major in Philosophy and Religion will increase Rowan University's capacity to provide a liberal education to its students. Furthermore, a course in Epistemology will be useful as well to those students not majoring or minoring in Philosophy and Religion whose major field of study involves some critical analysis of claims to knowledge. For instance, Physical Science, Psychology, Sociology, History, and Mathematics all involve a large amount of critical scrutiny concerning claims to knowledge, just to name a few disciplines.

An important component of the proposed Philosophy and Religion Major is a course in Epistemology. Students in the Major will have the option of taking either Epistemology or Philosophy of Mind. Each of these courses offer rigorous contemporary treatment of the central issues treated in the department's required courses in the History of Philosophy.

The question of how claims to knowledge are to be understood, tested, and analyzed is of fundamental importance to a great number of disciplines, not just philosophy. For this reason, a course in Epistemology is a staple at most universities, representing as it does the study of one of the most basic philosophical questions.

While it is certainly true that other courses, both taught within the Philosophy and Religion department and elsewhere, raise questions about the nature of knowledge, the treatment of these questions is there confined to the particular domain of knowledge or discipline being treated. Indeed, every philosophy course has an epistemological dimension; whether one deals with ethics, logic, social/political knowledge, or philosophy of science, a good share of what one does is scrutinize the grounds for claims to knowledge. Historical courses in philosophy definitely deal with epistemological issues, but primarily in connection with the historical narratives in which they arose, and the debates are only rarely brought into relation to contemporary approaches. Our course will treat of the Theory of Knowledge in its most general sense, and will be topically organized around the main questions in contemporary Epistemology.

#### IV. Essence of the Course

- a. Objectives of the course in relation to student outcomes: Epistemology is an investigation into the nature of knowledge. It concerns attempts to define knowledge, as well as the development of methods for criticism of such definitions and claims to knowledge in general. Thus, a student who successfully completes a course in Epistemology should have minimally acquired the following:

1. An understanding of the concepts that are central to the traditional analysis of knowledge: belief, truth, skepticism, evidence, and justification.
  2. Some familiarity with the philosophical deficiencies of the traditional account, and the role of these deficiencies in the construction of contemporary accounts.
  3. A knowledge of cognitive and empirical psychological accounts of perception and the fixation of belief and appearance.
  4. An understanding of the distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge, and the varieties of ways different accounts frame the distinction.
  5. An appreciation of the controversy between internalist and externalist accounts of knowledge, as well as the capacity to distinguish individual theories of knowledge on the basis of this distinction.
  6. A skill in appropriately scrutinizing claims to knowledge in other areas such as in ethics, mathematics, religion, science, as well as in domains of the student's experience that may lie outside philosophy. Attention will also be given to feminist epistemologies and standpoint theories.
- b. Topical Outline/Content: Though the following list should not be construed as exhausting the topics which might be included as the content for a course in Epistemology, it is indicative of the possible nature and scope of such topics in the light of the course objectives previously given.
1. Epistemic Justification
    - a) The nature of belief and the varieties of justification, e.g. moral, pragmatic, epistemic, etc.
    - b) The distinction between internalist and externalist theories of justification
    - c) Conceptual Analysis and conceptual schemes; the internalist difficulty of explaining conceptual grounding
    - d) The problems of externalism
    - e) The varieties of skepticism and their proffered solutions
  2. Foundationalism and Coherentism
    - a) Theories of truth/ theories of knowledge
    - b) Strong and weak foundationalism and their place in contemporary empiricism

