PHILOSOPHY 206A: CORE COURSE IN EPISTEMOLOGY
THE SEMANTICS OF KNOWLEDGE-ATTRIBUTIONS

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Course Description
When I say that I know that I have hands, is that true? When you say that I know that I won't have enough money to go on safari this year, is that true? When you say that I know that my Mega-Millions lottery ticket will lose, is *that* true? This course discusses a recent influential debate about the semantics of knowledge-attributions and the nature of knowledge. Call "Invariantism" the view that the truth-values of knowledge-attributions do not vary with context of use or circumstance of evaluation (in virtue of the semantic properties of "knows"). Call "Intellectualism" the view that a subject's knowledge is not a function of her practical interests. Classical Invariantism, the combination of Invariantism and Intellectualism, was the standard view until fairly recently. However, strong pressures on Classical Invariantism (particularly the problem of skepticism, the lottery paradox, and intuitions about ordinary language cases) have led to a plethora of alternative theories. One kind of view retains Intellectualism but abandons Invariantism. There are two theories of this sort: Contextualism and Relativism. Contextualists hold that the truth-values of knowledge-attributions vary with context of use, but do not vary with circumstance of evaluation. (Contextualists differ over what explains the variation: Pure Contextualists hold that "know" is an indexical or that knowledge-attributions contain a hidden parameter for epistemic standards; Contrastivists hold that knowledge is a ternary relation and the range of the hidden parameter is a contrast class of propositions, so that knowing is a matter of knowing p *rather than* q.) Relativists hold that the truth-values of knowledge-attributions vary with circumstance of evaluation, but do not vary with context of use. Another kind of view retains Invariantism but abandons Intellectualism. This kind of theory has been called "Subject-Sensitive Invariantism" (by DeRose, who is not a fan), "Interest-Relative Invariantism" (by Stanley), and "Sensitive Moderate Invariantism" (by Hawthorne). Our task in this course is to determine which of these five theories (Classical Invariantism, Pure Contextualism, Contrastivism, Relativism, Subject-Sensitive Invariantism) has the better of the argument(s).

Course Materials

There are three required books, each of which may be purchased at the UCSD Bookstore:

CC: Keith DeRose, *The Case for Contextualism*
KL: John Hawthorne, *Knowledge and Lotteries*
KPI: Jason Stanley, *Knowledge and Practical Interests*

All other course materials are journal articles available online (most through the UCSD library website), or photocopies placed in the philosophy department library.

Course Schedule

September 28: The Ordinary Language Case for Contextualism
        Background Reading
                Matthias Steup, "The Analysis of Knowledge", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/
                David Braun, "Indexicals", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/indexicals/
                Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Chapters 2 and 3 [photocopy]

        Reading: Stewart Cohen, "Contextualism, Skepticism, and the Structure of Reasons", *Philosophical Perspectives* 13 (1999): 57-89.
                Keith DeRose, **CC**, Chapter 1 (minus Section 15) and Chapter 2

October 5: Pure Contextualism vs. Contrastivism
        Reading: Jonathan Schaffer, "From Contextualism to Contrastivism", *Philosophical Studies* 119 (2004): 73-103.
                Jonathan Schaffer, "Contrastive Knowledge", *Oxford Studies in Epistemology* 1 (2005): 235-271.
                Keith DeRose, **CC**, Chapter 1, Section 15
                René van Woudenberg, "The Knowledge Relation: Binary or Ternary?", *Social Epistemology* 22 (2008): 281-288.

October 12: From the Context-Variability of Assertability to Contextualism
        Reading: Keith DeRose, **CC**, Chapter 3 (including Appendix)
                Patrick Rysiew, "The Context-Sensitivity of Knowledge Attributions", *Noûs* 35 (2001): 477-514.
                Patrick Rysiew, "Contesting Contextualism", *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 69 (2005): 51-69.
                John Turri, "Epistemic Invariantism and Speech Act Contextualism", *Philosophical Review* 119 (2010): 77-95.

October 19: The Knowledge Account of Assertion
        Reading: Timothy Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits*, Chapter 11 [photocopy]
                Matthew Weiner, "Must We Know What We Say?", *Philosophical Review* 114 (2005): 227-251.
                Jim Stone, "Contextualism and Warranted Assertion", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 88 (2007): 92-113.
                Jonathan L. Kvanvig, "Assertion, Knowledge, and Lotteries", in Patrick Greenough and Duncan Pritchard (eds.), *Williamson on Knowledge* (2009): 140-160.

