BIG IDEAS

Chapter 11: Exploring Epistemology

- Both the rationalist attempt to ground knowledge in contemplation (Descartes) and the empiricist attempt to ground knowledge in perception (Locke and Hume) fail to provide adequate foundation, leaving epistemology open to collapse–like an old house. (SE pp. 267-273)

- The major realization is that twentieth-century epistemolgy is tied up with the so-called *linguistic turn,* where questions of knowledge are related to language acquisition. (SE p. 275)

- Distinctions between foundationalism and post-foundationalism and realism and nominalism are central to understanding the issues in contemporary epistemology. (SE pp. 268, 275, 285)

- Many feminist philosophers have turned to post-foundational epistemology in their attempt to address equity issues, "rebuilding the master's house" by changing the rules upon which we regard people. (SE pp. 281-283)

Background

The main thrust of this chapter is the distinction between foundational and post-foundational philosophy, comparing and contrasting earlier thought about epistemology (e.g., Descartes and Locke) with contemporary thinking such as phenomenology. One of the most challenging chapters for students and teachers alike, here we delve into rather obscure contemporary philosophers such as Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Rorty, and Foucault, arguably some of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century. Keep your approach introductory and post questions along the way to help students navigate difficult terrain.

About Chapter 11

The analogy of conducting a forensic investigation is used in this chapter to see if epistemology as a field of philosophical inquiry is dead, or whether everything—metaphysics, ethics, politics, and aesthetics—is now somehow related to questions of knowledge or knowing. In Chapter 12, we briefly consider how shallow forensic science may be as an example of expert knowledge in action within courtrooms. You may wish to set up this chapter's enquiry as a courtroom (mock trial simulation, see BLM 11.2), interrogating the witnesses to epistemology's transformation or rebirth within forms of language philosophy.

Features

In this chapter, the following features are included to help students make personal connections and/or deepen their understanding of epistemology. You may use all or some of these features as explained in the table that follows.

Feature	Student Textbook Page(s)	Opportunity for Assessment	Strategies for Classroom Use
Profile	280	Write a reflection on how important biography is in understanding a philosophy.	Investigate further into Wittgenstein's biography, including his sister Margaret Stonborough-Wittgenstein (who posed for several of Gustav Klimt's paintings) and his brother Paul for whom Ravel wrote his Piano Concerto for the Left Hand (his right hand was lost in WWI). Is Wittgenstein a product of his rich family and culture, fin-de-siècle (aristocratic) Vienna? Recalling Pythagoras' emphasis on asceticism (Chapter 10), does it matter that Wittgenstein renounced his wealth to live like a hermit? See the book *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, by Toulmin and Janik. See also the movie *Wittgenstein* (available on YouTube), but use selectively for scenes of his teaching.
Philosophers on Philosophy	287-288	Debate the strengths and weaknesses of regarding truth as agreement, solidarity, and a game.	Read the ancient Chinese taxonomy out loud (SE p. 285) and ask students to inquire as to how it reveals a nominalist scheme or "order of things" different from ours, and a *game of truth* (as discussed in this feature).
World Views Across Time	278-279	See Chapter Review question 3, SE p. 290, and conduct the research and writing activity. Link Chapter Review question 5, on linguistic determinism: does our language determine how we think about trees?	Go outside and sit around a tree, and ask students if they are outside or inside the tree. It will seem like nonsense, but then read the Evernden quote on SE p. 279, and see if it makes sense that they are in its circulatory system. Discuss how trees have been seen differently under different concepts or paradigms: worshipped by some and harvested callously by others.

Teaching Plan 1   (SE pp. 266-279)

Activity Description

Following some additional introductory background on rationalist (Descartes) and empiricist (Locke and Hume) traditions in epistemology, students will conduct a mock trial (BLM 11.2) to investigate who supposedly killed this once central discipline, considered a foundation for the sciences at the beginning of the twentieth century. Not to suggest that one person is responsible for the demise of epistemology, the court will try Quine as defendant in order to provide a focal point for the discussion.

Learning Goal

Students will critically appraise the strengths and weaknesses (virtual health) of traditional forms of epistemology, as a sub-field of philosophy, considering seriously Charles Taylor's claim that epistemology is "in a bad way" or that we "stand over its grave." Students will also begin to better appreciate the role language plays in knowledge formation (the so-called *linguistic turn* in philosophy) by learning about feral children and language acquisition in primates (e.g., chimpanzees).

Assessment Opportunities for Chapter Questions

The table below summarizes assessment opportunities for selected chapter questions, including questions in the Chapter Review, which are relevant to this teaching plan.

