

Phil 2110
Knowledge
First Essay Topics

Write 5-7 pages (1250-1750 words) on **one** of the following topics.

You should answer the questions simply and straightforwardly, in your own words.
You should write with as much clarity, precision and care as you can.

If consult any sources, you must appropriately cite all sources you consult.

Due Monday 4 October by 4:30 pm.

Submit one copy of your assignment on paper to Ms Loletta Li, Main Building room 302.

1. Explain the no accidents account of knowledge discussed on the handout from 9 September.
Is this theory correct? Why or why not?

2. What is Lycan trying to show in this passage? Do he succeed in showing what he is trying to show?

"There is an ambitious antiGettier claim, seemingly unanswerable if true: that 'know' is unanalyzable. Even if knowledge has necessary conditions such as truth and belief, of course it does not follow that 'know' is analyzable in terms of those. Williamson (2000) argues at length that 'know' should be taken as primitive. If he is right, then of course any project which bills itself as 'analyzing knowledge' is doomed to failure. And that is what the Gettier project did bill itself as doing.

However, even if 'know' is unanalyzable and has no set of conceptually necessary and sufficient conditions, the claim needed to set up the Problem is (again) only the sufficiency thesis: that epistemically justified true belief suffices for knowledge. The falsity of that thesis still needs explaining, because, as before, there are real people who have JTB but still do not know, and that raises the question of what distinguishes the knower from the Gettier victim. The Gettier project can rage on unabated."

3. Explain Lycan's no-essential-false-assumption theory. Does the example Lycan discusses of Henry and Fake Barn Country show that Lycan's theory is incorrect? Why or why not?

4. In class on 16 September we discussed Goldman's theory of perceptual knowledge (from "Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge") and Nozick's account of knowledge. Compare these two accounts. What do they have in common? How do they differ? (It will help if you can think of some clear examples for which they yield different answers.) Is there good reason to prefer one theory over the other?