

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

# Epistemology

PHL 460

Fall 2020

## Course Syllabus

Dr. David Godden

(revised & corrected: 2020.11.12 – Tentative Reading Schedule & Office Hours)

### Basic Course Information:

Classes Meetings: Mon & Wed 12:40 - 2:00pm

Virtual Classroom: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/96782255310> Password: knowledge

Instructor: Dr. David Godden

Email: [dgodden@msu.edu](mailto:dgodden@msu.edu) (**Subject line includes course “PHL 460”**)

Virtual Office Hours: Wed 2:30-4:00pm or by appointment. (Email me to schedule.)

Virtual Office <https://msu.zoom.us/j/98592722038> Password: SKH503

Please note: When attending my scheduled office hours, you will be admitted to a waiting room. If I am already meeting with another student or there are others ahead of you waiting, you will have to wait until my other meetings are finished. We cannot communicate in Zoom between the meeting and waiting rooms. So, please be patient. Also, email me to let me know you're in the waiting room, and I can try to give you an idea of whether we can accommodate your desired meeting. If we can't, then we'll schedule another time.

**Catalog Description:** Theories and concepts of knowledge, belief, epistemic justification, certainty, and reason.

Credits: Total Credits: 3 Lecture/Recitation/Discussion Hours: 3

Recommended Background: One PHL course at the 300 level or above.

### Learning Materials:

Course Text (Required): Michael Williams. 2001. *Problems of knowledge: A critical introduction to epistemology.*

Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-289256-0 (PK) [Link to PK text on Amazon.com](#)

*Plus:* additional primary source readings as assigned throughout course. These will be posted to D2L and may require an additional, nominal cost to students.

### Course Learning Goals:

The general goals of this course are:

1. to provide you with a problem-oriented understanding of the predominant positions in the contemporary epistemology, enabling you to explain each theory in relation to the problems it attempts to solve as well as its competitors and alternatives,
2. to provide you with a critical and comparative understanding of the works studied, enabling you to explain and critically evaluate their central theories and arguments, and
3. based on (i) and (ii) to provide you with a historical understanding of the works studied enabling you to explain their role in the overall development of contemporary epistemological theories.

By the end of this course, you should be able to (clearly and in your own terms):

- describe and apply the critical and analytical concepts and methods discussed in the course for the analysis and evaluation of the concept of knowledge, claims to knowledge, and theories of knowledge
- by describing the central tenets of the various theories studied in the course, explain the rational structure of each theory, and explain by comparison how different theories relate to one another at a rational level
- describe the problem(s) motivating each theory, and explain how each theory goes about solving them
- explain the central criticisms raised against each theory
- articulate a position concerning the acceptability of some position, theory or argument discussed in the course by expressing, in a clear and organized manner, a cogent argument which, where appropriate, draws upon relevant material in the theoretical and / or empirical literature discovered through class discussion and your own independent research
- give a general historical narrative of the development of the theories considered in the course

## Course Description:

Detailed Description: The course will provide an advanced, in-depth introduction to the contemporary study of epistemology (its central positions and traditional problems) through a survey of the standard literature in the field. Topics to be covered include skepticism and responses thereto, the traditional analysis of knowledge as justified true belief and challenges to this picture, externalist versus internalist theories of knowledge and justification, foundationalism and coherentism, naturalism and causal theories of knowledge; and social approaches to knowledge including contextualism and feminism. Throughout the course, a focus will be on developing a critical understanding of the arguments that support and criticize each position, and on getting a sense of the overall development of epistemology as a theoretical discipline.

Course Topics: The course will follow the basic plan of the Tentative Reading Schedule (below). This may be revised in light of our progress through the course material.

## Course Requirements (Assessment):

The following course requirements measure the extent to which the course learning goals are attained.

### Basic Mark Breakdown

1. Reading Responses (pass 10 of 14 possible submissions   4 x 5%)	20%
2. Referee Reports (3 x 15%)	45%
3. Final Examination (Take Home)	25%
4. Participation	10%

### Notes on Evaluation

0. **Comments on Graded Work: I only provide comments on graded work at the student's request.**

I am always happy to talk with you about your work in the course, to give you formative or summative feedback on your work, and to help you to understand the grades you earned in the class or how to improve them in future work by answering any questions or concerns you might have about your grades. But I have been doing this long enough to know that, very frequently, my comments on students' work go unread. My giving students comments that they don't want or take notice of is a waste of my time and offers the student no educational benefit. For this reason, I have adopted the policy stated above.