October 26: Disagreement and Single Scoreboard Semantics
   Reading: David Lewis, "Scorekeeping in a Language Game", *Journal of*
         Philosophical Logic 8 (1979): 339-359.
        David Lewis, "Elusive Knowledge", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*
         74 (1996): 549-567.
        Keith DeRose, **CC**, Chapter 4
        Richard Feldman, "Comments on DeRose's 'Single Scoreboard
         Semantics'", *Philosophical Studies* 119 (2004): 23-33.

November 2: Bamboozled by Our Own Words?
   Background Reading: John Hawthorne, **KL**, Chapter 1, Sections 1-4

   Reading: John Hawthorne, **KL**, Chapter 2 (minus Section 2)
        Jason Stanley, **KPI**, Chapters 2 and 3
        Keith DeRose, **CC**, Chapter 5, Sections 1-9 and Appendix

November 9: Subject-Sensitive Invariantism
   Reading: John Hawthorne, **KL**, Chapter 4
        Jason Stanley, **KPI**, Chapters 5 and 6
        Keith DeRose, **CC**, Chapter 6

November 16: Knowledge, Assertion, and Action [TERM PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE]
   Reading: Jessica Brown, "Subject-Sensitive Invariantism and the Knowledge Norm
         for Practical Reasoning", *Noûs* 42 (2008): 167-189.
        Keith DeRose, **CC**, Chapter 7

November 23: NO MEETING

November 30: Relativism
   Reading: Mark Richard, "Contextualism and Relativism", *Philosophical Studies*
         119 (2004): 215-242.
        John MacFarlane, "The Assessment Sensitivity of Knowledge
         Attributions", *Oxford Studies in Epistemology* 1 (2005): 197-233.
        Jason Stanley, **KPI**, Chapter 7

December 8: TERM PAPER DUE

Course Requirements and Grading

➢ Six short (2-3 page) weekly papers, starting in the second week. Each paper must be uploaded in the appropriate Discussion Forum on TED (=WebCT) by 5pm on the day before the seminar in which the relevant issues will be discussed. For example, the first paper is due by 5pm on October 4. It is recommended that you read all of your co-seminarians' papers before seminar the next day. Your paper should, if at all possible, do one of the following: (i) criticize the validity or soundness of an argument in a relevant text, (ii) provide a counter-example to a central claim made in a relevant text, or (iii) articulate and defend an interpretation or philosophical position that competes with those found in the relevant texts.

➢ One term paper preceded by a prospectus. The term paper should be on a topic of your choice that is directly related to the topics discussed in the seminar, and approved by me. I will make suggestions as to possible term paper topics as they come up during the term, but you should also feel free to ask me for suggestions or explore your own ideas with me at any time. More details concerning the prospectus and term paper:

   a) The prospectus (approximately 2-3 pages) should contain an outline of the main thesis and structure of the paper you will write and should be uploaded to the Assignment section of the TED Content folder before 12pm, November 16). A bibliography of the main texts you will discuss should be attached. I will set up a meeting with you before the Thanksgiving Break to discuss your plans.

   b) The term paper (around 4,500 words, double-spaced, 12 point font) must be uploaded to the Assignment section of the TED Content folder before 9am, December 8.

➢ Two 15 minute in-class presentations. The purpose of each presentation is to introduce the main issues/problems/arguments to be discussed in seminar that day, raising some of your own questions/comments/criticisms along the way or at the end. The presentation may be related to the short paper, though the short paper (given its length) should be less introductory and more focused. You should not simply read your presentation, though you may speak your way through a handout. A handout is recommended, though not mandatory.

➢ Your grade will be based on the quality of your term paper (75%), your short papers (10%), your presentations (10%), and your participation in seminar (5%). The grade given to your worst short paper (assuming there is a worst paper) will be discarded in computing the final course grade. All unexcused late papers (including the term paper) will be given a grade of F, and no unexcused late short paper grade will be discarded in the computation of your short paper grade. Valid excuses are limited to (i) incapacitation through illness or accident, and (ii) serious emergency.

➢ If accommodations are needed for a disability, or for religious reasons, please let me know as soon as possible.