PHIL0358: RATIONALITY & COGNITION  
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE  
Spring 2016  
Twilight 301  
Tuesdays and Thursdays,  
Section A: 9:30-10:45PM  
Section B: 11:00-12:15PM

Kareem Khalifa, PhD  
Email: kkhalifa@middlebury.edu (far more reliable than telephone)  
Course Website: http://s16.middlebury.edu/PHIL0358A/  
(all lecture notes are posted here)  
Instructor Website: http://khalifa.org  
Office Hours: Mondays, 4-5 PM, Thursdays, 3-5 PM,  
and by appointment  
Course Blog: http://sites.middlebury.edu/rateog/

Course Description: Philosophers (and others) study how we ought to reason. By contrast,  
psychologists (and others) study how we actually do reason. Often, their findings conflict. How  
should these conflicts be reconciled? Potential topics include different kinds of reasoning  
(deductive, probabilistic, explanatory, analogical, practical, etc.), naturalized epistemology,  
theories of justification, and heuristics and biases. Prerequisites: either PHIL0180 or PSYC0105.

Course objectives:
(1) To educate you about the different epistemological and psychological positions, as well as the  
strengths and weaknesses of these positions.
(2) To cultivate your critical thinking skills. By critical thinking skills, I include the abilities to  
recognize, analyze, and criticize arguments in the contexts of reading, writing, thinking, and  
discussion. I expect you to do this not only with others’ positions but, more importantly, with  
your own positions.
(3) To encourage you to be active learners. By an active learner I mean a person who has the  
curiosity, confidence, and passion to take the initiative to seek information that will make the  
recognition, analysis, and criticism of arguments—once again, both others’ and your own—more  
poignant, penetrating, and insightful.
(4) To develop your ability to write an analytical essay, i.e. an essay in which you come to a  
conclusion through careful evaluations of the leading arguments on both sides of an issue.

Evaluation:
We will meet our course objectives through essays, in-class presentations, and discussion. Here is the  
breakdown of their relative weights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Essays:</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Discussion Leading:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Summary Paper:</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Blogging Questions:</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Presentation:</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. Participation:</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Alphabetic grades will then be assigned according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87.5-89.4</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.5-79.4</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.5-69.4</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-59.4</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no rounding up or down of final grades. Rounding occurs only for the final grade, i.e., individual assignments, etc. are not rounded.

I. Essays

The course has five core questions: (1) Should the philosophical study of knowledge (epistemology) become a branch of psychology? (2) What is the structure of our reasoning? (3) Can we determine what is rational by reflection alone? (4) Are there universal norms of rationality? (5) What is rationality? You can write essays on no more than two of these questions. Moreover, the cumulative word-count of your essays must be at least 2500 words. (This does not include your summary paper, discussed in Section II below.)

You have three different ways in which you can do this:

- **Option A**: Write a standard-length (1250-1500-word) paper on Topics (1), (2), or (3) before Spring Break, and another standard-length paper on Topics (4) or (5) during Finals Week. Each paper will constitute 25% of your final grade.

- **Option B**: Write a standard-length paper on Topics (1), (2), or (3) before Spring Break, and write an expanded (2500-3000-word) version of that paper due during Finals Week. The first, standard length paper will constitute 15% of your final grade; the expanded paper, 35%.

- **Option C (not recommended)**: Write a single, 2500-3000-word essay on Topics (4) or (5) due during Finals Week. This paper will constitute 50% of your final grade.

For all expanded papers, you are expected to do additional research, including a minimum of two extra readings beyond those listed on the syllabus. These extra sources must be articles from peer-reviewed journals or chapters from academic books. I will provide more specific prompts closer to the respective deadlines.

**General expectations for writing**

1. **Formatting**: All writing assignments should be typed, double-spaced, standard margins, and in Times New Roman font. You will automatically lose a third of a grade on any assignment that does not follow these guidelines. For citations, use Chicago Author-Date, which can be found here:

   [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/16/ch15/ch15_toc.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/16/ch15/ch15_toc.html)

2. **Form**: Spelling, grammar, and overall clarity are determinants of your grade. If I can’t understand what you’re saying, then I can’t assess the content of your claims. Writing clearly demonstrates greater understanding of the text. You will also notice that writing assignments are generally rather brief in page requirements. This means you must be very efficient in your writing if you want to make an interesting point. Avoid being flowery—cut to the chase.

3. **Timeliness**: All assignments should be submitted during the class on which they are due. Any assignment submitted late (i.e. after class) receives an automatic 10 percentage-point penalty. It will be penalized 3 percentage points for every subsequent day it is late. Hence, anyone submitting an assignment after class but on the same day in which it is due can earn no more

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1 This is about 5-6 double-spaced pages using Times New Roman font.

