

Recent Topics in Formal Epistemology

[[Home](#)] [[Syllabus](#)]

Professor

[Branden Fitelson](#)
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Office: [Seminary 3](#) – 110
Hours: Mondays 4–6pm

Time & Place

[Seminary 3](#) – Seminar Room
Wednesdays, 4:30–7:30pm

Readings

All readings for the course will be posted on this page. Scroll down for the reading schedule.

Requirements

I will expect enrolled students to write one term paper for the seminar.

Website

Current course information can be found on the course web site, at:

<http://fitelson.org/topics/>

The [home page](#) of our website is reserved mainly for announcements. You should keep an eye on the course website, as it will be updated regularly with various content and announcements pertaining to the course. The only two computer applications you will need to view/print, *etc.* the content on our website are: (i) your favorite [web browser](#), and (ii) [Adobe Reader](#) (version 6 or later, or – if you prefer – [another program](#) that can read [Acrobat PDF version 6](#) files).

Tentative Schedule (subject to change and evolution – so *stay tuned*)

I will be presenting material for the first 6–7 weeks of class. Then, we will have the following guest seminar presenters:

- [Matt Kotzen](#) (11/2)
- [Jim Joyce](#) (11/9)
- [Darren Bradley](#) (11/16)
- [Michael Titelbaum](#) (11/30)
- [Kenny Easwaran](#) (12/7)

OK, here are the notes, readings, *etc.*, for the seminar. This list will evolve as the semester unfolds...



- **09/07/11: No readings for this week. I'm just going over the [syllabus](#) (and a few other things), and then assigning background readings for our second meeting.**

- **09/14/11: No meeting today (Branden's in Munich).** I recommend using this week to bone-up on some background technicalities that will be presupposed in the seminar. For the most part, the seminar will presuppose only (1) sentential logic, (2) simple algebra, (3) some fundamentals of the theory of binary relations (specifically, relations that impose *orderings* on sets), and (4) some simple theories that are built-up from these basic ingredients (*e.g.*, comparative and numerical probability calculus). Here are some background materials on these topics.
 - [Grandy & Osherson, Sentential Logic for Psychologists](#)
 - [Roberts, Relations](#) [Chapter 1 of his *Measurement Theory*]
 - [Fishburn, The Axioms of Subjective Probability](#)
 - [Fitelson, Probability & Induction Lecture Notes](#) (first few weeks of lecture notes only)
 - [Fitelson, A Decision Procedure for Probability Calculus with Applications](#) (first few sections only)
 - [Halpern, Representing Uncertainty](#) [Chapter 2 of his *Reasoning About Uncertainty*]
- **09/21/11: Full Belief, Partial Belief, and the Lottery Paradox**
 - [Hawthorne & Bovens, The Preface, the Lottery, and the Logic of Belief](#)
 - [Douven & Williamson, Generalizing the Lottery Paradox](#)
 - [Chandler, The Lottery Paradox Generalized?](#)
 - [Leitgeb, Reducing Belief Simpliciter to Degrees of Belief](#)
- **09/28/11: Full Belief, Partial Belief, and the Preface Paradox**
 - [Christensen, Deductive Constraints: Problem Cases, Possible Solutions](#) [Chapter 3 of his *Putting Logic in its Place*]
 - [Hawthorne & Bovens, The Preface, the Lottery, and the Logic of Belief](#)
- **10/05/11: Whither Deductive Cogency?**
 - [Christensen, Arguments for Deductive Cogency](#) [Chapter 4 of his *Putting Logic in its Place*]
 - [Kolodny, How Does Coherence Matter?](#)
 - [Broome, Does rationality consist in responding correctly to reasons?](#)
- **10/12/11: Accuracy, Coherence, and Full Belief (Revisited)**
 - [Fitelson, Accuracy & Coherence I](#) (notes, TBA)
- **10/19/11: Accuracy, Coherence, and Comparative Confidence (Revisited)**
 - [Fitelson, Accuracy & Coherence II](#) (notes, TBA)
 - [Keynes, The Measurement of Probabilities](#) [Chapter 3 of his *A Treatise on Probability*]
 - [de Finetti, Foresight: Its logical laws, its subjective sources](#) [first two pages of Chapter 1]
 - [Fishburn, The Axioms of Subjective Probability](#)
 - [Fine, Excerpts from Chapters 2 and 3](#) of his *Theories of Probability*
- **10/26/11: Accuracy, Coherence, and Credence (Revisited)**
 - [Fitelson, Accuracy & Coherence III](#) (notes, TBA)
 - [Joyce, A Non-Pragmatic Vindication of Probabilism](#)
 - [Joyce, Accuracy and Coherence: Prospects for an Alethic Epistemology of Partial Belief](#)
 - [Easwaran & Fitelson, An "Evidentialist" Worry about Joyce's Argument for Probabilism](#)
- **11/02/11: Matt Kotzen**
 - [Pryor, Uncertainty and Undermining](#)
 - [Shafer, Dempster-Shafer Theory](#)
 - [Halpern, Representing Uncertainty](#) (section 2.4)
- **11/09/11: Jim Joyce**
 - Readings TBA
- **11/16/11: Darren Bradley**
 - Readings TBA
- **11/30/11: Michael Titelbaum**
 - Readings TBA
- **12/07/11: Kenny Easwaran**
 - Readings TBA