Assessment Type	Assessment Tool	Feature Questions	Section Questions	Chapter Review Questions
Assessment as Learning	Self-reflection		1, SE p. 273	
Assessment for Learning	Group discussion		2 and 3, SE p. 273	
Assessment as Learning	BLM C Comparison Chart			1, SE p. 290
Assessment for Learning	Researching phenomenology		1 and 2, SE p. 277	
Assessment as Learning	Self-reflection: links to Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (SE pp. 11-13) and to language deprivation		3 and 4, SE p. 277	
Assessment for Learning	Group discussion	1 and 2, SE p. 279		3, SE p. 290
Assessment for Learning	Reflective writing: Try composing a draft, partially answering now, using prior knowledge from Chapter 10 and the beginning of Chapter 11, and then reconsider and broaden the answer after completing Chapter 11			4, SE p. 290

Resources Needed

Make copies of these Blackline Masters:
- BLM 11.1 Exit Card
- BLM 11.2 Mock Trial (assessment of learning)
- BLM 11.3 Optical Illusions
- BLM 11.4 The *Treeness* of a Tree
- BLM E Learning Skills Tracking Sheet
- BLM J Journal Writing Guide (for assessment purposes)

Possible Assessment of Learning Task

Participation in the mock trial is marked according to the rubric on the instruction sheet (BLM 11.2).

Timing

225 minutes
(three 75-minute classes)

Learning Skills Focus

- Collaboration (legal teams)
- Responsibility
- Initiative (conducting own research)

Assessment (For/As Learning)

As teachers move through each chapter, opportunities will be highlighted to provide assessment for/as learning in preparation for assessment of learning at the end of each chapter.

Task/Project	Achievement Chart Category	Type of Assessment	Assessment Tool	Peer/Self/Teacher Assessment	Learning Skill	Student Textbook Page(s)	Blackline Master
Paragraph	Knowledge; Communication	As	Exit card	Self; teacher	Responsibility	273, question 1	BLM 11.1
2-3 paragraphs	Thinking; Communication	For (or Of)	Journal reflection (notebook)	Peer; teacher	Responsibility	277, questions 3 and 4	BLM 11.4 and BLM J
Storyboard: progress check	All four	As	Graphic organizer	Teacher	Self-regulation; initiative		BLM E

Prior Learning Needed

Utilize the introduction to the main schools of thought in Chapter 10: rationalist, empiricist, Kantian, and pragmatist (SE pp. 245-257).

Discuss how courts operate to help ensure more authentic learning during the mock trial.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Minds-on/hook activity: Help students learn by imitating (i.e., Aristotle's process of *mimesis* in habit formation). Show a YouTube clip of a court proceeding to help ensure authenticity; for instance, scenes from *Inherit the Wind* on the famous Scopes trial:

   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeriPGQ8VcYandfeature=related

   Even better, show students this *student-run* mock trial dramatization involving the Peel District School Board:

   http://vimeo.com/8455487

2. Mock trial (simulation): Hand out BLM 11.2, giving the class instructions on settingup a courtroom inquest into the death of epistemology. Get this assessment of learning task (the mock trial) for this chapter rolling before you start the textbook inquiry into the state of epistemology, setting up the context of an investigation. Divide the class into two main groups: the prosecution and defence. The trial is intended to arrive at a verdict on the charge: The defendant, W.V.O. Quine, is accused of killing epistemology. The prosecution will try to show how epistemology is now just a naturalized study of learning and knowing, belonging to the field of psychology. Students may draw on witnesses such as the Churchlands to present a case for cognitive science as an alternative to metaphysics in explaining how the mind works when we know something. Establishing the death of epistemology is the prosecution's burden. The defence may argue to exonerate Quine from guilt by arguing that epistemology died from other causes or persons, or by establishing the well-being of epistemology (nullifying the claim of its death). Participants on both teams make brief testimonies showing their further research into the topic. Select a student to act as judge (perhaps rotating the role to share it), and another to act as court recorder. Appoint a bailiff to keep order in the court and back up the judge. Select a jury (anyone not on the defence or prosecution teams, fulfilling a court appointment) who must collectively deliberate and render a single verdict.

You can help the class understand the threat Quine posed to epistemology by venturing into his philosophical attacks on Hume's Fork (the analytic/synthetic divide, SE p. 254), which he considered to be one of the dogmas of empiricism. The proposition "water is H_2O," for instance, is both analytic and synthetic. The definition of a metre stick is also analytic and synthetic, which can be defined through the relations of words or discovered empirically by seeing the standard unit displayed in a museum in Paris. If the standard division between these two ways of knowing does not hold up, does it signal that the foundation is giving way? (Putnam, a pragmatist following in Quine's footsteps, attacks the fact/value dichotomy. See Chapter 12, SE p. 303.) Look up the following video title on the Internet (available on YouTube in five parts) for additional information about Quine's ideas:

> On the Ideas of Quine: Section 1

Here is one additional resource on Quine and the end of positivism:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O4f1tj11qwandfeature=related

Acc The mock-trial task can also be done in small groups instead of by the entire class, allowing for members of five-person teams to take on more responsibility for their own learning. This may allow for quicker coverage, but can also leave some students or groups out of the loop if merely spectators to the trial.