- c) The problem of underdetermination and the nature of foundational transmission of justification
  - d) The nature of coherence and the justification of sets of beliefs
3. Theories of Knowledge
- a) The Gettier problems
  - b) Dretske's informational semantics
  - c) Goldman's causal connectionist account
  - d) Reliabilism as a theory of knowledge
  - e) Undefeated justified true belief
  - f) Naturalized epistemology: Quine and his successors
4. Perception and the *A Priori*
- a) Direct and representational realism; the sense-datum theory
  - b) Adverbial accounts and phenomenalism
  - c) Perception as a cognitive process
  - d) The influence of cognitive science on epistemology; the descriptive/normative dilemma of applying scientific results to epistemology
  - e) Kant's account of the *a priori*
  - f) Can the *a priori* be translated into neuroscientific terms?
5. Applications
- a) Mathematical knowledge
  - b) Religious knowledge
  - c) Ethics
  - d) Science
  - e) The challenge of feminist epistemology
- c. Evaluation of students and grading procedure: Student performance will be assessed in various ways: written examinations, papers, homework assignments, oral reports, class participation, individual or group projects, and possibly other devices as well. The particular mix of such devices for evaluating student performance will be at the discretion of the instructors.
- d. Course Evaluation: This course will be reevaluated by the Philosophy and Religion department at least every other year (beginning with the first year of its implementation). The review will take into account student evaluations of the course, reactions to the course from the various departments affected and the views of the instructor responsible for teaching the course. The purpose of this review will be to ensure that the Epistemology course continues to meet the objectives of the Philosophy and Religion Major and of the general education, the goals of the university as well as the objectives stipulated for the course itself.

- V. Results of Consultations
  - a. Letters of Consultation: letters to follow shortly.
  - b. Additional Consultation
- VI. Additional Information (Comments, etc.)

**Catalog Description**

1509.370 (Suggested HEGIS number; 1509.371 for writing intensive course) 3 s.h.

**Epistemology**

(Prerequisite: at least one philosophy class)

This course addresses philosophical questions concerning the nature of knowledge. Some of these questions include: How can we be sure that our knowledge of the world is accurate? What is the relation of evidence to our understanding of the world? What distinguishes mathematical knowledge from scientific and ethical knowledge? Students will study and criticize both traditional and contemporary approaches to the understanding of knowledge. Students will also develop and refine their own views in response to these issues.

Rowan University  
**CURRICULUM PROPOSAL**  
**LIBRARY RESOURCE FORM**

The purpose of this form is to provide a channel of communication between the library and faculty changing and designing new courses/programs. The information will be used to assess the resources available in the library, and to identify resources the library should acquire to support the course/program. The information will also provide rationale for institutional support for library acquisitions

This form should be completed in a coordinated effort between the course sponsor(s) and the academic department liaison librarian. **THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED FOR ALL CURRICULUM PROPOSALS.**

- The sponsor(s) complete parts A & B  
 If assistance is required to complete parts A & B, please notify the liaison librarian.
- Forward this form to the librarian who will complete parts C, D & E

***This form must be completed and attached to the original curriculum proposal before being approved by the Senate Curriculum Committee***

A. College Liberal Arts and Sciences Department Philosophy and Religion  
 Proposed by: Dr. Matthew D. Lund Date: 10/7/2005  
 Course Title: Epistemology  
 Anticipated Date for Course/Program Offering: Fall 2005

B. List specific resources that should be acquired to support this course.  
*see attached*

C. Describe the resources available in the library to support this course/program, including reference, monographic, electronic databases, audio-visual materials, etc. A summary statement is sufficient.  
*see attached*

D. List key periodicals available in the library to support this course/program.  
*see attached*

E. Librarian comments and recommendations:  
*see attached*

Name: LIBRARIAN LIAISON

Ellen Miller

Librarian Signature:

[Signature]

Library Resources (Submitted by Cynthia Mullens)

- B. Describe the resources available...
  - a. Philosopher's Index, Paper
  - b. Academic Search Premier, Electronic
  - c. Humanities, FT, Electronic
  - d. Humanities and Social Science Retro, Electronic
- C. List of key periodicals available in the library ...
  - a. Canadian Journal of Philosophy
  - b. Ethics
  - c. International Philosophical Quarterly
  - d. Journal of Philosophy
  - e. Pacific Philosophical Quarterly
  - f. Philosophical Quarterly
  - g. Philosophical Review
- D. List specific resources that should be acquired...

No additional resources required
- E. Librarian Comments and recommendations:

The philosophy collection is excellent and well-maintained, and the librarian does not need to make recommendations.

