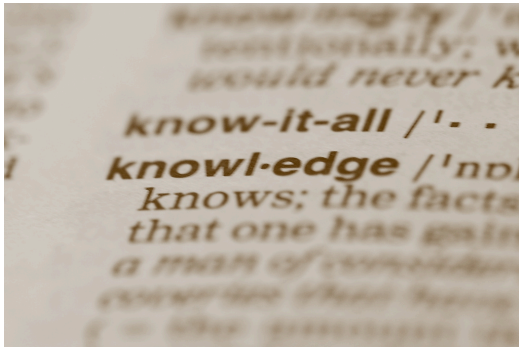


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What Is Knowledge?



Course Information

Mon-Fri 9 am – 12 pm, Academic 305

NOTE: Many Cornerstone activities happen outside of class time – your attendance is always mandatory (**See Schedule**)

Website: moodle.questu.ca

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+ **Main Objectives:**

- Understand and articulate answers to the question "What Is Knowledge?" from a variety of intellectual perspectives.
- Actively participate in and value question-driven inquiry
- Establish intellectual skills and practices needed to thrive at university:
 - Communicating clearly in oral and written forms
 - Collaborating and receiving effective peer feedback
 - Responding positively to challenges
 - Reading complex texts and arguments
 - Developing sophisticated study skills
- Develop a sense of place at Quest & in our surroundings

Welcome to Quest University!

Cornerstone serves as a microcosm of your entire education at Quest. Part of the goal of the course is to acclimatize you to Quest, and to taking classes on the block system. This course will also introduce you, in a whirlwind fashion, to the notion of an interdisciplinary liberal arts education. In Cornerstone, we will be exploring ideas from the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural and theoretical sciences. While probably no other course you take at Quest will be quite as interdisciplinary as this one, your education as a whole here will draw from all of those disciplines.

The purpose of this course is to explore the unexamined principles and assumptions that underpin our views on science and culture. When we classify something as knowledge, we are implicitly appealing to a system of values: what is known is worthwhile, if not for its own sake, at least for its utility. For example, we believe that astronomy expands what we know, but astrology does not. But why? To respond that the former is science while the latter is nonsense merely reiterates our view that they are knowledge and superstition respectively. The way to make progress on the question of knowledge is to look at 3 questions:

- (1) What assumptions do we have about knowledge?
- (2) What is scientific and mathematical knowledge?
- (3) What is knowledge itself?

Course Texts

The following texts are included in the printed course pack, available at the University Bookstore. Paper copies of each reading are **required**; purchasing the course pack is the most time and cost efficient way to obtain these readings.

- *Thick Description*: Geertz, Clifford (1973). *Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture*. In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books (3-30).
- *Nacirema*: Miner, Horace (1956). Body Ritual among the Nacirema, *American Anthropologist*, 58, 503-507.
- *This Earth*: Tsing, A.L. (2004). This Earth; this Island Borneo. In *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (pp. 155-170). Princeton: Princeton UP.
- *On Writing Fieldnotes*: Wolfinger, Nicholas H. (2002). On writing fieldnotes: collection strategies and background expectancies. In *Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- *Medical Metaphors*: Martin, Emily (1990). Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause. In *The woman in the body: A cultural analysis of reproduction*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- *The Egg and the Sperm*: Martin, Emily. (1991). The Egg and the Sperm: How science has constructed a romance based on stereotypical male-female roles. *Signs*, 16 (3), 485-501.
- *Science and Pseudoscience*: Popper, Karl (1978). Science, Pseudo-Science, and Falsifiability. In *Conjectures and Refutations*. London: Kegan Paul (33-39).
- *Music of the Primes*: Du Sautoy, Marcus (2003). The Atoms of Arithmetic. In *The Music of the Primes*. New York: HarperCollins.
- *Meno*: Plato (1980). *Meno*. Trans. G. M. Grube. Hackett Publishing Company (Original work ca. 400 BC).
- *Justified True Belief*: Gettier, Edmund (1966). Is Knowledge Justified True Belief?, *Analysis*, 23, 121-123.

The following novel is also available at the University bookstore.

- *Chronicle*: García Márquez, Gabriel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. Trans. Gregor Rabassa. New York: Knopf, 1983.

The following readings will be available on the course website.