DI Some students could write up the trial as media coverage (newspaper, magazine, radio, and television), giving a précis of the testimonies given by both sides.

3. Exploring rationalism and empiricism as traditional approaches in epistemology: Rationalism founded on reason and empiricism on perception. Have students give a close reading of Descartes' *Meditations* (SE pp. 268-270), and then answer section question 1 on SE p. 273. Use BLM 11.1 to check their answers and diagnose their understanding (assessment *as* learning). Then turn to Locke and Hume (SE pp. 270-271), using the optical illusions (Figures 11-5 and 11-6) as a way of casting doubt on the reliability of our senses and leading students into Kant's fusion of empiricism and rationalism (SE p. 271). Use section questions 2 and 3 on SE p. 273 to engage reflection and discussion. For additional information, look up the following video titles on the Internet (available on YouTube):

> Bernard Williams on Descartes (1-4)
>
> David Hume and his theory on knowledge - Explore - BBC
>
> Western Philosophy Documentary Section [2/3] part 5/5
>
> Western Philosophy Documentary Section [2/3] part 4/5

Hand out BLM 11.3 on optical illusions to provide more examples than in the student textbook, or project the images on BLM 11.3 on the screen in the classroom. Take up answers to the section questions on SE p. 273 to secure learning that went on individually or in pairs, and correct misconceptions about empiricism and rationalism (which students often interpolate). For additional information related to optical illusions, look up these video titles on the Internet (available on YouTube):

> Optical Illusions ~ Tricks of the Eye
>
> The Complexity of the Brain Documentary part 1
>
> Illusions from Bill Nye

4. Starting with the section "Moving Beyond the Foundation" (SE p. 274), you and your students are venturing into the deep end of contemporary philosophy. One of the major challenges in contemporary epistemology comes from eliminative materialists like the Churchlands who see our words for *knowing* and *understanding* as rather empty expressions, only made meaningful when we restore the underlying

matter they refer to: the functioning, biomechanics, and chemistry of the brain. Neuroscience presents one of the alternatives to epistemology, following Quine's move to naturalize the subject as an empirical field of psychology. Look up these video titles on the Internet (available on YouTube) for additional information:

> Patricia Churchland on Eliminative Materialism
>
> Patricia Churchland on Neurophilosophy

Perhaps far more interesting to students is the case of Daniel Tammet, a person with synaesthesia who sees numbers as colours and forms. Is Daniel's case evidence for rationalism in that knowledge is within us if we tap the brain's full potential? Or, is his ability to calculate different from knowing, like a calculator that does not really "know" math? Look up this video title on the Internet (available on YouTube, in five parts):

> Daniel Tammet - The Boy with the Incredible Brain (1-5)

5. The other major turn introduced in this section is twentieth-century language philosophy: the so-called *linguistic turn* that moves us into phenomenology and post-foundational epistemology. Because the topic is dense, it helps to bring it down to a level students can apprehend. Comparing us with our cousins in the primate world is of great interest to students, examining how we differ in terms of our language and knowledge abilities. You might ask how many students took the Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology course (APS, usually through Family Studies, and/or see the McGraw-Hill Ryerson text for that course, 2011; Jan Haskings-Winner, et al.). Two documentaries are of help here (both available through PBS.org): *Ape Genius* (*NOVA* series—see especially the ending, where they explain the use of language and facial expressions in the human "learning triangle," absent in chimpanzees); and *The Human Spark* (with Alan Alda, which is also useful for issues related to ethics in that it shows how preverbal children are innately inclined to help adults, as a survival enhancement strategy). Look up the following video titles (available on YouTube) for additional information on apes and language:

> Bonobos: Language Recognition, Play
>
> Kanzi and Novel Sentences
>
> Kanzi the Bonobo talks to reporters (speaks to Lisa Ling on Oprah)
>
> Koko: A Talking Gorilla [1/8]

Another avenue of approach is to show what happens when humans are deprived of language acquisition, usually through abandonment (wild or feral children raised by wolves or dogs) or neglect (Genie's incarceration within her home). This is also a way of connecting ethics, as tactile and verbal stimulation turn out to be essential for the growth of the human brain and the forging of neural links between the two hemispheres, which enables complex grammatical functions. Oxana Malaya, a feral child, was raised by dogs when she was abandoned by her alcoholic parents in the Ukraine. How do you think this would affect her worldview?