You may request comments on your submitted work in one of two ways: (1) When submitting: When you submit a piece of work to D2L, you should indicate something like "*Feedback / Comments Requested*" in either the "Comments" box of the D2L submission window or *at the beginning* of the document you submit. (2) After grading: After a piece of work has been graded, I am happy to provide feedback on it either by meeting with you to discuss the work or by giving you written feedback. Of course,

**Grades assigned in this class are final.** *Consultations about submitted work are NOT occasions to petition or negotiate for a higher grade. Grade-wise, they are opportunities for students to better understand why they received the grade they earned, and how they might improve that grade in future work. More importantly, they are learning opportunities for students to better understand the class material and to help them gain competency in, and mastery of, the skills developed in the course.*

1. **Reading Responses:** The purpose of the reading response is to allow students summarize, reflect upon, and engage with, the course material as we progress through it. It is intended not only to ensure that students come to class prepared to contribute to group learning activities, but also to provide students an occasion to articulate and develop their own personal thoughts about (i.e., questions about, insights into, or criticisms of) the theories and arguments discussed in the course. Students are encouraged to approach their Reading Responses as preparation for class discussion and their take-home final exam, by addressing in their Responses the kinds of topics, themes, and problems discussed throughout the course and mentioned in the exam question.

**Grading Policy:** For each week of classes except the first (wk.1) students may complete a Reading Response for the reading assigned(s) for that week (for a total of 14 weeks). Each of these will be graded on a PASS/FAIL basis and students must pass 10 of the 14 possible in order to receive a grade for this portion of the course grade. A student may select 4 of their submitted Responses for numerical grading. Each will be

graded out of 5, for a total of 20% on the final course grade. Any previously ungraded Reading Response is eligible for grading. Responses submitted for grading should indicate which week / readings they were composed in response to. **Responses selected for a numerical grade may not be revised from their original submission.** The grade assigned to any Response submitted for a numerical grade is final.

*Due Dates:* Pass/fail weekly Reading Responses are due by electronic submission on Sunday prior to the week that the target reading(s) are assigned for discussion. Responses submitted for numerical grading are due by electronic submission on the dates given in the Tentative Reading Schedule (below). NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED; NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCETED.

*Evaluation:* Comprehension will play an important, but secondary, role in their evaluation. Evaluation will focus primarily on the student's ability to compose their thoughts write a well-structured entry that demonstrates a relevant and thoughtful (e.g., reflective, comparative, critical, synthetic) engagement with the course material. Students wishing formative feedback on a Reading Response may submit a sample to the instructor for detailed comments, so long as this is done at least 1 week in advance of the due date.

*Format:* Reading Responses should be typed in complete sentences and paragraphs, and about a single-spaced, typed page in length (no more than about 500 words). They should aim at doing things like the following: (i) Identify and articulate the main point(s) of the target reading. (ii) Summarize the main argument(s) offered. (iii) Identify and develop any points of criticism. (iv) Articulate any questions of understanding.

### ***Tips for composing successful Reading Responses:***

Responses should be composed as critical, reflective commentaries on the course material which address the weekly assigned readings. They should include a brief summary or explanation of any course material or concepts involved in the answer. Although they are a personal and reflective response to the readings and course material, they are also composition exercises – your audience is your classmates and other interested philosophers.

#### DO'S

- Weekly Responses SHOULD respond to the assigned reading(s).
- They SHOULD be composed in complete sentences and paragraphs about a single-spaced, typed page in length (no more than about 500 words)
- They SHOULD be composed over the duration of the course and should not concentrate exclusively or excessively on any one author or topic
- They SHOULD offer a *brief summary* or explanation of *key concepts* or course material forming the basis for the entry
- They SHOULD engage with the course material somehow. For example,
  - They SHOULD *raise questions* (of understanding and comprehension);
  - They SHOULD *make connections* between the assigned readings and *previous readings* and class discussions
  - The SHOULD *make connections* between *course material* and *your own views* of the class material and other relevant materials or topics studied in other courses
  - They SHOULD *raise objections and criticisms* about the position(s) being studied

#### DON'T'S

- Weekly Responses should NOT be in point form
- They are NOT a substitute for class notes; indeed they should NOT be composed in class, but during your private, reflective study either prior to class after having read the material, or perhaps following a discussion of the material during class or group study
- They are meant form a basis for class discussion, but are NOT a substitute for it. Completing them allows you to come to class prepared to participate with something to contribute to the discussion, and you are expected to do so.

2. *Referee Reports:* Their purpose is to give students the experience of writing within a specific genre, as well as to test a critical and comparative comprehension of course material (including an understanding of the major theories and arguments studied in the course), a practical mastery of the skills and techniques employed in the course, and synthesis of the major themes of the course.

