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**Week Six Assignment**

Here's the assignment for week six, the brief version first, then the fuller version second. You may want to print it out just so it's more conveniently available for review.

**Readings:** Several lectures

(Maybe also get a start on next week’s Schopenhauer readings?)

**Study Questions:** no SQs this week

**Mini-lectures:**

• [Periods in western Philosophy](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-histphi.html)

• [Some dates in modern Philosophy](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-moddates.html)

• [An introduction to epistemology](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-episintro.html)

• [On stuff](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-stf.html)

• [A little quantum physics](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-quanphys.html)

• [Tulpas in Hinduism](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-tulpas.html)

• [Introduction to John Locke](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-locke.html)

(Next week also has quite a few lectures to read -- plus you’ll be starting to read a difficult book -- so it may be a good idea to get a start on reading Schopenhauer this week if you can.)

**Discussion Questions:**

• [My Dream: Or How Not to Tell What's Really Real](http://philosophycourse.info/DQsite/dq-mydrm.html)

• [On stuff](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-stf.html)

• [Epistemology discussion questions](http://philosophycourse.info/DQsite/dq-episqs.html)

**Memorize and recite:**

One passage from any of the lectures

**Due date:** 6pm Wed evening

**Reminders:**

This lighter reading week might be a good opportunity to work on your research project

**Now a few notes on a couple of these things:**

**Readings & SQs:**

If you like, you could maybe get a start on reading Schopenhauer, but this is not an assignment (till next week), and not even a recommendation. Schopenhauer is by far the most difficult of the books you’ll be reading this quarter, and you’ve only got two weeks set aside to read it (viz., next week and the week after). So if you got a start on reading him this week (reading only the assigned portions, of course) you might be glad you did. (You can find the assigned chapters on the [Weekly Schedule](http://philosophycourse.info/businessite/phi-sched10.html) web page for next week, or on [the Schopenhauer homepage](http://philosophycourse.info/schopsite/schop-homepg.html).)

Also, this would be a good week to make some real progress on your research project.

**Mini-lectures:**

We are starting an entirely new philosphical enterprise this week, one that is of a very different nature than the philosophical concerns we’ve been discussing so far.

Our new topics these next three weeks or so will be concerned with the foundations and bases of human knowledge. We will be dealing with questions about how a human mind works, questions about what it means to "know" something, questions about the groundings of human "knowledge," and questions about the differences between "opinion," "belief," and "knowledge." These questions all fall under the general category of "epistemology."

The study of epistemology really begins to take off in Western thought around the beginning of what we refer to as the "modern" period. René Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant are some of the famous names in this tradition that we’ll be encountering in the next few weeks.

Epistemology frequently refers to itself as "First Philosophy," that is, as the kind of philosophy that one ought to do first before they start making knowledge claims about anything else at all. (Some introductory Philosophy courses actually begin right off with epistemological questions in the first week.) Epistemologists believe that until we have some basic understanding of these fundamental questions about how a human mind knows anything, our knowledge claims about anything at all that we talk about may in fact be weaker and less well-founded than we think.

The lectures this week are intended to introduce you to some of the basic questions that epistemology considers of central importance. The lectures you’ll be reading this week are:

• [Periods in western Philosophy](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-histphi.html) (This is just an oversimplified map of how the history of Western Philosophy has usually been divided up by historians)

• [Some dates in modern Philosophy](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-moddates.html) (for future reference)

• [An introduction to epistemology](http://philosophycourse.info/DQsite/dq-episqs.html)

• [On stuff](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-stf.html). (This is the organizing lecture; three of the following lectures are sub-parts of this lecture. You may want to print out this one and the three sub-lectures so you can mark them up with underlinings and questions. The bulk of your discussion assignment for this week is to discuss these lectures)

• [A little quantum physics](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-quanphys.html)

• [Tulpas in Hinduism](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-tulpas.html)

And finally,

• [An Introduction to John Locke’s philosophy](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-locke.html)

**Discussion Qs:** The discussion assignment this week is fourfold:

• Discuss ["My Dream: Or How Not to Tell What's Really Real"](http://philosophycourse.info/DQsite/dq-mydrm.html)

• Discuss ["On stuff"](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-stf.html) (and all its sub-lectures)

• Discuss ["Epistemology discussion questions"](http://philosophycourse.info/DQsite/dq-episqs.html)

• And finally, you’ll want to discuss [John Locke’s philosophy](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-locke.html) enough so that you are pretty sure you understand it. It will be fundamental to understanding everything else we do for the next few weeks.

Much of what you’ll be reading about and discussing in the coming weeks will require that you be able to call into question, and even doubt, some of our normal assumptions about what "common sense" is and about how we can know anything specific about the world. You’ll be asked to re-think some of your common beliefs about what "everybody knows" to be true about things. You’ll be asked to exercise some of your intellectual flexibility muscles and to ask questions and have doubts about a few common beliefs about which we might say "Well, everybody knows that’s true."