Professor Rebecca Saxe of MIT (seen in the PBS documentaries cited above) has useful articles discussing these cases, called "The Forbidden Experiment":

> http://bostonreview.net/BR31.4/saxe.php
>
> http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7019/is_6_14/ai_
> n28412480/?tag=mantle_skin;content

Look up these video titles on the Internet (available on YouTube), which are video documentaries on feral children:

Feral Children part 1 (BBC)

Secret of the Wild Child part 1 (Genie; *NOVA*)

See the following Web site for additional information on feral children:

http://www.world-mysteries.com/sci_feralc.htm

6. Venturing into the subject of phenomenology, you might talk about the emphasis given to the "life-world" (*lebensvelt*) and the meaning it has for us, as beings who find themselves *thrown* into a world that has meaning through language. Martin Heidegger referred to animals as being "less endowed with world," meaning that—ontologically speaking—things that are present to humans and that have meaning are either different or not there (present as beings) for less linguistically sophisticated animals (or persons). Heidegger's concept of *being* is to be *present* (or to be *presencing*, as he prefers the verb form of "to be"), within our world as it opens to us through language (the House of Being). The word *phenomenology* comes from *phenomenon*, which was originally Greek for "to shine forth" or "to be illuminated." The French *resource* also has this sense of things (like fresh water) springing up from the ground, presenting to us their utility. Language is like the fire (*logos*) that lights our world, enabling us to see things *as* such and such (e.g., to instantly see a hammer as equipment, or "ready-to-hand" as Heidegger put it). The image from *The Matrix* in Figure 11-8 is there to remind us that language is the mother tongue or *mater/matrix* through which we experience the world, linking the observing subject to the things perceived and thus overcoming the dualism in Descartes' epistemology and the gap left in Locke's between the knower and what is known/perceived.

7. "The *Treeness* of a Tree" (World Views Across Time on SE p. 278) is intended to illustrate Heidegger's idea that things are revealed to us differently depending on our historical and linguistic horizon of experience: our life-world in which things like trees take on meaning. Use BLM 11.4 to help illustrate this complex topic and aid discussion. If you (or your school's Geography Department) have samples of petrified wood, pass them around to demonstrate the concept and relate epistemology to metaphysics.

Try this meditation with students: standing with the class near a tree, ask "Are you outside or inside the tree?" The question will seem like nonsense at first, but reflecting on the Evernden quote (SE p. 279), it will make sense that they are in the root system and energy field of the tree. Now try this question: "Are you inside or outside the Sun?" If really outside, you would be frozen (space is −270°C). If you could see beyond the optical wavelengths of light, and see the electromagnetic field, even the gravitons carrying the gravitational force, you would see that Earth is toward the centre of the Sun. Next: Ask students to picture language as the warping space (Einstein's gravity field) that draws the perceiving subject into unison with the tree, just as the space warping around our Sun draws our Earth around the Sun in its annual revolution. This series of meditations and illustrations helps students rethink their relation to things along relativistic lines, realizing that they see and know things in relation to their language. (Extension: See Chapter Review question 3, SE p. 290.)

Students and teachers who seek a greater understanding of Heidegger's ideas may wish to use the following glossary of his philosophical language:

Aletheia: truth as "unconcealment" or disclosure/revelation of potentiality, instead of "correctness" or "rightness" of assertion (*orthos*)

Anxiety: often read as a state of dread or angst, but positively as something that can trigger world-revelation. Our encounter with death, for instance, can disclose the taken-for-granted world through distancing, or "ek-sistence": standing-out from the busyness and chatter of our everyday, mundane existence

Authenticity: not a state that hovers over everyday inauthenticity but our momentary realization of this entrapment as our "factical" state (i.e., the rare moments of realization that we spend our time tranquilized by idle chatter or over-reaching language and in curiosity of science, which reduces things)

Being: how something comes to be present to us, as a thing or phenomenon (not the ideal or eternal form that Plato referred to, and contrasted with becoming)

Dasein: being-here, thrown into the world (of language) from birth, already residing with-things *mitsein* instead of being removed from them as an outsider or objective observer

De-structuring: taking off layers of Western ontology's "building project" and returning to the original ground on which Plato formulated the question of "being" (and even back to the pre-Socratic philosopher Parmenides in asking why there is something rather than nothing)

Enframing: the way we (through science) reduce things to standing-resource (e.g., Earth itself) through our technological gaze and the ontotheological position of nihilism

Essence: the potentiality for being that each thing or person has (its allotment or dispensation of possibilities), instead of its singular form or substance

Making (*poiesis*) as disclosure: how a van Gogh painting of peasants' shoes or Rilke's poems attend to the ontological ground of language, ushering things forth into language/world and allowing them to have presence, or being, for others to see anew

Ontological ground: the potentiality of being that lies within language, or its historically thrown horizon, discovered if we heed the call of language ("Language speaks")

Paideia: Enculturation and learning (mathesis), not as in filling the empty vessel but as discovery of one's unique potential for being—"becoming who one is through learning" (to cite Pindar's *Second Pythian Ode*, used by Nietzsche and Heidegger; this ode was reversed by Foucault into "become who you are not!")