*Grading Policy:* Each student may submit 3 Referee Reports, 1 for any of the primary source readings assigned (not optional) in the course, which will count 45% (3 x 15%) towards the final course grade.

*Composition:* A Referee Report consists of a written report, as described on the assignment. Reports should adhere to the guidelines given in the assignment, where guides are provided that describe the norms of the referee report genre. Reports should conform to those norms, and should be about four (4) of five (5) pages or 1,000 – 1,500 words long. While they need not be written in essay format they should be clearly written in complete sentences and paragraphs.

*Evaluation:* Reports will be assessed according to their success in completing the assigned tasks. Generally, evaluation will focus primarily on the student's ability to compose a well-structured written answer that effectively demonstrates (i) a **sound, comparative and critical understanding** of the major concepts, theories and arguments studied in the course, or (ii) an ability to **synthesize** the major themes of the course, or (iii) a **practical mastery** of the skills or techniques being evaluated. Reports should also conform to the norms of the genre (e.g., as given by the guides listed in the assignment) and will be assessed, in part, according to how well they conform to those genre norms. Students wishing formative feedback on a Referee Report may submit a sample to the instructor for detailed comments, so long as this is done at least 2 weeks in advance of the due date.

*Due Dates:* Referee Reports are due by electronic submission on the dates given in the Tentative Reading Schedule (below). Inexcusably late Referee Reports will be penalized 20% per scheduled class – so, a Report due on a Friday and submitted before Monday's class the following week would receive a 20% penalty; before Wednesday's class, a 40% penalty; following Wednesday's class, a 60% penalty.

3. *Final Examination* (take home): The purpose of course examinations is to test comprehension of the course material (including an understanding of the major theories and arguments studied in the course), practical mastery of the skills and techniques employed in the course, and synthesis of the major themes of the course.

*Composition:* The final exam is take-home and consists of comprehensive essay question posted in advance.

*Evaluation:* The exam will be assessed according to its success in completing the tasks assigned in the question.

Generally, evaluation will focus primarily on the student's ability to compose a well-structured written answer that effectively demonstrates (i) a **sound, comparative and critical understanding** of the major concepts, theories and arguments studied in the course, or (ii) an ability to **synthesize** the major themes of the course, or (iii) a **practical mastery** of the skill or technique being evaluated. In addition to demonstrating an understanding of course material, students will also be evaluated on their ability to advance and develop a critical, argumentative thesis and to support it with cogent argument.

*Due Dates:* Ordinarily, the take-home final for this class is due by electronic submission at the end of the scheduled exam period for this class. In this case, that is: ~~Tuesday, Dec 15 2020 12:45pm – 2:45pm~~. I am giving everyone a blanket extension to the end of exam week. *Please plan accordingly*. Without exception, your final exam is due: **Friday Dec 18, 2020 @ 11:59pm** by electronic submission. **NO FURTHER EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED; NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCETED.**

4. *Participation:* Your participation grade will reflect not only your class attendance, but also your active and meaningful participation in class discussions and exercises. Simply attending class regularly is not sufficient to ensure a good mark in this component of the course grade. Each student is to come to class having read the assigned material so that we can have informed and fruitful discussions in addition to the lectures. Failure to complete the reading assignments will negatively affect your participation grade. Interesting and thoughtful questions and contributions to class discussions are strongly encouraged and will positively impact your participation grade. Students are encouraged to make note of their questions about, and comments on, the assigned readings as they complete them and bring them to class for discussion.

Participation in class discussions will involve collaborative work, where we work together to understand or criticize and argument or position, as well as individual contributions. Students may be asked to adopt the perspective of a theory or position being discussed, and to contribute to the discussion from that perspective.

**Participation Grade Breakdown**

- 10 Is never absent from class and can always be relied upon to make substantive and insightful contributions to class discussions that reflect a sound understanding of the assigned readings and course material
- 9 Is almost never absent from class and can always be relied upon to make relevant contributions to class discussions that demonstrate a sound understanding of the assigned readings and course material
- 8 Is almost never absent from class and can regularly be relied on to make relevant contributions to class discussions that demonstrate a working understanding of the assigned readings and course material
- 7 Attends class regularly (two absences or fewer) and can be relied on to regularly participate in classroom discussions in a way that demonstrates a concerted effort to understand and engage with the assigned readings and course material
- 6 Attends class regularly (two absences or fewer) and participates in classroom discussions on occasion or when called upon to do so in a way that demonstrates an effort to understand and engage with the assigned readings and course material
- 4 Attends class regularly but seldom participates in classroom discussions
- 0 Attends class sporadically and seldom participates in classroom discussions

5. Due Dates and Late Penalties:

*Due dates for graded work are given in the Course Syllabus (Tentative Reading Schedule) or posted to D2L insofar as they can be fixed in advance.* Generally, these dates should be taken as tentative and subject to change based on our progress through the course material. Any changes to announced or posted due dates will be announced in class or posted to D2L, usually with at least one week advance notice of any change.

