

Philosophy 149: Metaphysics and Epistemology



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Instructors: Dr. Krupa Patel & Dr. Anand Vaidya

Location: Online on Zoom (Synchronous)

Day / Time: Thursday, 1500-1745 (3:00pm-5:45pm)

Description: This course will be a survey of core topics in epistemology (the theory of knowledge) and metaphysics (the theory of reality). It will be taught through a cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary perspective. We will use traditions of philosophy from around the world, and we will appeal to work from outside of the discipline of philosophy, such as physics and mathematics. We will begin with traditional topics in epistemology, such as the analysis of knowledge, the architecture of knowledge, sources of knowledge, and skepticism; and traditional topics in metaphysics, such as the distinction between simulations, illusions and reality, and existence. We will then move on to discussion of contemporary issues, such as:

- Are we living in a simulation?
- How should I choose what to believe when there is a rise in fake news?
- What does it mean to be well-informed in the attention-economy where everything is pulling on my attention?
- How can we live in an epistemically more just world, where knowledge is not distributed or created in an unjust way?

Grading: Either 3 (4-page papers – 2000 words each), 2 (6-page papers – 3000 words each), or 1 (12-page paper – 6000 words). A presentation of one's work prior to submission of their final work is highly suggested. Class time will be made for individual presentation prior to submitting work at the end of the term.