

ACADEMIC SESSION 2018-2019

PH306H/PH406H Scepticism

15 CREDITS- 11 WEEKS

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen Organisation page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM

Dr Luca Moretti

Office: OBG02, Old Brewery

Office hours: Thursday 11-12am

Telephone number: 01224 272385

Email address: l.moretti@abdn.ac.uk

Discipline Administration:

Mr Warwick Brown

50-52 College Bounds

Room CB001

01224 272366

philosophy@abdn.ac.uk

Students are asked to make themselves familiar with the information on key institutional policies which have been made available within MyAberdeen (<https://abdn.blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/institution/Policies>). These policies are relevant to all students and will be useful to you throughout your studies. They contain important information and address issues such as what to do if you are absent, how to raise an appeal or a complaint and how seriously the University takes your feedback.

These institutional policies should be read in conjunction with this course guide, in which School specific policies are detailed. Further information can be found on the [University's Infohub webpage](#) or by visiting the Infohub.

TIMETABLE

Students can view their university timetable at

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will focus on the long-standing debate on epistemological scepticism. It will single out types of scepticism emerged in philosophy, excluding *ancient* (Greek/Roman) scepticism, and will explore important attempts to reply to them. The emphasis will be on global scepticism (or scepticism about the external world) and the contemporary responses to it. The latter will include positions based on relevant alternatives, on the rejection of closure, and on epistemological entitlement; infallibilism and contextualism will also be considered.

INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course aims to introduce the epistemological debate on scepticism, the principal forms of scepticism and the principal attempted solutions of sceptical problems; to give students insight into the central problems of the debate on scepticism; to explore connections between the discussion on scepticism and other epistemological discussions - principally, concerning the characterization of the notions of knowledge and of epistemic justification; to trace some recent developments in the contemporary debate, above all in connection with issues of formal epistemology.

The main learning outcomes of the course are the following: to be able to explain key concepts in epistemology; to understand the positions of some of the main historical figures in epistemology; to understand the positions of

some of the main contemporary figures in epistemology; to be able to read and critically discuss journal articles carefully and identify key arguments; to be able to articulate ideas clearly, confidently and systematically.

LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME

Two one-hour lectures and then nine ninety-minute seminars over eleven weeks.

READING LIST

The reading list will be available at the beginning of the course

ASSESSMENT

For Level 3 students: one essay of 2000 words (50%) and one 2 hour written exam (50%).

For Level 4 students: one essay of 3000 words (50%) and one 2 hour written exam (50%). There is no re-sit for Level 4 students.

Resit for Level 3 students: 2 hour written exam (100%)

There is no resit for level 4 students

To view the CGS Descriptors please go to **MyAberdeen- Organisations- Divinity, History, & Philosophy Student Information for Undergraduates**.

The link to the CGS Descriptors is on the left hand menu.

PLEASE NOTE: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.

ESSAYS

Level 3 essays should be 2000 words long. Level 4 essays should be 3000 words long. The required final bibliography must not be included the word-count (but everything else is). Work that is either too long or too short ($\pm 10\%$) will be penalised. (Please email the coordinator for further details.)

The essay's topic/title must be agreed in advance with the course coordinator and must concern one or more subjects surveyed in the course. Alternatively, you can answer the general question: "Can we defeat external world scepticism?" In this case too your answer must focus on some of the views discussed in the course.

ASSESSMENT DEADLINES

The essay is due on Monday, the 12th of November at 3pm

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Submit **one paper copy** with a completed essay cover sheet to the **drop boxes in CB008 in 50-52 College Bounds** and **one official electronic copy to TurnitinUK via MyAberdeen**. Both copies to be submitted by 3.00pm on the due date.

Paper Copy: One paper copy, typed and double spaced, together with an **Assessment cover sheet** – this should have your ID number **clearly** written on the cover sheet, with **NO** name or signature but **EVERYTHING ELSE** completed, including tutor's name – and should be delivered to the drop boxes in CB008, 50-52 College Bounds.

Electronic Copy: One copy submitted through Turnitin via [MyAberdeen](https://my.abdn.ac.uk). (for instructions please see <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/eLearning/turnitinuk/students/>)

Students are asked to retain the Turnitin receipt so they are able to provide proof of submission at a later date if required.

In advance of uploading, please save the assignment with your student ID number listed in the filename, i.e. 59999999 PHxxxx Essay 1.

When asked to enter a title for the assignment, please enter a title identical to the name of your saved assignment, i.e. PHxxxx Essay 1. To help us comply with our anonymous marking policy, please remove any immediately identifying information (e.g. your name) from your work.

Both copies to be submitted by 3.00pm on the due date.

Please note: Failure to submit both an electronic copy to TurnitinUK, and an identical paper copy, will result in a deduction of marks. Failure to submit to TurnitinUK will result in a zero mark.

EXAMINATION

A 2-hour exam, in which the student will give written answers to 2 out of 7-8 questions, will take place at the end of the half session. **General exam guidance will be given in the Student Handbook.**)

N.B. Students are not allowed to answer questions on the same topic of the essay or to replicate its content.

Past exam papers can be viewed at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/learning-and-teaching/for-students/exam-papers/>.

Please Note: Candidates whose first language is not English may refer to English/native tongue dictionaries, when permitted by their Schools to do so. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted in the examination venue. Invigilators are entitled to request inspection of dictionaries prior to the examination, thumbing through them to check that there is no extra written material present.