Phenomenology: "coming to light" (*phainesthai*) or the "presencing" of things as beings, as they are gathered in the "clearing of being" or House of Being—our language (*logos* as *legein*, a gathering force that holds things together in our linguistic web)

Present-to-hand: the way science reduces things through representation and objectification, as objects of study detached from the life-world and ordinary language

Ready-to-hand: the way things appear as equipment (e.g., this is a hammer), already instrumental to our use because of our prior immersion or thrownness in language and world

Releasement (letting-be): as in authentic teaching (as apprenticeship) or in letting the figure escape from the wood or marble when sculpting

Thrownness: our immersion in language and world, in which the subject-object duality dissolves; our thrownness toward death, as our destiny

Tranquilization and falling prey: similar to what Nietzsche called the "narcosis" in which we daily slumber (from which we must become untimely in order to dawn) and Foucault's "normalization" within regimes of discipline and truth

8. Conduct a progress check on the Unit 4 Culminating Activity: preparation for the film festival on issues in epistemology. Track students' learning skills using BLM E.

Text Answers

Page 273: Section questions

1. Descartes' skeptical method works to isolate what he can be sure of, absolutely, by stripping away everything that can be brought into doubt. Is the room he is surrounded by real, or is he being deceived by an evil genie into perceiving it as a wood panelled study? Recall from Unit 2: Metaphysics (SE p. 101) that this method leaves Descartes with only two basic substances: *extended substances* (such as the piece of wax he holds before the fireplace, stretching in his hands) and *thinking substances* (such as himself, contemplating his own existence). His method in epistemology reduces reality, or what we can know of it, to this dualistic principle of metaphysics.

2. Hegel is drawing attention to the *circular reasoning* in Kant's epistemology, where presumably we must first know the *a priori* concepts (space, time, motion, solidity, causation) before we can perceive or know anything else (e.g., know that a horse has jumped over the fence yonder), raising the question of how we know these prior concepts. Epistemology is knowledge about knowing, always drawing us into a vicious circle. Hegel's solution is to turn toward idealism, positing a *World Spirit* that realizes itself (comes to fruition) in various places throughout history, such as classical Greece and ancient China, through the dynamic interaction of reason and nature.

3. If there are two ways of seeing the pattern in a single diagram—as an old and young woman (Figure 11-6), as moving or not (the circles in Figure 11-5), or as projected in or out (the Necker Cube), etc.—then it means our minds are actively configuring the lines and shapes into something meaningful, with alternate as opposed to singular solutions. The empirical foundation for knowledge is shaken if we realize that the mind is also organizing the sensory impressions in a variety of ways. This leads to some hybrid form of epistemology, as in Kant's fusion of empiricism and rationalism, and to the emergence of constructivism. In the early twentieth century, Wittgenstein renews interest in these puzzles, writing in his *Philosophical Investigations* about *aspect-dawning*: now seeing a rabbit, and then a duck, in Jastrow's drawing. The realization is that we are *continuously seeing aspects* whenever we regard something *as* this or that (e.g., seeing a fork as cutlery), and that this points back to an *as structure* embedded in the grammar of our language(s). It is what allows us to read fluently, without phonetically pronouncing each syllable.

Page 277: Section questions

1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's book *Phenomenology of Perception* critically examines Descartes' epistemology, and tries to overcome its inherent dualism between a perceiving subject and the objects perceived. As for Heidegger, it is our being *thrown* from birth into a world with-things (*mitsein*), through early immersion in language, that his phenomenology bridges this gap between subject and object. Look up the following video titles (available on YouTube) for additional information on Husserl and Heidegger:

Husserl and Phenomenology (1-2)

Husserl On First Philosophy (1/5)

Husserl and The Rise of Phenomenology

Rise of 20th-Century Philosophy—Phenomenology

Heidegger's Being and Time

Human all too human - Martin Heidegger

Heidegger life and Philosophy (1-6)

2. Linda Zerilli uses Arendt's philosophy to try to bridge the gap that divides us when we try to unite disparate groups into coalitions to achieve political reform. *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* starts with the recognition that the concept "woman" is not enough to unite all women across barriers of race, religion, orientation, and class, threatening to undermine the feminist movement by dissolving its unifying object of concern. Like Susan Hekman, she draws on Wittgenstein's concepts of background and bedrock (see SE pp. 281-283) to form bridges between otherwise isolated worlds, forming new worlds (political spaces) or unrealized opportunities for the emergence of freedoms. See also Arendt in Unit 6: Social and Political Philosophy (SE pp. 448-449).

