

Intro to Formal Epistemology: Reading List

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This is a tractable, selective guide to some of the **formal tools** and **interesting topics** in formal epistemology, designed for students interested in getting into the area. It's not intended to be complete; instead, it's my attempt to reel people in: What tools are useful for *any* epistemologist to have some familiarity with? And what topics are interesting, tractable, and unexplored-enough that students may find their way in to the subfield through those them?

Readings that are **bolded** are highly recommended (possibly more challenging—but worth it); those that are **gray** are optional additions for those who want more on the topic.

It's an evolving list, and feedback is welcome!

Formal Tools

Probability

- **Bertsekas and Tsitsiklis 2008, *Introduction to Probability*, Chapters 1–2.**
(And the problem sets! [Answers here.](#))
→ For a quicker introduction to probability, try the notes for the first 6–7 lectures (and the problem-sets) from [this free online course](#).
- Titelbaum 2021, *Fundamentals of Bayesian Epistemology*, Chapters 1–4.¹
- Objective chance: Lewis 1980, “A Subjectivist’s Guide to Objective Chance”.
- Evidential probability: Williamson 2000, *Knowledge and its Limits*, Chapter 10.

Decision Theory

- [Buchak forthcoming](#), “Decision Theory”.
- [Briggs 2019](#), “Normative Theories of Rational Choice: Expected Utility.”
- [Thoma 2019](#), “Decision Theory” (especially §1).

Epistemic Logic

- **Stalnaker 2006, “On the Logics of Knowledge and Belief.”**
- [Holliday forthcoming](#), “Epistemic Logic and Epistemology”
- Sider 2010, *Logic for Philosophy*, Chapter 6.
- Hughes and Cresswell 1968, *A New Introduction to Modal Logic*, Chapters 1–4 (and possibly 5–6, 10).
- Williamson 2013, “Gettier Cases in Epistemic Logic”.

Accuracy-Based Epistemology

- Titelbaum 2021, *Fundamentals of Bayesian Epistemology*, Chapter 10.
- [Pettigrew 2019](#), “Epistemic Utility Arguments for Probabilism”
- Pettigrew 2016, *Accuracy and the Laws of Credence*

¹The book is still under construction, but Mike is very approachable and will most likely be more than willing to share a draft. Email him at titelbaum@gmail.com; feel free to tell him I sent you.

Topics

Internalism/Externalism

- **Williamson 2000**, *Knowledge and its Limits*, Chapters 4–5.
- [Srinivasan 2015](#), “Are We Luminous?”
- [Salow 2018](#), “The Externalist’s Guide to Fishing for Compliments”.
- [Schoenfield 2017](#), “Conditionalization Does Not Maximize Expected Accuracy”.
- [Berker 2008](#), “Luminosity Regained”

Higher-Order Evidence/Probability

- [Horowitz 2014](#), “Epistemic Akrasia”.
- [Schoenfield 2018](#), “An Accuracy-Based Approach to Higher-Order Evidence”
- [Dorst 2020](#), “Evidence: A Guide for the Uncertain”.
- [Dorst forthcoming](#), “Higher-Order Evidence”.
- [Williamson 2008](#), “Why Epistemology Can’t be Operationalized”.
- [Levinstein MS](#), “Higher-Order Evidence as Information Loss”

Human (Ir)rationality

- [Hedden 2019](#), “Hindsight Bias is Not a Bias”
- [Kelly 2008](#), “Disagreement, Dogmatism, and Belief Polarization”
- [McWilliams forthcoming](#), “Evidentialism and Belief Polarization”
- [Jern et al. 2014](#), “Belief Polarization is Not Always Irrational”
- **[Whittlestone 2017](#)**, *The Importance of Making Assumptions: Why Confirmation is Not Necessarily a Bias*
- [Hahn and Harris 2014](#), “What Does it Mean to be Biased: Motivated Reasoning and Irrationality”.
- [O’Connor and Weatherall 2018](#), “Scientific Polarization”
- [Singer et al. 2019](#), “Rational Social and Political Polarization”

Precision

- [White 2009](#), “Evidential Symmetry and Mushy Credence”
- [Schoenfield 2012](#), “Chilling out on epistemic rationality: A defense of imprecise credences
- **[Carr 2019](#)**, “**Imprecise Evidence Without Imprecise Credences**”
- [Mahtani 2019](#), “Imprecise Probabilities”.

Permissivism vs. Uniqueness

- [White 2005](#), “Epistemic Permissiveness”.
- [Schoenfield 2014](#), “Permission to Believe”.
- [Schultheis 2018](#), “Living on the Edge: Against Epistemic Permissivism”
- [Horowitz 2013](#), “Immoderately Rational”.

Deference Principles

- Lewis 1980, “A Subjectivist’s Guide to Objective Chance”
- Hall 1994, “Correcting the Guide to Objective Chance”
- Elga 2013, “The puzzle of the unmarked clock and the new rational reflection principle”
- Lasonen-Aarnio 2015, “New Rational Reflection and Internalism About Rationality”.
- Pettigrew and Titelbaum 2014, “Deference Done Right”
- Dorst et al. 2021, “Deference Done Better”.²

²Should be posted soon; email me for a copy.