

Phil 890
Seminar: Evidence and Reliability
W: 19:00-21:45 HUM 384

Instructor: **I. Peschard**
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Course Description: Will be examined and discussed:

- Different theories about the nature and use of evidence in science, with particular attention given to the debate between Bayesian and error statistical philosophers.
- The need and conditions for reliability, as well as the relation between reliability and evidence, in philosophy of science and in epistemology
- The role of judgments of relevance in evaluation of evidential import

Grading and Course Requirements: There will be a strong emphasis on class preparation and participation with weekly forum and presentations (20%)

- First essay (~3000 wds) due on Sunday Oct. 9 (25%)
- Outline of final essay (1500wds): due on Sunday Nov. 20 (15%)
- Peer-review of outline of final essay due on Sunday Dec.4 (10%)
- Final essay (~3000wds): due on Friday Dec. 16 (30 %).

Texts: There is one textbook and one reader, both will be available at the bookstore.

Textbook: *Scientific Evidence. Philosophical Theories and Applications.* Peter Achinstein (ed.). The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2005.

Reader: Seminar Evidence and Reliability-F2011.
Additional material will be posted on ilearn.

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

- **Week 1, Aug.24** *Overview of the problem and theories of evidence*

IEP: Evidence

John Norton: A Little Survey of Induction (textbook)

Add.Reading: C. Hempel: Excerpts from *Studies in the Logic of Confirmation*

Week 2, Aug. 31 *IBE and Probabilistic theories of evidence*

Peter Lipton: 'Inference to the Best Explanation' (2000) (reader)

Colin Howson & Peter Urbach: 'Bayesian versus non-Bayesian approaches to confirmation.' (reader)

- **Week 3, Sept. 7** *Achinstein's theory of evidence*

Peter Achinstein: 'Four Mistaken Theses About Evidence' (textbook)

Sherri Roush: 'Positive Relevance: A Defense and Challenge' (textbook)

Case study: Richard Richards: 'Is Domestic Breeding Evidence for Darwinian Evolution?' (textbook)

- **Week 4, Sept. 14** *Statistical approach to evidence*
Deborah Mayo: ‘Evidence as Passing Severe Test’ (textbook)
Case Study: K. Staley: ‘Agency and Objectivity in the Search for ...’ (textbook)
- **Week 5, Sept 21** *Bayesian vs. Statistical: On base-rate fallacy*
C. Howson: ‘Error probabilities in error’ (reader)
D. Mayo: ‘Error statistics and learning from error’ (reader)
- **Week 6, Sept. 28** *Reliabilism ;*
J. Bogen & J. Woodward: ‘Evading the IRS’ (reader)
- **Week 7, Oct.5** *Functional role of error*
Farrel and Hooker: Error, error statistics and self-directed anticipative learning
Gregory Wheeler: Error statistic and Duhem's problem
- **Week 8, Oct. 12** *Bayesian reasoning*
C. Glymour: ‘Why I am not a Bayesian’ (reader)
- **Week 9, Oct. 19** *Evidence for what, degrees of evidence*
Steven Gimbel: ‘Restoring Ambiguity to Achinstein’ Account of Evidence’ (textbook)
Nancy Cartwright: ‘Evidence-based policy: what’s to be done about relevance?’ (reader)
Jacob Stegenga: ‘Robustness, Discordance, and Relevance’ (reader)
- **Week 10, Oct. 26** *Evidence, Relevance*
Helen Longino: ‘Evidence in the Sciences of Behavior’ (textbook)
- **Week 11, Nov.2** *Reliabilism in Epistemology*
John Greco: ‘Agent Reliabilism’ [reader]
- **Week 12, Nov 9** *Reliabilism in Epistemology*
Robert Brandom. ‘Insights and Blindspots of Reliabilism’ [reader]
- **Week 13, Nov. 16** *Self-Locating beliefs*
Adam Elga: ‘Self-Locating Belief and the Sleeping Beauty Problem’ [reader]
Bas van Fraassen: ‘Belief and the will.’
- **Week 14, Nov. 30** *Introspective evidence*
Gary Hatfield: ‘Introspective Evidence in Psychology’ (textbook)
Maja Spener: Phenomenal Adequacy and Introspective Evidence
- **Week 15, Dec.7** *Evidence vs. Good Sense*
Abrol Fariweather: The Epistemic Value of Good Sense

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attendance: Full attendance and to be on time is part of seminar participation.

Plagiarism: occurs when someone misrepresents the work of another as his or her own, whether by copying or inserting text without appropriate acknowledgement, or by improper reliance on someone else’s work or results. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade, and will be reported to the Dean of the College. See www.sfsu.edu/~collhum/plagiarism.html.

Dual submission: any assignment for which work is found to have been submitted to another class, whether here or elsewhere, will receive an “F” grade.

Library: special arrangements for obtaining library materials are needed during the construction in the main library. Please consult the library’s informational website at www.library.sfsu.edu/about/building/index.php.

Disability: You are invited to communicate with me at the outset of the course or at your

discretion about any disabilities or medical conditions that may affect your course participation, so that we can make the course as accessible as possible for you. You can also contact the Disability Resource Center at 338-2472 (Voice/TDD)