*Late submissions of course work:* Excusable late submissions are those supported by a documented, verifiable and acceptable (e.g., medical, compassionate, religious, academic) reason. Students who can reasonably anticipate a circumstance affecting their submission of course work should make arrangements in advance with the instructor. The nature of any arrangements or accommodations will be at the discretion of the instructor and as circumstances allow. Students failing to do this will not be permitted to make up that portion of their course grade. In the event of an unforeseeable circumstance, similar arrangements will be made after the fact. No inexcusably late work will be accepted after one week past the initial due date, and no course work whatsoever will be accepted after Friday of the last week of class in the term.

*Plagiarism & Academic Misconduct:* An [Academic Dishonesty Report](#) will be filed for all alleged or suspected incidents of plagiarism, or other violations of academic integrity in this course. All actual incidents (as determined either by the Report process or by the student’s agreement) of plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity, will result in a **minimum** penalty of a **failing grade for the course**.

*Requirement to Retain Graded Material:* Each student is required to keep all graded material until final grades are released. Be sure to keep a copy of all submitted course work both while it is under submission and a graded copy after it has been returned. This is in your own best interests, especially in the event that there is any discrepancy or dispute concerning your official course grades.

6. *Calculation of Final Grade:* I will use the Official Course Grading Scheme (below) to convert your final course grade into a GPA on the 4-point scale used by MSU. I will not curve or otherwise adjust grades.

**Official Course Grading Scheme**

Superior			Good			Satisfactory			Passing			Failing		
4.0	A	100 – 90	3.5	B+	89.9 – 85	2.5	C+	79.9 – 75	1.5	D+	69.9 – 65	0.0	F	59.9 – 0
			3.0	B	84.9 – 80	2.0	C	74.9 – 70	1.0	D	64.9 – 60			

**Important Dates (for information purposes only – E&OE):**

Authoritative version of calendar at [MSU Registrar’s Office Academic Calendar](#).

Authoritative final exam schedule <https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Calendar/FinalExam.aspx>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE – PHL460 (Fall 2020)

**PK** = M. Williams. 2001. *Problems of Knowledge: A critical introduction to epistemology*. Oxford: OUP.  
(Optional readings are listed in brackets.)