2 I strongly recommend that you acquire one of the several reference management programs (EndNote, RefWorks, Zotero, etc.) Zotero is freeware; RefWorks is free to all Middlebury users. All of the programs are relatively easy to use, and any one of them minimizes your chances of violating the Honor Code.
than 90% of the total points; on the next day, 87%; on the next, 84%; etc. There are exceptions
to this rule. See my policy on Dean’s Excuses below.

4. **Objections to grades:** If you object to a grade you receive, send me an email with passages in your
   paper where you think I was being unfair. Provide reasons why my remarks for this passage were
   not fair. The email should also include times when you can meet over a one-week period. I will
   not discuss grades without reading an email first. This process should not be adversarial; rather,
   it is an extended application of your critical thinking skills. These policies are intended to
   facilitate clarity and communication, as well as to guarantee that I respond as thoughtfully as I
   can to your queries and concerns.

5. **Content:** All writing assignments must demonstrate sufficient understanding of the texts, including
   using only those parts of the text relevant to establishing your thesis. As writing good
   philosophical papers isn’t the easiest thing to do, you’re always welcome to discuss your writing
   with me during office hours. Also visit my website for additional guides:
   [http://community.middlebury.edu/~kkhalifa/teaching/guides/](http://community.middlebury.edu/~kkhalifa/teaching/guides/)
   I also strongly recommend reading the following:
   Mogck, B. 2008. *Writing to reason: a companion for philosophy students and instructors.* Malden:
   Blackwell Publications.
   This is an excellent guide for learning how to write good philosophy papers, and will take you an
   evening to read. If there is sufficient interest, I will run an extra session on discussing this book.

II. **Discussion Leading**

This is a 300-level philosophy course. Consequently, active, student-led discussion is expected. I have
found the following format works well for achieving this goal: Each student, hereon called a *presenter,*
will be responsible for leading at least one class (Some of you will do this as teams of two). On these
days, there are 3 distinct stages:

*Stage 1: Summary papers:* Each presenter should write a 1000-1500 word paper. See below for details.

*Stage 2: Pre-class questions for presenters:* Approximately five students who are NOT PRESENTING will
be “ON CALL.” Being on call means having to post a question on the course blog in response to the
Summary Paper and readings. See details below.

*Stage 3: Discussion:* Each class will begin with the presenter providing a brief (5-minute) synopsis of
the reading. (Everybody will have already read the primary material and the summary paper.) The
presentation must conclude with a summary of the main questions that people asked (presenters
should group questions according to similar concerns). Students who are neither presenters nor on-call
are expected to be the first people to answer these questions. This way, everybody has an opportunity
to be involved in each discussion in each class.

Presenters and on-call members who submit everything on time and exhibit an honest effort get at
least a 92.5 on these assignments. Those who do exceptional work can earn up to 100. Those who
fail to be timely or who fail to exhibit of an honest effort (as judged by me) will earn lower grades.

A. **Summary Paper**

As noted above (Stage 1), presenters must write a paper in which:

1) The presenter summarizes the texts to be discussed for the class.

2) The presenter critically engages the texts he/she summarizes so as to stimulate discussion by,
   e.g., raising potential objections, exploring potential answers to those objections, etc.

This paper should be posted to the blog no later than **11:59pm** on two days BEFORE the
presentations (i.e. either Sunday or Tuesday, depending on when you’re presenting). The blog address
is:

[http://sites.middlebury.edu/ratcog/](http://sites.middlebury.edu/ratcog/)
Please enter this as a new post. Since there are two sections of this course, this will be a cooperative project with your counterpart in the other section. For example, suppose that Jack is in Section A and Jill is in Section B. Both are to present Churchland and Almeder's essays in Week 2. Then Jack and Jill will co-author a single summary paper of these readings and post to the blog. In some cases, this will involve up to four people collaborating. You are strongly encouraged to divide your labor efficiently, so that all of the material can be covered. I will provide the first and last name of each presenter on the course website.

B. On-Call Responsibilities

For any given class, approximately 4-5 students who are not presenting will be on-call. Possible questions might be about:

1) Passages (in either the text or the presenter's paper) that were not clear to you. Cite page numbers and use direct quotations.
2) Passages (in either the text or the presenter's paper) that you strongly disagree with. Cite page numbers and use direct quotations.
3) For those of you who post a bit later than your peers, you’re encouraged to use other on-call group members’ questions and ideas as the basis of your own question. If you do so, try to tie it back to the readings.