- *Stewart*: Stewart, Ian (2007). Hasn't it all been done? In *Letters to a Young Mathematician*. New York: Basic Books.
- *Stereotype Threat*: Good, C., Aronson, J., and Inzlicht, M (2003). Improving adolescents' standardized test performance: An intervention to reduce the effects of stereotype threat. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 24(6), 645-662.

Responsibilities

Our role is to provide the framework in which our conversation can happen. This syllabus is part of that framing. As an additional component of that framing, we will facilitate our class discussions, and will act as a guide to the course materials when necessary. We will also provide frequent feedback on your performance in the course.

Your responsibility is to be prepared to engage in serious discussion of the materials. Your participation represents a significant part of the course, not just as a percentage of your grade but, more importantly, in the impact that it has on your learning, our teaching, and the environment in which we all work. Put simply: if you don't do the work, we (as a group) *will not work*.

You are expected to come ready to contribute to discussion. This means that you have read the assigned material; it also suggests that you have formulated questions about the material and reflected on it ahead of time. The presence of written notes and the ability to refer quickly to specific places in the text are excellent indications of conscientious preparation on your part. Participation includes active and voluntary involvement in class discussions and cooperation in all group activities. While we hope we all will have a chance to speak in each and every class, we expect, as a bare minimum, active interest in course discussions.

Evaluation: Cornerstone is a pass/no-pass course. To pass the course, you must pass each main assignment, attend all course activities (see calendar), participate in each class, and complete homework (including readings). To pass each assignment, you must make an honest, serious effort on that assignment, and your work must be of passable quality. If you do not complete all the assignments or you submit them late, you will not pass the course.

Let's not go there.

At the end of Cornerstone, you will receive a narrative evaluation of your overall performance, which will be useful in charting your path through the Foundation program.

+ Assignments:

1. Ethnography group essay
2. Letter to self
3. Chronicle essay
4. Spreadsheet assignment
5. Field research poster
6. Creative presentation

Note that we begin each class at 9:00 AM sharp – all assignments must be submitted by this time, with the exception of the Field Research Report. You will submit each assignment on Moodle, as a Microsoft Word .doc, a Rich Text Format (rtf) file, or an Adobe Acrobat document (pdf). Documents must be double-spaced in 12-point font with 1” margins.

Course Policies

Attendance of all activities is mandatory. For out-of-class events, you are responsible to ensure we have noted your presence. If you miss more than two activities, **you will not pass** the course. If you must miss a class or activity, notify us by email *in advance*. You will need to **make up** for any absences by writing a two-page essay on the topic of the day, to be handed in at the beginning of next class.

Tardiness will result in you being subject to random punishment (usually involving public shaming) – the same applies if your **electronic devices** go off during class.

Participation is key for success in Cornerstone. Students who participate well are prepared for class, and offer clear, thoughtful ideas or questions on the texts we are studying. The goal of an excellent student is never to demonstrate brilliance at the expense of the class; rather, it is to involve fellow students in our discussions, and to respect viewpoints that differ from her/his own.

Late assignments will not be accepted. Any requests for extensions must be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the due date for the assignment.

Plagiarism and other violations of the Honour Code will be vigorously dealt with. Ensure that you are familiar with the Honour Principle, which applies to all coursework, including class discussion and participation. Also, listen attentively to the plagiarism presentation during the Library Workshop.

You will usually be asked to put away all **computers, cellphones, and tablets** during class. Therefore, you should come to class with pens and paper, and hard copies of readings and notes. If you will require technology for a particular class, we will try to let you know ahead of time.

We are happy to discuss **academic accommodations** with students who have an IEP. Please bring this to one of us during the first two days of class, and we will discuss what we can do to maximize your learning.

This course outline is subject to change. We shall announce any changes in class; if you are not present, you are responsible for finding out what we announced.



