Metaphysics and Epistemology

**General objectives for students in Metaphysics and Epistemology**

Study of philosophy in this area gives students the skills to

1. Identify and apply major theories pertaining to the nature of reality, causation, the mind and body, existence, and knowledge
2. Distinguish between making a claim that is an assumption, a controversial claim requiring support, or a claim that is a hypothesis introduced in order to be refuted or established
3. Appreciate the importance of advancing an argument that does not irrefutably solve a problem if instead it illuminates and clarifies a problem
4. Explain the role of science in discovering information about the world
5. Identify whether and to what extent the scientific method gives scientists privileged insight into the nature and function of reality
6. Recognize and explain ways in which science is or is not different from other ways of learning about the world
7. Discuss the tools used by science in experimentation that provide descriptions of the world and to explore to what extent these descriptions are superior to everyday observations.

**Representative courses**

**Phil 441 Theory of Knowledge**

**Learning Objectives:** Upon completion of the course, students will be able to

1. Appreciate the different conceptual dimensions of core epistemological notions (such as knowledge and justification) and how they can often operate in tension with each other
2. Apply the conceptual concerns of epistemologists to practical concerns of knowledge
3. Understand and participate in the dialectical structure of a philosophical dispute
4. Understand and participate in the recursive philosophical process of analysis-and-counterexample

**Assessments**

1. Frequent exegetical quizzes will prompt the students to stay on top of the course readings and to improve their comprehension of those texts
2. Online assignments designed in “target essay and response” format will assess both the student's mastery of the course material as well as his/her ability to engage fruitfully in constructive argument with both the assigned texts and others.

3. Tests will be a combination of objective questions about the course material and analytic essays that will require the student to state and defend his/her own views on questions of epistemological significance.

Phil 450: Philosophy of Mind

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to

1. Comprehend the historical development of major positions on the mind/body problem

2. Articulate the connections between the philosophy of mind and the cognitive and behavioral sciences

3. Understand and participate in the dialectical structure of a philosophical dispute.

Assessments

1. Frequent exegetical quizzes will prompt the students to stay on top of the course readings and improve their comprehension of those texts

2. Online assignments designed in “target essay and response” format will assess both the student’s mastery of the course material, as well as his/her ability to engage fruitfully in constructive argument with both the assigned texts and others

3. Tests will be a combination of objective questions about the course material and analytic essays that will require the student to state and defend his/her own views.