This course examines a number of doctrines and debates concerning the nature and value of truth—doctrines and debates that exist at the intersection of ethics, theory of knowledge, and philosophy of language. What’s valuable, in private life and in public, about true beliefs? What’s bad about false ones? We will also consider questions about the nature and value of certain virtues related to truth and truth-telling—accuracy, sincerity, authenticity, and candor.

**Requirements**

**Lectures**

Regular attendance is expected, and participation is encouraged; these account for 10% of students’ final grades. Students should exercise common courtesy to their instructors and fellow classmates by avoiding the use of distracting applications during lecture, including email, web browsing, chat programs, etc.
Short essay

A short essay (roughly 1250-1500 words in length) will be assigned mid-session. The essay each will account for 45% of students’ final grades. I’ll hand out possible essay topics in advance.

Final exam

Students will write a take-home final exam during the end-quarter exam period. The exam will account for 45% of each student’s final grade.

Late Assignments

Late writing assignments will be penalized one third of one letter grade (i.e., A- becomes B+) every 24 hours, starting ten minutes after the deadline. Exceptions to the lateness policy will be made only in cases I deem exceptional.

Accessible Education Information

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations should submit their request for accommodations to the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) as soon as possible, as it may take up to two weeks for the CAE to review the request. If you are already registered with the CAE, you can request a letter of accommodation on the Student Portal, otherwise please submit your request via the CAE website. Please note that the CAE does not send letters to instructors—you must request that I view the letter in the online Faculty Portal. Once you have requested your accommodations via the Student Portal, please notify me immediately so I can view your letter.

For more information, please visit the CAE website (www.cae.ucla.edu), visit the CAE at A255 Murphy Hall, or contact them by phone at (310) 825-1501.

Texts

Required Books


Schedule of Topics

N.B. *The schedule of readings is very likely to change by summer.*

1. Kinds of deceptiveness

2. The ethics of belief


3. The nature of truth


4. Genealogy of truth and truthfulness

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, excerpts from Beyond Good and Evil, secs. 1-9.
3. Williams, Truth and Truthfulness, chap. 2.

5. Truth and the “state of nature”

3. Williams, chap. 3.

6. Truth, assertion, and belief

2. Williams, chap. 4.

7. Sincerity

1. Christine Korsgaard, “Two Arguments against Lying”, from Creating the Kingdom of Ends.
2. Williams, chap. 5.

8. Accuracy

2. Williams, chap. 6.

9. Authenticity & Candor

2. Diderot, “Rameau’s Nephew”
3. Williams, chap. 8

10. Public openness

2. Williams, chap. 9