<i>Week</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Topics and Readings</i>
1.	Sep.2-4	COURSE INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW Read Course Syllabus (posted on D2L)
2.	Sep. 7-11	<b>Monday – Labor Day Holiday – NO CLASS</b> <b>PK</b> Introduction EPISTEMIC RESPONSIBILITY PTI Clifford, W. (1877). The ethics of belief. <i>Contemporary Review</i> , 29, 289-309. <a href="#">Excerpts - Pirate link</a> (← read this one!) ( <u>Trigger warning</u> : Clifford is writing from a 19 <sup>th</sup> century, European colonial perspective and his writing conveys many prejudices of that time. Some of his examples, particularly in the full paper, read as <u>classist, sexist, racist, islamophobic, and generally deprecating of non-Christian religions</u> . Much of this is omitted in the excerpted version I have assigned (above), but will be found to a greater extent in the full paper (below).) Full paper: <a href="#">Link to Journal @ MSU Libraries</a> . <a href="#">Link to posting of paper on www</a> Reprinted in: Stephen, L. and Pollock, F. (Eds.). (1886). <i>William K. Clifford, Lectures and Essays</i> . London: Macmillan and Co.)
3.	Sep. 14-18	KNOWLEDGE: THE STANDARD ANALYSIS <b>PK</b> Ch.1& Ch.2 (sect.I – Gettier’s problem pp. 28-29) Zagzebski, L. (1994). The inescapability of Gettier problems. <i>Philosophical quarterly</i> , 44, 65-73. <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/2220147">http://www.jstor.org/stable/2220147</a> <a href="#">JSTOR stable link</a> (Gettier, E. (1963). Is justified true belief knowledge? <i>Analysis</i> , 23, 121-123. <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/3326922">http://www.jstor.org/stable/3326922</a> <a href="#">JSTOR stable link</a> )
4.	Sep. 21-25	THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE Hyman, J. (2010) The road to Larissa. <i>Ratio</i> , 23, 393-414. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9329.2010.00475.x <a href="#">Wiley Online Library stable link</a> (start at §3) ( <u>Trigger warning</u> : Plato’s <i>Meno</i> , discussed in this paper, makes reference to <u>human slavery</u> , prevalent in ancient Greece. Hyman’s discussion mostly avoids these references.)
<b>Sunday Sep. 27</b>		<b>READING RESPONSE #1 DUE 11:59 BY DROPBOX SUBMISSION</b>
5.	Sep. 28 - Oct. 2	EPISTEMIC RESPONSIBILITY PTII Steup, M. (1988). The deontic conception of epistemic justification. <i>Philosophical Studies</i> , 53, 65-84. <a href="https://www.jstor.org/stable/4319936">https://www.jstor.org/stable/4319936</a> <a href="#">JSTOR stable link</a>
<b>Sunday Oct. 4</b>		<b>REFEREE REPORT #1 DUE 11:59PM BY DROPBOX SUBMISSION</b>
6.	Oct. 5-9	INTERNALISM & EXTERNALISM <b>PK</b> Ch.2 Goldman, A. (1976). What is justified belief? In G. Pappas (Ed.), <i>Justification and knowledge</i> (pp. 1-23). <a href="#">Chapter on SpringerLink</a> <a href="#">MSU Library Permanent Record Link</a> <a href="#">Pirate link</a>
7.	Oct. 12-16	CERTAINTY & FALLIBILISM <b>PK</b> Ch.3&4 Brandom, R. (1998). Insights and blindspots of reliabilism. <i>The Monist</i> , 81, 371-392. <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/27903596">http://www.jstor.org/stable/27903596</a> <a href="#">JSTOR stable link</a> Reprinted in: Brandom, R. (2000). <i>Articulating reasons</i> (ch.3 pp. 97-122). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
<b>Sunday Oct. 18</b>		<b>READING RESPONSE #2 DUE 11:59PM BY DROPBOX SUBMISSION</b>
8.	Oct. 19-23	SKEPTICISM I - PYRRHONIAN SKEPTICISM <b>PK</b> Ch.5 Sextus Empiricus <i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i> (Selections) The Five Modes of Agrippa.
9.	Oct. 26-30	SKEPTICISM II – CARTESIAN SKEPTICISM <b>PK</b> Ch.6 Descartes1647 <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Med 1&2 Selections

<b>Sunday Nov. 1</b>		<b>REFeree REPORT #2 DUE 11:59PM BY DROPBOX SUBMISSION</b>
10.	Nov. 2–6	<p>SKEPTICISM III – PROBLEM OF THE CRITERION  Chisholm, R. (1973). <i>The problem of the criterion: The Aquinas lecture to the Wisconsin-Alpha-Chapter of Phi Sigma Tau, the National Honor Society for Philosophy at Marquette University</i>. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press. <a href="#">Pirate link</a>  Chisholm, R. (1982). <i>The foundations of knowing</i> (ch.5). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.</p> <p>SKEPTICISM IV – PROBLEM OF INDUCTION (If time permits)  <b>PK</b> Ch.17  Hume, David. ([1777] 1975). <i>Enquiry concerning human understanding</i>, 3rd ed, §§ 4-5. P.H. Nidditch (ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.</p>
11.	Nov. 9–13	<p>FOUNDATIONALISM &amp; COHERENTISM PtI  <b>PK</b> Ch. 7 &amp; 8; (Optional: Ch. 9)  Bonjour, L. (1978). Can empirical knowledge have a foundation? <i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i>, 15, 281-312. <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/20009690">http://www.jstor.org/stable/20009690</a> <a href="#">JSTOR stable link</a></p>
<b>Sunday Nov. 15</b>		<b>READING RESPONSE #3 DUE 11:59PM BY DROPBOX SUBMISSION</b>
12.	Nov. 16–20	<p>FOUNDATIONALISM &amp; COHERENTISM PtII  <b>PK</b> Ch.10, 11 &amp; 12  Bonjour, L. (1976). The coherence theory of empirical knowledge. <i>Philosophical studies</i>, 30, 281-312. <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/4319097">.http://www.jstor.org/stable/4319097</a> <a href="#">JSTOR stable link</a></p>
13.	Nov. 23 – 27	<p><b>THURS &amp; FRI – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>  MODAL EPISTEMOLOGY  Pritchard, D. (2008). Sensitivity, safety, and antiluck epistemology. In J. Greco (ed.), <i>The Oxford handbook of scepticism</i> (pp. 437-455). Oxford: Oxford UP. <a href="#">Pirate link</a></p>
<b>Sunday Nov. 29</b>		<b>REFeree REPORT #3 DUE 11:59PM BY DROPBOX SUBMISSION</b>
14.	Nov. 30 - Dec. 4	<p>DEFAULT &amp; CHALLENGE: FALLIBALISM &amp; CONTEXTUALISM  <b>PK</b> Ch. 13,14 &amp; 15 (Review: <b>PK</b> Ch.3&amp;4)  McDowell, J. (1995). Knowledge and the internal. <i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i>, 4, 877-893. <a href="https://www.jstor.org/stable/2108338">https://www.jstor.org/stable/2108338</a> <a href="#">JSTOR stable link</a>  Brandom, R. (1995). Knowledge and the social articulation of the space of reasons. <i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i>, 4, 895-908. <a href="https://www.jstor.org/stable/2108339">https://www.jstor.org/stable/2108339</a> <a href="#">JSTOR stable link</a></p>
<b>Sunday Dec. 6</b>		<b>READING RESPONSE #4 DUE 11:59 BY DROPBOX SUBMISSION</b>
15.	Dec. 7 – 11	<p>SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY  Leite, A. (2004). On justifying and being justified. <i>Philosophical Issues</i>, 14, 219-253. doi: 10.1111/j.1533-6077.2004.00029.x <a href="#">Wiley Online Library stable link</a> <a href="#">Pirate link</a></p>
<b>Friday Dec. 18 11:59pm</b>		<b>TAKE-HOME Final Exam DUE FRI Dec. 18 @ 11:59pm by Dropbox Submission</b>

