



## ЦЕНТЪР ЗА ОБУЧЕНИЕ – БАН

1000 София  
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### TEMPLATE FOR A SPECIALIZED DOCTORAL COURSE

#### **Basic Information:**

Course Title: **Semiotic Ideas of Knowledge**

Lecturer: **Prof. Dr. Ivan Mladenov**

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Total Teaching Hours: 30

#### **Annotation**

We will discuss the basic theories of knowledge from their origin to the contemporary. We start from the pre-Socratic era and proceed to the ancient legacy: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. We continue through the Medieval Ages and try to touch upon the difference between the Byzantine philosophy, ancient Greek thinkers and their Roman successors. We will make an overview of the work of Augustine, Boethius, Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham and continue to the British empiricists: Locke, Berkeley and Hume. As is well known, the most important enquiries for these times relate to issues of religion and scholasticism. We will follow Descartes and Kant to German idealists and arrive at the “modern philosophy” of the 19th century, focusing on the one of Charles S. Peirce. We will summarize the most significant contemporary theories of knowledge of today.

#### **Course content**

Topic / Module 1: Aristotelian innate pursuit of knowledge: why everybody wants to know? What knowledge did people possess before the times it was recorded. Was this a knowledge or it was a collection of instincts? Poetry, narration, folklore: forms of preserving and transmitting knowledge. Emergence of philosophy, what was the need of it? Appropriating knowledge as a theology: achieving knowledge as summum bonum of searching of God. A new dialogue: Man-God. Monotheism, Neo-Platonism, scholasticism: knowledge as re-interpretation of Aristotle. East and West of Rome.

Topic / Module 2: Locke, Berkeley, Hume: putting the knowledge on a new, social ground. Perceiving vs. reflecting; is generality a “real” thing or a figment in our minds? Abstract ideas and God’s mind. The earliest mentioning of semiotics as a doctrine of signs: the not-taken road of knowledge. The big geographical discoveries. Towards Enlighthment.

Topic / Module 3: German classical idealism and phenomenology. The categories and the problem of the universals. The idea of knowledge’ growth. The developmental theories. American pragmatism and the analytical philosophy. American and European semiotics. Modern theories of knowledge. Is information knowledge?



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### Teaching and assessment methods

The course is a combination of discussion and lecture. Discussion is based on primary source readings and written focus questions. Each student is responsible for 5 minutes oral presentation on selected items based on the current topic. Grading will be calculated mainly on the basis of attendance and participation. Mid-term paper and final paper are demanded; they should not exceed 5 pages. It is recommended that each student chooses an author or a period on which to write a paper at the earliest of the semester.

### Competencies acquired as a result of training (3–5 points)

The main purpose of the course is to provide a frame for all kinds of knowledge the students will inquire in their future studies. They will obtain an overview on the general cognitive ideas from the history to today and thus increase their competence on what is substantial in humanities. This will improve their orientation in the realm of ideas.

### Literature:

*Against Theory, Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism*, ed. by W.J. Mitchell, The U-ty of Chicago Press, 1982.

*A Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. A.R. Lacey, Routledge & Kegan Paul Lmt. first edition 1976.

Audy, Robert: *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introductions to the Theory of Knowledge*, Routledge, 2010.

*Critical Dictionary of Postmodern Thought*, ed. Stuart Sim, Routledge, New York, 1999

Nathan Houser, *Peirce on Semiotics*, Semiotics Studies Series, Indiana University, 1992.

*Pragmatism, A Reader*, ed. by Louis Menand, Vintage Books, 1997.

Sharon M. Kaye, *Medieval Philosophy A Beginner's Guide*, Oxford, 2008.

Vincent M. Colapietro, *Glossary of Semiotics*, Paragon House, New York, 1993

### Additional information

We need a place and a Ppt-projector