## Empirical Skepticism

1.	What is Empirical Skepticism?
2.	What is the external world?
3.	Which of these options are good examples of things in the external world?  God chairs trees people colors and sounds
4.	Describe Descartes's Dreaming case.
5.	Describe Putnam's Brain in a Vat (BIV) case.
6.	What are some relevant differences between the Dreaming and BIV cases?
7.	How does the possibility of someone be dreaming of be a BIV undermine knowledge about the external world, according to Empirical Skepticism? How must be knowledge understood for this argument to work? Is that how we <i>ordinarily</i> think about knowledge? Use examples to answer these questions.

8. Consider the following objection: "Empirical Skepticism is false because something outside the mind must be the cause of our perceptual experiences". Is this a good objection? Why?

9. Consider the following objection: "Empirical Skepticism is false because dreams are not as vivid as the experiences I have right now". Is this a good objection? Why?

True or false?

10. \_\_\_\_ Empirical Skepticism denies that there is an external world.

11. \_\_\_\_ Optical illusions support Empirical Skepticism.

12. \_\_\_\_ BIV requires that there is an external world; therefore Empirical Skepticism is false.

13. \_\_\_\_ Given the laws of physics, the Dreaming and BIV cases are impossible; therefore Empirical Skepticism is false.

Possible objections to Empirical Skepticism:

a) Inductive reasoning

b) Single Premise Closure is false

c) Dreaming and BIV cases are not possible

d) Burden of the proof

Composing philosophy papers can be a big challenge. Understanding the key questions and developing a clear, logical response are essential to all argumentative essays, including those that describe and analyze philosophical arguments. Check these websites for tips on how to write a good philosophy paper:

https://prezi.com/z4h1\_fwilbxj/a-sample-philosophy-paper/http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html.

## K = JTB

1.	Is it possible to know a false proposition?
2.	Did the ancients know that the Earth is flat?
3.	Can you give an example of a proposition that is true but not known?
4.	Is it possible to believe something false?
5.	Did the ancients believe that the Earth is flat?
6.	Can you give an example of a proposition that true but not believed?
7.	William flips a coin, and confidently believes—on no particular basis—that it will land tails. The coin does land tails. Did William $know$ that the coin would land tails? Why?
8.	What is the traditional analysis of knowledge?

9. Describe a Gettier case against the traditional analysis of knowledge. How does it undermine the traditional analysis of knowledge?

- 10. If you want to keep the traditional analysis of knowledge, how would reply to the objection in question 9?
- 11. If you don't want to keep the traditional analysis of knowledge, how would you reply to the objection in question 9?
- 12. Suppose Walter comes home after work to find out that his house has burned down. He says: "I don't believe it". Critics of the belief condition argue that Walter knows that his house has burned down (he sees that it has), but, as his words indicate, he does not believe it. Do you think this is the correct assessment of the case? Why?
- 13. Colin Radford (1966) described the following case: Suppose Albert is quizzed on English history. One of the questions is: "When did Queen Elizabeth die?" Albert doesn't think he knows, but answers the question correctly. Moreover, he gives correct answers to many other questions to which he didn't think he knew the answer. Let us focus on Albert's answer to the question about Elizabeth:
  - (E) Elizabeth died in 1603.

Radford makes the following two claims about this example:

- (1) Albert does not believe (E).
- (2) Albert knows (E).
- (a) In support of (1), Radford emphasizes that Albert thinks he doesn't know the answer to the question. He doesn't trust his answer because he takes it to be a mere guess. How could someone object to Radford's reasoning?

(b) In support of (2), Radford argues that Albert's answer is not at all just a lucky guess. The fact that he answers most of the questions correctly indicates that he has actually learned, and never forgotten, such historical facts. How could someone object to Radford's reasoning?

(c) If (1) and (2) to be true, how does the case undermine the traditional analysis of knowledge?

True or false?

- 14. \_\_\_\_ If a proposition is true, then it's known.
- 15. \_\_\_\_ If a proposition is known, then it's true.
- 16. \_\_\_\_ If a proposition is true, then it's believed.
- 17. \_\_\_\_ If a proposition is believed, then it's true.
- 18. \_\_\_\_ If a person is justified in believing a proposition, then she knows it.
- 19. \_\_\_\_ If a person knows a proposition, then she is justified in believing it.
- 20. \_\_\_\_ If a person is justified in believing a proposition, then the proposition is true.

The answer to most of the questions on this handout and a more in depth discussion on the subject can be found here: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis.

## Topics:

- undermining vs. rebutting
- foundationalism vs. coherentism vs. infinitism vs. skepticism vs. quietism
- 1. What is undermining evidence? 2. What is rebutting evidence? 3. Undermining or rebutting evidence? (a) Evidence that Tom's mother is a pathological liar: (b) Testimony from Tom's mother: (c) Letters from Donald sitting on your desk in front of you: (d) News broadcast that the president's security guard was killed: 4. What's the Pyrrhonian Problematic (aka Agrippa's Trilemma)? 5. State the argument based on the Pyrrhonian Problematic in the standard form. 6. What's the difference between the Pyrrhonian skepticism and Stroud's skepticism? 7. What is foundationalism and how does it reply to the argument as stated in question 5?

8. If basic beliefs are justified but not by other beliefs, then how are they justified? What else besides beliefs is there that can justify beliefs, according to foundationalism?

9. What is coherentism and how does it reply to the argument as stated in question 5?

10. What is infinitism and how does it reply to the argument as stated in question 5?

11. What is quietism and how does it reply to the argument as stated in question 5?

12. Which kind of skepticism do we get from accepting the argument as stated in question 5?

13. What is the myth of the given as presented by Chisholm?

More information on the topic of undermining vs. rebutting evidence can be found here:

https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/evidence/#EviWhiJusBel

More information on the Pyrrhonian Problematic can be found here:

http://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/
encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/pyrrhonian-problematic