### Course Policies (the fine print):

**Classroom Conduct:** During class you are expected to be focused on class activities. This is not the place to sleep, gossip, or do work for other classes. It is definitely not a place to surf the web, play videogames, call, text, tweet, Facebook or Yik Yak.

In general, any conduct that distracts from, or is disruptive of, a classroom environment conducive to learning is prohibited. Disruptive students will be required to leave the class and will be referred to the [MSU Student Conduct System](#) as appropriate.

**Classroom Use of Electronic Items:** The in-class use of electronic devices is permitted for the sole purpose of taking notes in class and participating in classroom learning activities. With the exception of emergencies, the non-pedagogical use of electronic devices in the classroom is prohibited, and the instructor reserves the right to prohibit the use of electronic devices in class on an individual basis if it is deemed to be distracting or disruptive.

**Attendance & Preparation:** Your regular attendance in this course is expected. You should come to class having completed the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them. **Students who do not regularly prepare for and attend class should not expect to do well in this course.** More generally, it is up to you to ensure that you have taken on a manageable course workload in view of your other pursuits and obligations.

For grading-related late and absence policies, please see Syllabus “Notes on Evaluation” and “Due Dates & Late Penalties.”

**Absences:** Excusable absences are those supported by a documented, verifiable and acceptable (e.g., medical, compassionate, religious, academic, or varsity athletic) reason. Attending all classes is a requisite condition for success in the class. I consider more than two unexcused absences excessive. Should the professor feel that excessive absences are affecting a student’s ability to pass the course, they may recommend that the student reconsider their plans for remaining in the class.

**No matter whether an absence is, in reality, “excusable” or “inexcusable” the student faces the same risks with respect to doing poorly in the course.**

Regardless of whether or not an absence is excusable, absence for any reason requires this same response: students must be able to catch up on what they missed during the classes from which they were absent. It is the responsibility of the student, whether prior to an anticipated absence or following an unexpected one, to make (an) appointment(s) with the instructor so that a plan for how the student will catch up can be made.

Students who are absent are responsible for getting class notes from a classmate. If you miss a class meeting, do not email me or come to me and ask: “Did I miss anything important?” I will not repeat material covered in class for students who fail to attend. Late registrants are responsible for all material of all classes, even for the material covered before joining the class.

**Lateness:** Students should recognize that late arrivals and early departures from class are disruptive of an environment conducive to distraction-free learning. Similarly, it should be recognized that early departures are also disruptive. Should circumstances require you to arrive late or leave early on occasion, courtesy dictates that you should inform your instructor in advance, and sit at a place that will minimize disruption to the class. Students arriving late to class should not expect to be admitted,

Late arrivals and early departures are treated the same as absences for grading purposes.