3. (Note that Nietzsche's name is misspelled in this student textbook question.) In his opening to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* Nietzsche famously called metaphysicians like Plato back to Earth, asking that they come back into their bodies and dwell within our limited domain of truth: what we can only see through some value-laden perspective or subjectivity, instead of seeking the ultimate truth (e.g., ideal forms, see SE p. 95).

> "Remain faithful to the earth, my brothers, with the power of your virtue. Let your gift-giving love and your knowledge serve the meaning of the earth. Thus I beg and beseech you. Do not let them fly away from earthly things and beat their wings against eternal walls. Alas, there has always been so much virtue that has flown away. Lead back to earth the virtue that flew away, as I do—back to the body, back to life, that it may give earth meaning, a human meaning."

> "Behold, I teach you the overman! The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman shall be the meaning of the earth! I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poison-mixers are they, whether they know it or not. Despisers of life are they, decaying and poisoned themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so let them go!"

> – Prologue

Look up the following video title (available on YouTube) for additional information on Nietzsche's critique of morality and truth:

Nietzsche's critique of morality and truth

4. The advocates for *depth grammar* (e.g., Noam Chomsky)—the idea that language is hard-wired into us—find some support in the way chimpanzees can learn to understand commands/requests in any human language when raised in a language-rich environment from infancy. The limitation on apes to develop more complex grammatical tasks, such as conversing among themselves (part physiological, as they cannot make consonantal sounds), as well as the case of feral children who cannot move beyond simple word recognition, shows how reliant we are on early initiation into language: essential for constructing our world. Initiation into language, and its becoming a second nature for us, requires a great deal of socialization, and as Wittgenstein would add, an agreeable *form of life*.

Page 279: World Views Across Time

1. See the guided meditation around the Evernden quote on trees in Teaching Strategy 7, earlier in this Teaching Plan. Also see BLM 11.4.

2. Explore the boundary issue between science and pseudo-science, sorting out when metaphorical terms illustrate concepts (serve as models or paradigms), and when they obscure or mislead us into fantasies (see SE pp. 315, 332, 346). This discussion also ties into *linguistic idealism*, a subject in the next section of Chapter 11. Is it possible to "release" too much of our conceptual hold on things, leading us down the rabbit hole (as in *Alice in Wonderland*)? Try these excerpts from Jeffrey Goelitz's *Secrets from the Lives of Trees* as an example:

   > "The trunk of a tree has a spiral clockwise energy pattern which helps bring light from the crown of the tree to the earth which in turn, helps amplify the earth's energy."

   > "Trees have balancing qualities which heal one's aura if they sit in a field of trees. If, however, a person sat there with negative thoughts, he would not absorb many of the healing energies ... that is why the soft heart is so important in being able to be sensitive to all forms of energy."

   > "The soft heart is a peaceful energy that blends harmoniously with a tree. A tree picks up any vibration that a human consciously puts out to it or even someone casually walking by. When a tree responds to you, you receive its colors and frequencies. The grandmother and grandfather trees are highly intelligent life forms..."

Teaching Plan 2 (SE pp. 280-291)

Activity Description

Preparation for the mock trial described in Teaching Plan 1 is still under way, but here we go more deeply into post-foundational epistemology. The application of post-foundational epistemology to feminism gives some grounding for how contemporary philosophy can be used in the cause of overcoming prejudice and achieving equity.

Assessment Opportunities for Chapter Questions

The table below summarizes assessment opportunities for selected chapter questions, including questions in the Chapter Review, which are relevant to this teaching plan.

Learning Goal

Students will gain insight into modern theories of knowledge, which abandon the search for a foundation and instead focus on our practices of knowing or acting with certainty. In this process of inquiry, students will encounter how philosophers address the problems of relativism, referring to our "agreement" or "solidarity" with others instead of being "objectively true."