You should post these questions to our blog: http://sites.middlebury.edu/ratcog/

These should posted as replies to the summary paper. You should post these questions by 2pm on the day before the presentation (so either Monday or Wednesday, depending on when you’re on call.) This blog is not publicly accessible (i.e. people can’t find it if they Google), so don’t be shy about asking a question that you think is “dumb.” (Chances are, it’s not.)

EVERY student has the following responsibilities for EVERY class:

1) To read EVERY question on the blog.
2) To think about potential responses to 3-4 questions, and be willing to share your ideas in class.

Remember, those who are neither presenting nor on-call are expected to be the first people to propose answers to these questions.

C. Discussion

On the day of the class in which you are scheduled to present, you will lead discussion. The major questions we will answer are those asked by the On-Call group. Wherever possible, students who are neither presenting nor on call should make the first attempt to answer these questions. (This way, everyone’s involved.) Having said this, it’s sometimes easier to start conversations by asking on-call members to motivate/clarify their questions. Presenters should keep the following in mind:

1. All presenters must use PowerPoint, Beamer, or Keynote.
2. Slideshows must be less than 10 slides long.
3. The presenter should begin by situating the reading within the broader themes of the course, especially with respect to earlier readings.
4. The chief criterion by which presenters will be assessed is how well they stimulate discussion. (This is not as easy as it looks!) Consider how different questions on the blog hang together; find interesting points of disagreement.

The slideshow should not be overflowing with information, yet must be sufficiently clear that other members of the class find the ideas easy to follow. Consequently, presenters must be especially reflective about how the accompanying commentary will supplement what the slides say. You are encouraged to look for additional materials about how to use PowerPoint effectively in academic presentations.

III. Participation
This is a general evaluation of the amount of effort and astuteness you have demonstrated to me in the course. Considerations that are relevant include promptness, attendance, quantity and quality of both contributions and questions in class sessions, responsiveness to other people’s comments in class, discussions outside of class, and appropriate class behavior. This grade reflects your performance in all of those areas of the course other than the graded, written assignments.

If you simply attend all of the required courses, you will receive a 75 (C) on your participation grade. Here are some ways of improving that grade:

- **Asking questions about the material.** These questions can be requests for clarification or challenges to the author’s claims.
- **Answering your peers’ questions.** Some of you will find this material easier than others. For those of you who find this easy, don’t be passive, don’t get bored, etc. Rather, share your knowledge, especially when you have an answer to someone else’s questions.
- **Don’t be shy during discussion sections and office hours.** Some of you feel more comfortable in group setting than others. For those who would rather not speak in front of your peers, feel free to swing by office hours or to use email to be more open with your thoughts and concerns.

IV. **General expectations of student behavior**

Participation also includes behaving like an adult. This includes exhibiting the virtues of civility, accountability, responsibility—particularly as these virtues apply to your education. For most of you, this is second nature. However, for the few of you who have not yet shed your adolescent tendencies, please note that failure to behave like an adult will be reflected in your participation grade. This includes taking the required initiative and responsibility of your workload in the event that you need a Dean’s Excuse (see below).

V. **Email etiquette/decorum**

Different professors have different expectations about how they are addressed, and especially how they are addressed in email correspondences. I consider my norms to be “semiformal,” i.e. I expect some form of salutation with some acknowledgment that I’m a professor, but within those constraints, you can be fairly colloquial. For instance, the following are all perfectly good ways to start an email: “Dear Professor Khalifa,” “Hey Prof,” “Hi Dr. K,” “Howdy Most Esteemed Educator,” etc. What’s not acceptable is an email either lacking a salutation or failing to acknowledge the fact that I’m a professor. This reads as if I’m a waiter taking your order, which is not a good professor-student dynamic. Examples of bad email introductions include diving into your email without addressing me at all, “Hi,” “Hey,” “Hello,” “Hello Kareem,” “Khalifa,” “Hey Khalifa,” etc. Just so you know, I don’t reply to emails if they don’t follow these very basic rules of decorum. Similar rules apply in face-to-face interactions.

Also, a general rule: most professors (including myself) don’t like to answer emails about logistical issues (how something will be graded, how to access a file, when something is due, etc.) in which the student could have read the syllabus, searched the internet, or asked a classmate in roughly the same amount of time it would take them to write and wait for a reply to an email. This is not a good use of your time (since you often could get the answer to your question more quickly with a little more effort) and it’s definitely not a good use of my time. If I do not reply to an email within 24 hours, assume that you’re guilty of this offense, and don’t expect a reply from me.

