

**Previous Final Examinations  
Philosophy 102  
UC Davis**

**Spring, 2008**

1. What is the distinction between particularism and methodism?
2. Give an example of a “Gettier case” and explain what it is supposed to do.
3. In what sense is knowledge a normative notion?
4. What is foundationalism, and what is the chief motive for adopting it?
5. What is the “Moorean argument” against skepticism?
6. What aspect of skepticism is said to be explained by contextualism?
7. What is a “relevant alternative,” and what role has it been given in the analysis of knowledge?
8. What is coherentism, and what is the chief motive for adopting it?
9. What is the problem of the criterion?
10. What is fallibilism, and what is the chief motive for adopting it?

## Fall, 2008

1. How does the proposed necessary condition for knowledge, that if S knows that p, then S has come to believe that p *responsibly*, motivate internalism?
2. Why does there seem to be a dilemma between fallibilism and skepticism. (A dilemma is a choice between two alternatives, each one of which is undesirable.)
3. What is the principle of closure, applied to knowledge, and how does it present a problem for externalism?
4. Why might one hold that rational acceptance, rather than mere belief, is a necessary condition of knowledge?
5. How does contextualism explain the persuasiveness of skeptical arguments to non-skeptics?
6. In what way do some epistemologists think that 'knows' functions like an indexical term?
7. Give an internalist counterexample to externalism.
8. What is the "sensitivity" condition, and why might it be considered a suitable necessary condition for knowledge?
9. What is the "internal access" condition on knowledge, and why might an externalist reject it?
10. What is the basis for external world skepticism? What is the basic externalist approach to external world skepticism?

## Fall, 2009

1. What is the basic difference between foundationalism and coherentism?
2. How is contextualism helpful in defending fallibilism?
3. Name two options available to explain the phenomenon of contextual variation in the attribution of knowledge and ignorance.
4. What role does an attributor's attitude toward risk play in the attribution of knowledge and ignorance?
5. What is a "relevant alternative," and what role do relevant alternatives play in the analysis of knowledge?
6. Give a brief description of two different "externalist" accounts of warrant.
7. Give one objection to the claim that if S knows in circumstances c that p, then S believes in c that p.
8. Give one example of a difficulty in providing an adequate account of sufficient warrant.
9. Why did David Lewis claim that our knowledge vanishes when we engage in the practice of epistemology?
10. What is the primary reason for skepticism about the external world? Give one non-skeptical response to the skeptical position.

## Fall, 2010

1. How does the relevant alternatives approach to sufficient warrant violate a “closure” principle for knowledge?
2. How is “sufficient warrant” defined by Plantinga (and used in this course)?
3. Name two kinds of factors that might influence an attributor to raise or lower his or her standards for attributing knowledge.
4. How might ‘knows’ be understood as a vague term?
5. Given that there is variability in the attribution of knowledge, what problem does this pose for an invariantist account of sufficient warrant?
6. How does Williamson’s account of knowledge differ from what he calls the “traditional analysis” of knowledge?
7. What is the “sensitivity” condition that some epistemologists place on knowledge? Name a problem in epistemology that it solves.
8. What are two ways of understanding the “foundation” that perceptual experience is supposed to provide as a “support” for beliefs about physical objects?
9. Why might Gettier cases drive an internalist to concede that sufficient warrant requires the satisfaction of a condition of which the subject is not aware?
10. How might an internalist defend the claim that human beings have knowledge of the existence of physical objects?

## Fall, 2011

1. In what sense has it been claimed in this class that knowledge is a normative concept?
2. What is a major difference between internalist and externalist accounts of knowledge?
3. What is the difference between deductive, inductive and abductive principles for the transmission of warrant?
4. How does Cohen treat knowledge attributions as being analogous to indexical terms in natural language?
5. What might make an alternative in which a proposition  $p$  is false be *relevant* in the question of whether to attribute knowledge to an epistemic subject in a circumstance?
6. In what sense can internalist accounts of sufficient warrant be called deontological?
7. What are the alternatives to the foundationalist claim that there is direct evidential support and that all support terminates in direct evidential support?
8. How can a foundationalist incorporate coherence conditions into an account of sufficient warrant?
9. What is the Moorean strategy in response to skepticism about the external world?
10. Why might an externalist be less susceptible than an internalist to skepticism about the existence of an external world outside ones self?

## **Fall, 2012**

1. Why do the Gettier cases seem to require an externalist element in the analysis of knowledge?
2. How can closure under known implication serve as a basis for skepticism about the existence of the external world?
3. Why did David Lewis claim that knowledge is elusive: when you look for it, it vanishes?
4. Give an example of how practical interests might play a role in the attribution of knowledge or ignorance.
5. What is the “sensitivity condition” of knowledge as proposed by Nozick and endorsed for skeptical contexts of attribution by DeRose?
6. What is a “factive” mental state, and how did Williams relate factive mental states to knowledge?
7. In what way might fallibilism be considered an answer to skepticism?
8. What objection might be made against externalism as a solution to the problem of skepticism about the external world?
9. What is the nature of warrant and sufficient warrant, according to Plantinga?
10. What is the distinction Chisholm drew between “particularist” and “methodist” approaches to the question of the nature of knowledge?

## **Spring, 2014**

1. What is closure under detachment, and why does adoption of a closure principle threaten skepticism?
2. How did Plantinga define his notion of “sufficient warrant?”
3. How did Lewis maintain that the standard of knowledge that p is infallibility, while conceding that we have knowledge in cases where we cannot rule out all the possibilities in which p is false?
4. What is the “sensitivity” condition on knowledge that some have proposed?
5. What difference have philosophers drawn between belief and acceptance?
6. How might whether epistemic attribution is made to the self or to another subject favor internalism or externalism?
7. What reasons might one give to reject the condition that if S knows that p, then S's belief that p is caused in the appropriate way by p?
8. How might it be possible to combine foundationalist and coherentist accounts of warrant?
9. What is one argument for the warrant of the belief in the existence of an external world?
10. How might a contextualist avoid skepticism with regard to the external world?

## Spring, 2015

1. What problem is there in deciding whether the starting-point of epistemology should be a pre-determined set of epistemic norms or a pre-determined set of cases of knowledge?
2. What is one objection to doing epistemology “from the armchair?”
3. How might someone’s tolerance of risk play a role in their attributions of knowledge or ignorance?
4. What role do “relevant alternatives” play in some accounts of warrant?
5. How does Lewis attempt to require that knowledge be infallible, in the face of skeptical hypotheses that cannot be ruled out?
6. What is it that distinguishes an “internalist” from an “externalist” with respect to knowledge?
7. What is the difference between “doxastic” and “non-doxastic” accounts of warrant?
8. Why might one favor a “virtue” account of warrant over a “reliabilist” account?
9. How did Moore appeal to “common sense” in order to refute external-world skepticism?
10. How might explanation be invoked to overcome external-world skepticism?