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**Faison, Christy**

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**m:** Faison, Christy  
**it:** Monday, February 14, 2005 3:56 PM  
**To:** Lund, Matthew D  
**Cc:** Wiest, Rosemarie; Mosto, Patricia; Milou, Eric  
**Subject:** SCC 04-05-601

I have received the proposal, SCC 04-05-601 Epistemology, from the University Senate. I have two minor concerns and one major concern about the proposal as presented. Minor concerns include 1) missing letters of consultation, and 2) please word the prerequisite so that the system will be able to appropriately register students (eg. Provide the hegis designation for philosophy)

My major concern is that the new course proposal presupposes a major in Philosophy and Religion. Please present the course as a stand-alone one, that is desired whether or not a major exists, or hold the new course proposal and submit with the program approval document for the major. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Christy

Christy L. Faison, Ed.D.  
Interim Provost  
Rowan University  
856-256-4108

ROWAN UNIVERSITY  
Glassboro, New Jersey

Department of Philosophy and Religion

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A course in Epistemology will be useful to any student whose major field of study involves some critical analysis of claims to knowledge. For instance, Physical Science, Psychology, Sociology, History, and Mathematics all involve a large amount of critical scrutiny concerning claims to knowledge, just to name a few disciplines.

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V. Results of Consultations

- a. Letters of Consultation: see attached.
- b. Additional Consultation

VI. Additional Information (Comments, etc.)

**Catalog Description**

1509.370.....3 s.h.

**Epistemology**

*(Prerequisites: 1509.xxx – any course in philosophy)*

This course addresses philosophical questions concerning the nature of knowledge. Some of these questions include: How can we be sure that our knowledge of the world is accurate? What is the relation of evidence to our understanding of the world? What distinguishes mathematical knowledge from scientific and ethical knowledge? Students will study and criticize both traditional and contemporary approaches to the understanding of knowledge. Students will also develop and refine their own views in response to these issues.

✓  
DB  
4/14/05

1509.371.....3 s.h.

**Epistemology – WI**

Same as 1509.370, but meets general education writing intensive guidelines with a variety of graded and ungraded writing assignments.

✓ DB  
4/14/05

Library Resources (Submitted by Cynthia Mullens)

- B. Describe the resources available...
  - a. Philosopher's Index, Paper
  - b. Academic Search Premier, Electronic
  - c. Humanities, FT, Electronic
  - d. Humanities and Social Science Retro, Electronic
- C. List of key periodicals available in the library ...
  - a. Canadian Journal of Philosophy
  - b. Ethics
  - c. International Philosophical Quarterly
  - d. Journal of Philosophy
  - e. Pacific Philosophical Quarterly
  - f. Philosophical Quarterly
  - g. Philosophical Review
- D. List specific resources that should be acquired...
  - No additional resources required
- E. Librarian Comments and recommendations:  
The philosophy collection is excellent and well-maintained, and the librarian does not need to make recommendations.

Matt,

From the point of view of an economist I would say that epistemology should be a required course for our majors. I am only sorry I took it when I was a graduate student. It changed the way I thought about my profession and my research methodology.

I think students in general do not understand what a model is and furthermore can not be critical of the methodology. They relate to economics as a foreign object rather than as an ideological tool of persuasion. Hence, depending on what book and what professor they happen to get so will be their understanding of the economic system. With a limited exposure that could be a problem.

But if they have a minimal ability to criticize what we do, to be able to see behind our analogies, their understanding of economics would be enhanced because it would not be limited to the views of one or two people or, more important, the dominant paradigm.

Right now the dominant paradigm is neoclassical economics. It, to a great extent, embodies the values of neoconservatives in this country and elsewhere. But it is sold to audiences as a value-free, neutral, set of ideas. I think that somewhere along the line students would benefit from taking a class where they are given the tools to criticize our models and ideas, perhaps after they have taken a couple of introductory level classes.

Moreover, I think that the general apathy that many youngsters seem to display about politics is related not so much to their age but to their lack of tools to conceptualize their reality. They may take an all or nothing approach to politics and assume that their participation is worthless. This is because many of them have no class conscience. I think the type of reading you propose in the class would change that as well.

Please feel free to use this endorsement as you see fit.

I have not forgotten my paper; I need to look for it.

Luis

>>> "Lund, Matthew D" <Lund@rowan.edu> 11/16/04 03:04PM >>>

*From Luis Brunstein*