**Participation:** Contributions to classroom discussion, including questions about the class readings, individual responses to and criticisms of the readings, as well as alternative views and opinions on topics discussed, and are expected and encouraged. Students whose contributions monopolize class time, take the discussion off on a tangent, or are disrespectful or disruptive to others in the class will be requested and required to pursue their discussion with the instructor outside of class time.

**Staying Informed:** You are responsible for everything that is discussed in class for both administration and evaluation purposes.

The Course Policies (including matters of Course Evaluation and Due Dates) and other Course Information may be changed in light of our progress through the course material, and usually following a class discussion. Such changes will be announced in class and as such you are responsible for becoming aware of them and will be bound by them.

Students should not email or telephone the instructor seeking information that can be obtained during a class meeting, from the syllabus, or from another student who attended a missed meeting. Emails or phone calls requesting such information will be disregarded.

**Submission of Course Work:** In addition to paper copy, electronic submission of any and all course work may be required. Failure to do either (if required) will result in your earning no credit for the assignment. By registering in the course, students give their permission that their submitted work be collected and stored for the purposes of checking it for plagiarism.

Be sure to keep a copy of *all* submitted course work both while it is under submission and a graded copy after it has been returned. This is in your own best interest, especially in the event that there is any discrepancy or dispute concerning your official course grades.

**Paper submission:** With the exception of in-class tests and exercises, submitted course work must be typed. Please: do not include a title page, or any report cover; clearly indicate your name on the work; and staple the pages together.

**D2L / electronic submission:** Work submitted electronically will be counted as received only when it is received by me in a format in which it can be graded (e.g., an electronic file which I cannot open will not be counted as submitted). Papers submitted electronically must be identical to the paper copy submitted or no credit will be given for the work.

**Final Exam & Conflicts:** The final exam will take place [as scheduled by the Registrar’s Office during the end-of-term exam period](#). The date, time and place of the final exam are set by the Registrar’s Office, and may be subject to change.

**Test and Exam Policies:** Unless specifically stated, no special aids (e.g., books, notes, dictionaries, calculators or other electronic devices) or allowances (e.g., extra time) are permitted in tests and exams. Students requiring special aids (e.g., a language dictionary) or conditions (e.g., extra time) must make arrangements in advance according to the policies administered by the [MSU Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities](#).

You may be required to produce university identification when writing a test or exam.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious offense, and it will not be overlooked in this or in other classes. Written work submitted for this course may be checked for plagiarism. For guidance on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, see the [MSU Ombudsperson’s page on Academic Integrity](#).

Appeals: You have a right to appeal the final grade you receive in this class, and should be aware of the [Grade/Appeal Policy given on the MSU Ombudsperson's website](#). To file an appeal you must follow the procedure given there.

Course Evaluation: You will have the opportunity to complete a course evaluation near the end of the course.

Letters of Reference: Generally, I am happy to provide academic references for my students, but only if provided with enough time and information to complete the reference by the deadline. Please be mindful that the composition of a compelling and supportive reference letter is a time-intensive process. Typically: I will inform you whether I can write a supportive letter and the kinds of things I am able to say in it, and will provide you with a (draft) copy of the letter. In accordance with MSU's FERPA compliance policy, students requesting a letter of reference are required to complete a Release of Information Authorization form, <https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/PrivacyGuidelines.aspx>, specifying that "Any and all 'non-directory' information deemed pertinent to the reference by the instructor may be disclosed in the reference."

The Dead-Duck Clause: Don't staple a dead duck to your assignment when you hand it in. More generally: don't do anything that, it goes without saying, you shouldn't do; and do everything that, it goes without saying, you should do.

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### Some Relevant University Policies

Here are some of the Michigan State University policies, ordinances, regulations, and advisories that pertain to our course. All of these will be taken to hold for the course, and students are expected familiarize themselves with, and abide by, them. Many have been taken from the [MSU Ombudsperson's Classroom Policies page](#) (accessed: 2015.08.31).

1. **Academic Honesty**: [Article 2.III.B.2](#) of the Student Rights and Responsibilities states: "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, [Protection of Scholarship and Grades](#); the all-University Policy on [Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](#); and [Ordinance 17.00](#), Examinations. Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the [Academic Integrity](#) webpage.)

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course. This course is overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

2. **Incompletes**: The MSU Policy on Incompletes is given here: <https://reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Print.asp?Section=528> and reads, in part, as follows:

The I-Incomplete may be given only when: the student (a) has completed at least 6/7 of the term of instruction, but is unable to complete the class work and/or take the final examination because of illness or other compelling reason; and (b) has done satisfactory work in the course; and (c) in the instructor's judgment can complete the required work without repeating the course.