All in all, I prefer face-to-face interactions, where we’re talking about the content of the course. So, wherever possible, you should try to meet under these conditions.
VI. Dean’s Excuses

There are exceptions to certain deadlines (e.g., illness, family emergency); however they require a Dean’s Excuse. The Dean’s Excuse serves the following functions in my course:

- As official documentation to me that your reasons for handing in a tardy assignment are legitimate;
- A mandate for you to initiate a conversation with me about how you will make up any assignments that you’ve missed.
- A mandate for you to initiate this conversation as soon as possible.
  - In general, I prefer that you speak with me prior to my receiving a Dean’s excuse.
  - “As soon as possible” should be read “within a week in which I receive the Dean’s Excuse,” circumstances permitting. If you can attend class, then your circumstances permit you to speak with me about any work you need to make up.

A Dean’s Excuse does NOT serve the following functions in my course:

- A permission slip for you to hand in your assignment at your earliest convenience.
- A mandate for me to seek you out in order to initiate a conversation with you about how you will make up any assignments that you’ve missed.
- Failure to respect these guidelines will result in a reduction of your participation grade AND the relevant assignments.

VII. Travel

I realize that, in many cases, you can save a lot of money by leaving a few days earlier. In these cases, if you give me at least two weeks notice, I will try my best to accommodate you; though the earlier you notify me of this, the better. Otherwise, it’s your problem, not mine.

VIII. ADA Statement

Middlebury College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with documented disabilities. If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, please contact Jodi Litchfield in the Office of Student Accessibility Services. Please do so at the beginning of the semester.

IX. Honor code

You are expected to abide by all the rules of Middlebury College’s honor code. Failure to do so will lead to reporting you to the proper university authorities.

X. Texts

All readings will either be hyperlinked or in the HANDOUTS folder of the course server (middfiles). If they are hyperlinked, you will need to be connected to the Middlebury network in order to have permission to download them.


XI. Schedule of readings and assignments:

The following is a tentative schedule of readings.

PRESENTERS are responsible for summarizing the readings in a blog entry by Sunday (if presenting on Tuesday) or Tuesday (if presenting on a Thursday).

Each member of an assigned ON-CALL GROUP is responsible for posing questions to the blog by Monday (for a presentation scheduled for Tuesday) or Wednesday (for a presentation scheduled on a Thursday.)
EVERYONE is responsible for reading the blog entry and coming up with answers to the group’s questions before class, and participating in the discussion during class. An asterisk * below indicates that two students in a section may co-present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE/TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>ON-CALL GROUP</th>
<th>PRESENTER (A Section)</th>
<th>PRESENTER (B Section)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Should epistemology be naturalized?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>ON-CALL GROUP</th>
<th>PRESENTER (A Section)</th>
<th>PRESENTER (B Section)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Pollock and Cruz, Ch. 1: “Problems of Knowledge”</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>KK</td>
<td>KK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What is the structure of our reasoning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>ON-CALL GROUP</th>
<th>PRESENTER (A Section)</th>
<th>PRESENTER (B Section)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>Pollock and Cruz, Ch. 2: “Foundations Theories”</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>KK</td>
<td>KK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Pylyshyn, continued: 366-423</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>Pollock and Cruz, Ch.3: “Coherence Theories”</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>KK</td>
<td>KK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Pages</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>March 15</td>
<td>Thagard, continued: 468-502.</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>Pollock and Cruz, Ch.4: &quot;Externalism&quot;</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>KK</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>Todd and Gigerenzer, continued: 742-777.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>PAPER #1 Due in DROPBOX by 11:59PM</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Pollock and Cruz, Ch.4, “Epistemic Norms”</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>KK</td>
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<td>April 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>KK</td>
<td>KK</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Stanovich and West, continued: pp. 680-717</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Pollock and Cruz, Ch. 5, “Epistemology and Rationality”</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>KK</td>
<td>KK</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. Can we determine what is rational from reflection alone?

4. Are there universal norms of rationality?

5. What is rationality?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>Oaksford and Chater, continued:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85-115.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Elqayam, Shira, and Jonathan St. B. T. Evans. 2011.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Subtracting 'ought' from 'is': Descriptivism versus normativism in the study of human thinking.&quot; Behavioral and Brain Sciences 34: 233-248.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Elqayam and Evans, continued:</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>249-284.</td>
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<td>May 5</td>
<td>Mercier, Hugo and Dan Sperber.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Mercier and Sperber, continued:</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>75-111.</td>
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<td>May 12</td>
<td>Pollock and Cruz, Ch. 6, “Direct Realism”</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 16</td>
<td>Paper 2 due in DROPBOX by 11:59PM</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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