Assessment Type	Assessment Tool	Feature Questions	Section Questions	Chapter Review Questions
Assessment as Learning	Self-reflection; discussion		1, SE p. 286	
Assessment as Learning	Dramatization/contest		2, SE p. 286	
Assessment for Learning	Group discussion; BLM C Comparison Chart	1 and 2, SE p. 288		
Assessment for Learning	Expository writing/journal BLM J			2, SE p. 290
Assessment as Learning	Further research			3, SE p. 290
Assessment for Learning	Self-reflection; note taking			4-6, SE pp. 290-291

Learning Skills Focus

- Collaboration (legal teams)
- Responsibility
- Initiative (conducting own research)

Resources Needed

Make copies of this Blackline Master:

- BLM J Journal Writing Guide (for assessment purposes)

Possible Assessment of Learning Task

Ask students to hand in their answers to Chapter Review question 4, SE p. 290, as a journal entry for inclusion in the portfolio for assessment *of* learning. The chapter culminates by holding the mock trial, which is assessed using the rubric on BLM 11.2. Have students use the rubric to assess their own readiness.

Assessment (For/As Learning)

As teachers move through each chapter, opportunities will be highlighted to provide assessment for/as learning in preparation for assessment of learning at the end of each chapter.

Task/Project	Achievement Chart Category	Type of Assessment	Assessment Tool	Peer/Self/ Teacher Assessment	Learning Skill	Student Textbook Page(s)	Blackline Master
Paragraph	Knowledge; Communication	As		Self; teacher	Responsibility	290, question 2	
Mock trial	All four	For	Use Mock Trial rubric to assess readiness	Self; teacher	Collaboration		BLM 11.2
2-3 paragraphs	Thinking; Communication	For (or Of)	Journal reflection (notebook)	Peer; teacher	Responsibility	290-291, questions 4 and 6	BLM J
Storyboard: progress check	All four	As	Graphic organizer	Teacher	Self-regulation; initiative		

Prior Learning Needed

Kant's *a priori,* in Chapter 10 (SE pp. 255-256), is central to understanding the role of language in post-foundational epistemology (as explained on SE p. 275). Foucault refers to discourses, changing throughout history, as the historical *a priori* possibilities for what can be said or thought to be true within a given period's game of truth.

Consulting the section on Heidegger's concept of being in Unit 2: Metaphysics (SE p. 105) will also help with comprehension as we move into ideas about language philosophy.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Perhaps the best way to wade into this complex topic is with some humour. The movie *Wittgenstein* (Zeitgeist Films) contains a re-enactment of Ludwig Wittgenstein teaching a seminar at Cambridge University (with Bertrand Russell attending, in red velvet). In the film, the students' inability to understand their teacher becomes the occasion to clarify why we cannot understand a lion, should it speak to us. (If using other parts of the film, choose your clips carefully, as it is rather surreal.) This film is available under the video title listed below (on YouTube):

   Wittgenstein: Philosophical discussion in Cambridge - Part 1

   If you wish to give historical background on Wittgenstein's early and late revolutions in philosophy, look up the following video titles (available on YouTube):

   Physics, Positivism, and Early .Wittgenstein

   Ludwig Wittgenstein - Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus - Preface

Wittgenstein's Turn to Ordinary Language

John Searle on Austin and Wittgenstein

John Searle on the Philosophy of Language: Section 1

Wittgenstein - Sea of Faith - BBC documentary (1-2)

2. The quick shift to feminist philosophy in the student textbook provides a useful context for tackling prejudice (sexism, racism, homophobia, etc.), deconstructing the way our language may have embedded within it negative pictures of other persons. If we become aware of the way our *bedrock certainties* erode over time (e.g., outdated concepts like Aristotle's theory of gravity or the geocentric model of the solar system—once a basis for knowledge; see SE p. 320) then why not, as Hekman suggests (SE p. 281), hasten the process and deconstruct the "master's house" with our own tools? Consider discussing why casual, derogatory utterances are being challenged in schools and on campuses. As Wittgenstein said, in these cases "a picture held us captive"; we are enthralled or "bewitched" (SE p. 283) in a negative way of seeing—one that can only be overcome through reconceptualization and through new, more equitable sets of practices that ultimately give meaning to our sayings. This could also serve as the topic for a journal reflection on stereotyping people and things through language (See BLM J). (Consult the section on Jacques Derrida in Unit 2: Metaphysics (SE p. 106) for a similar strategy in *deconstructing* Western metaphysics.)

Relating to the opening picture of the house in the Unit Opener (Figure 11-2, SE p. 267), Wittgenstein gives us an alternate picture of epistemology in which our knowledge and practices belong to an edifice (a house) that carries its foundation *within itself*. He writes, "I have arrived at the rock bottom of my convictions. And one might almost say that these foundation-walls are carried by the whole house." In other words, the house holds itself up instead of being supported from below by a firm foundation (what Descartes and Locke searched for in vain). Section question 1 on SE p. 286 can help students get at this idea. Writing journal reflections (see BLM J) in answer to Chapter Review questions 4 and 6 will also stimulate deeper inquiry.