3. **Limits to confidentiality**. Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center: <http://counseling.msu.edu> 517-355-8270 Links for emergency contact: <http://counseling.msu.edu/emergency-2/>

4. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** (from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD): Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored.

5. **Drops and Adds**: Add, drop, and tuition refund dates for this course are given for your information (E&OE) in the "Important Dates" portion of the syllabus above. Authoritative dates can be found at [MSU Registrar's Office Academic Calendar](#) and [MSU Registrar's Schedule of Courses](#) (by looking up this course, and clicking on its link). You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped the course.

6. **Commercialized Lecture Notes**: Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.

7. **Internet:** Some professional journals will not consider a submission for publication if the article has appeared on the Internet. Please notify your instructor in writing if you do not want your course papers posted to the course Web site.
8. **Disruptive Behavior:** Article 2.III.B.4 of the [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\)](#) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 of the [SRR](#) states that "The student and the faculty share the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships based on mutual trust and civility." [MSU Ordinance 15.02](#) states: "No person shall obstruct, hinder, or impede the normal operation of any class, laboratory, seminar, examination, field trip, or other educational activity of the University." [General Student Regulation 5.02](#) states: "Functions, services, and processes of the University must be protected if the institution is to be effective in discharging its responsibilities; therefore, no student shall: obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with the functions, services, or directives of the University, its offices, or its employees (e.g., classes, ...)."
9. **Attendance: General University Attendance Policy** - This policy states in part: "No person is allowed to attend a class unless officially enrolled on a credit or non-credit basis with the appropriate fees paid. Students who attend, participate and strive to complete course requirements without formal enrollment will not receive credit for their work. . . . It is the responsibility of the instructor to define the policy for attendance at the beginning of the course."  
Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.  
Further information about University Attendance policies can be found at the [MSU Ombudsperson Classroom Policies webpage](#) (accessed 2015.08.31).
10. **Final Exam Policy** - The university [final exam policy](#) allows instructors to impose severe consequences on students who miss a final exam without a "satisfactory explanation"; namely, a failing grade in the course. To avoid such dire action, the policy instructs students "unable to take a final examination because of illness or other reasons over which they have no control" to notify the associate dean of their college immediately. Students should be prepared to document their illness or the extenuating circumstances that caused them to miss the final exam. Oversleeping usually won't do it.
11. **Campus Emergencies:** If an emergency arises in this classroom, building or vicinity, your instructor will inform you of actions to follow to enhance your safety. As a student in this class, you are responsible for knowing the location of the nearest emergency evacuation route or shelter. These directions appear on the maps posted on the walls throughout this building. Please familiarize yourself with these "[Classroom Emergency Guidelines](#)." If police or university officials order us to evacuate the classroom or building, follow the posted emergency route in an orderly manner and assist those who might need help in reaching a barrier-free exit or shelter. To receive emergency messages, set your cellular phones on silent mode when you enter this classroom. If you observe or receive an emergency alert, immediately and calmly inform your instructor. (See also [www.alert.msu.edu](http://www.alert.msu.edu).) Please see also the information sheet found at the [MSU Ombudsperson's Handling Emergency Situations in the Classroom](#) webpage.
12. **Grief Absence Policy:** In the Spring Semester of 2015, Academic Governance approved a Grief Absence Policy (see <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/student-group-regulations-administrative-rulings-all-university-policies-and-selected-ordinances/grief-absence-policy>). I am writing to remind you of the online system which facilitates the processes for accommodating a grief absence - including the student's request, authorization of that request, notification of faculty, and verification.  
Students seeking a grief absence should be directed to the Grief Absence Request Form found on the RO home page (<https://reg.msu.edu/>) under 'Student Services - Grief Absence Request Form' OR to StuInfo (<https://stuinfo.msu.edu/>) under 'Academics - Enrollment Information and Services - Grief Absence Request Form.' Per policy, graduate students who should see their major professor and notify course instructors are directed to do so when they access the form.  
Students will be asked to supply information on the nature of the loss, the date they became aware, and the expected period of absence. Once completed, the information is routed to the Assoc. Dean of the student's college and must be received prior to the student leaving campus. The student will receive a confidential message confirming the submission and reminding them that supporting documentation must be provided and who to send it to. In addition, the appropriate dean's office will be notified that a request has been submitted. Once the appropriate administrator has either approved or denied the request, the student will again receive a confidential message notifying them of the decision of the dean's office. If approved, instructors will be notified by the appropriate dean's office of the period of absence. Instructors are expected to arrange for students to make up the missed work.

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