Day	Activities	Readings and Assignments
Monday August 31	In Class (9-12): Introduction Goals for Block Making maps: activity and discussion Introduction to Letter to Self Introduction to Ethnography Assignment	Read <i>This Earth</i> Read <i>On Writing Fieldnotes</i> Do participant observation (30 minutes) Write field notes (bring 4 copies to class) Read <i>Thick Description</i> Work on Letter to Self Read syllabus
Tuesday, Sept. 1 at 9 am: Ethnography 1: Field Notes Due (in class)		
Tuesday September 1	In Class (9-12): Discussion of <i>Thick Description, This Earth, On Writing Fieldnotes</i> Discussion of <i>Nacirema</i>	Complete reading <i>Chronicle</i> Work on Ethnography Group Essay Work on Letter to Self
Wednesday September 2	In Class (9-12): Discussion of <i>Chronicle</i> Evening Talk (7 pm, MPR): Dr. Ahalya Satkunaratnam	Review <i>Chronicle</i> Work on Ethnography Group Essay Complete Letter to Self
Thursday, Sept. 3 at 9 am: Letter to Self Due (in class)		
Thursday September 3	In Class (9-12): Discussion of <i>Chronicle</i> , cont'd Introduction to Essay Assignment Preparation for Adventure Pursuits Information I Workshop (1-2:30 pm, Rm 305)	<i>Chronicle</i> Essay: Complete thesis and outline of argument Work on Ethnography Group Essay
Friday September 4	Adventure Pursuits	<i>Chronicle</i> Essay: Complete Detailed Outline Complete Ethnography Group Essay
Saturday & Sunday	Saturday: Adventure Pursuits	Work on <i>Chronicle</i> Essay Visit Learning Commons Read <i>Medical Metaphors</i> Read <i>The Egg and the Sperm</i>
Monday September 7	No Regular Class Information II Workshop (1-2:30 pm, Rm 305) Anti-Oppression Workshop (4:15-5:30, Rm 305)	Review readings from weekend Complete draft of <i>Chronicle</i> essay
Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 9 am: Draft of Chronicle Essay Due (on Moodle) Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 9 am: Ethnography 2 : Group Essay Due (on Moodle)		

Day	Activities	Readings and Assignments
Tuesday September 8	In Class (9-12): Discussion of <i>Medical Metaphors</i> Introduction to Growth Mindset Essay Workshop (1-2:30, Room 305): Bring three printed copies of essay draft	Read <i>Stereotype Threat</i> article Revise <i>Chronicle</i> essay based on workshop feedback
Wednesday September 9	In Class (9-12): Discussion of scientific article Exploring Math on the arXiv Introduce Spreadsheets Assignment Library Workshop (1-2:30, Library) Evening Talk (7 pm, MPR): Dr. Richard Hoshino	Read <i>Music of the Primes</i> excerpt Read <i>Stewart</i> Work on Spreadsheets Assignment Complete <i>Chronicle</i> Essay
Thursday, September 10 at 9 am: Final <i>Chronicle</i> Essay Due (on Moodle)		
Thursday September 10	In Class (9-12): What is mathematical knowledge? Exploring the mathematics of paper folding Preparation for Field Research Class Dinner (6:00, Melaine Koenderman's House – meet in the Roundabout in front of the Library at 5:45)	Complete Spreadsheets Assignment Prepare for Field Exercises Work on Ethnography Group Essay
Friday, September 11 at 9 a.m.: Spreadsheet Assignment Due (on Moodle)		
Friday September 11	Field Research	Field Research Read <i>Meno</i> , Sections 70a-79e
Saturday & Sunday	Field Research	Field Research Read <i>Meno</i> , Sections 80a-89e
Monday September 14	Field Research	Field Research Read <i>Meno</i> , Sections 90a-100e
Tuesday September 15	Field Research	Field Research Read <i>Science and Pseudoscience</i>
Tuesday, September 15 at 1 p.m.: Field Research Poster Due		

Day	Activities	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday September 16	In Class (9-12): Introduce Creativity Presentation Discuss <i>Science and Pseudoscience</i> Evening Talk (7 pm, MPR): Dr. Doug Munroe	Re-read <i>Meno</i> Meet with groups for Creative Presentation
Thursday September 17	In Class (9-12): Discussion of <i>Meno</i> , part 1 Algebra Workshop (1-2:30 pm, Rm 305)	Review <i>Meno</i> Work on Creative Presentation
Friday September 18	In Class (9-12): Discussion of <i>Meno</i> , part 2 Preview to <i>Justified True Belief</i> Measurement Workshop (1-2:30 pm, Rm 305)	Work on Creative Presentation
Saturday & Sunday		Work on Creative Presentation Additional course readings
Monday September 21	In Class (9-12): Discussion of <i>Justified True Belief</i> Review of Goals Sexual Health Workshop (1:00-2:30, MPR)	Complete Creative Presentations Final course readings
Tuesday, September 22 at 9 am: Creative Presentations Due (In Class)		
Tuesday September 22	In Class (9-12): Reflections on Cornerstone Creative Presentations Course Selection Meetings	
Wednesday September 23	Creative Presentation Showcase (MPR)	