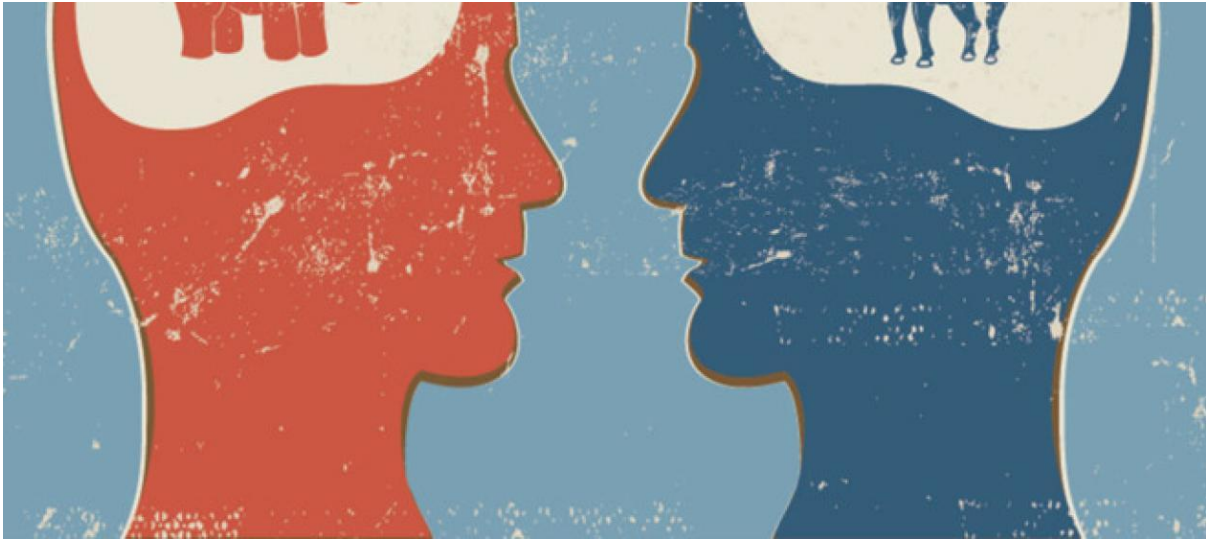


PHIL 291: Advanced Seminar in Epistemology or Metaphysics

## Democracy and Truth: An Introduction to Political Epistemology

Tuesdays from 6pm to 8:45pm, Spring 2021  
Dr. Étienne Brown ([etienne.brown@sjsu.edu](mailto:etienne.brown@sjsu.edu))

Online Format: Synchronous Zoom Meetings



One of the most exciting features of contemporary philosophy is the rapid development of new philosophical subdisciplines. In the last few years, political philosophers and epistemologists have contributed to development of one such discipline – political epistemology – which focuses on the relationship between knowledge, truth and politics.

This seminar is an introduction to this booming philosophical field. We will begin with an inquiry on truth and politics in ancient Greek, Islamic and Chinese philosophy, and then move on to a reflection on contemporary topics such as disagreement, polarization, propaganda, ideology and false consciousness, misinformation and fake news, post-truth, epistemic virtues and vices, trust in experts, and the epistemic roots of white supremacy. In the last part of the seminar, we will study how contemporary political epistemologists have contributed to a renewal of reflection upon the original question of political philosophy – what is the best political regime? – by comparing democracy to two of its alternatives: epistocracy (i.e., the rule of experts) and lottocracy (i.e., sortition).

Regarding format and method, we will read a selection of preprints of two forthcoming books – *Politics and Truth* (Oxford University Press, 2021) and the *Routledge Handbook of Political Epistemology* (Routledge, 2021). This means that students will get to read two books for free before they are even published!

Regarding evaluation, students will be expected to give an oral presentation on a weekly reading at least once during the semester and to actively participate in seminar discussions. They will also write a paper, present its first draft during a seminar meeting, integrate feedback, and then write a final draft.