

# Epistemology 85230

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Spring 2007 7:00 – 9:50 a.m. Wednesday

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**Catalogue Description:** A critical study of such topics as the nature of truth, the respective roles of reason and experience in acquiring knowledge, rationalism versus empiricism, revelation and warrant.

**Texts:** Paul Moser & Arnold Vander Nat, eds., *Human Knowledge: Classical and Contemporary Approaches*, Third Edition (Oxford)  
Paul Moser, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology* (Oxford)  
Alvin Plantinga. *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford)

**Course Objectives:** The course is intended to equip the student to join, with confidence, the professional conversation in epistemology and to help the student find the way to a working epistemology of his or her own. To this end, we will read classical and contemporary readings in the field, enrich our philosophical vocabularies, engage the arguments, and bring epistemological perspectives to bear on the Christian faith.

## Learning Activities, Requirements, and Evaluations:

### Readings:

The readings are substantial and students may be tempted to slight them as they develop their papers. To help them keep on track, prepared to enter effectively into the classroom discussion, a daily readings quiz will be given over the assigned material. A three-point, multiple-choice/true-false test will be given for each day's reading. Of the 13 daily quiz scores, only the best 12 will count, for a total of 36 points.

### January

31 Introduction: No reading assignment

### February

7	Moser & Vander Nat	Greek & Medieval; Early Modern
14	Moser & Vander Nat	Pragm. & Empir.; Analysis of Knowledge
21	Moser & Vander Nat	<i>A Priori</i> Knowledge; Justified Belief
28	Moser & Vander Nat	Skepticism; Epistemology & Psychology

**March**

7 Moser Intro-5  
 14 Moser 6-10  
 21 Moser 11-15  
 28 Moser 16-20

**April**

4 Plantinga I  
 11 **Reading Days**  
 18 Plantinga II  
 25 Plantinga III

**May**

2 Plantinga IV

**Papers:**

Each student will bring a 6-page paper in connection with each of the three books. In this paper, the student will critique, advance, or apply a claim/argument found in one or more of the readings. Each paper will be the basis of a 30-minute classroom presentation, 15 of which will be explanation, 15 of which will be discussion. Each paper will count 15 points for a total of 45.

**Blue Book Final:**

During the final exam period, the student will write short essays on a selection of questions provided in advance. The final will count 15 points.

**Discussion Participation:**

Four points will be given for those who pull their weight in classroom discussion – through questioning, clarification, and argument. Though insight is prized, well-expressed puzzlement is also valuable. Those who have done their homework and are not averse to risking embarrassment in discussion should have no trouble gaining these points.

**Points Summary:**

Daily Readings Quizzes	36
Three 7-page papers	45
Blue Book Final	15
Classroom Participation	<u>4</u>
Total	100

**Disclaimer:** This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the course description, content outline, course objectives, grading criteria, activities to be evaluated, major exam dates, policy on absences, course bibliography and other information necessary for students to appraise the course. However, during the course of the semester,

the professor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may appear necessary because of events and circumstances that change during the semester.