3. Moving into the section on "Seeking the Foundation of Truth" (SE p. 283), connect the picture of the minotaur (Figure 11-11) to feminist philosopher Naomi Scheman's quote on SE p. 285; using Wittgenstein, she tries to avoid being gored on the horns of ancient dichotomies (pictures of dualism that are embedded in our philosophical language) that bewitch us into thinking we have to choose between idealism or realism, or universalism (objectivity) and relativism (subjectivity). Consider how Wittgenstein (SE p. 284), and then Foucault (SE p. 285), offer non-dualistic alternatives by grounding knowledge in practices and language.

4. The idea of *forms of life* (SE p. 284) has already been set up by considering apes and feral children earlier in Chapter 11. Connect the section on forms of life with the Russell quote on SE p. 272, where he, too, (like his student Wittgenstein) later in his career refers to us as "animals adapted to our environment." In terms of our ongoing investigation into the death of epistemology, it does seem to have come down from a great height: from the firm foundation for scientific knowledge to a shallow grounding in our animalistic second nature and training in language. Discuss the quote on SE p. 284: "If a lion could talk, we could not understand him." Does this make sense to students in light of what they have read in this chapter? How?

5. The "Philosophers on Philosophy" feature (SE p. 287), which addresses relativism, may help students decide whether epistemology has survived. In this later section of the chapter, epistemology now appears embedded in political and ethical philosophy, as well as metaphysics and aesthetics, through feminism, post-structuralism (Foucault),

and neo-pragmatism (Rorty and Putnam). But if epistemology collapses into what some claim is postmodern relativism, then we lose our traditional concepts of truth and knowledge as being objective. (Bernard Williams is another philosopher, among many, who has weighed in on this debate.) Has this linguistic turn killed epistemology, or has it made it a pervasive aspect of contemporary philosophical thinking, heavily influenced by Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Foucault?

6. After completing Chapter 11, hold the mock trial, using the rubric on BLM 11.2 to assess students' demonstration of learning through testimonies.

Text Answers

Page 286: Section questions

1. Plato was an idealist philosopher who believed there was one absolute form of what knowledge was, hence Socrates interrogating his fellow Athenians, such as Meno, to discover the essence of knowledge. Whereas Plato (through his character Socrates) could proclaim that he knew what knowledge was, as a general idea or pure form, Wittgenstein attacked the very idea of a universal definition of concepts like *knowledge*. Wittgenstein is famous for defending his *meaning-as-use* thesis, in which words have meaning through the context of their use, and therefore often lack sharp definitions. In the following excerpt from *Philosophical Grammar*, Wittgenstein opposes Platonic essentialism:

   "It has puzzled me why Socrates is regarded as a great philosopher. Because when Socrates asks for the meaning of a word and people give him examples of how that word is used, he isn't satisfied but wants a unique definition. Now if someone shows me how a word is used and its different meanings, that is just the sort of answer I want."

   "I cannot characterise my standpoint better than by saying that it is opposed to that which Socrates represents in the Platonic dialogues. Or if asked what knowledge is I would list examples of knowledge, and add the words 'and the like.' No common element is to be found in all of them."

   As a non-essentialist, Wittgenstein focuses on language in actual practice (within its diverse *language-games*). Saying "I know you are not sick" is different from saying "I know how to solve quadratic equations."

2. This brief contest is meant to generate enthusiasm or levity through parody, mocking the language of language philosophers. Try reading the first two paragraphs of Heidegger's essay "Language," or a passage from *Being and Time*; alternatively, see what students make of the several Wittgenstein quotes included in Chapter 11, drawn from the thousands of brief remarks he left us. The serious reflection comes with discussion of Heidegger's claim that he had to deconstruct all of Western metaphysics and build anew, including his own poetic terminology, in order to think differently from past philosophers. Is our thinking tied to our terminology, and in what ways does complex vocabulary give us either: (a) tools for deeper or more precise thought; or (b) defensive armouring or pretentious costumes that exclude other people?

   Look up the following video title (available on YouTube) for additional information on Heidegger's *Being and Time*:

   Heidegger's Being and Time

Page 288: Philosophers on Philosophy

1. Rorty advocates an ironic, as opposed to an inflexible, fundamentalist stance toward our ways of thinking about things, which he calls "vocabularies." For Putnam, however, Rorty goes too far in making truth a matter of solidarity—a move that can lead into relativism. Look up the following video titles on the Internet (available on YouTube). One video shows students the Rorty versus Putnam debate and how these philosophers position the arguments. The other two videos provide additional information on Rorty's views:

   The Putnam-Rorty Debate and the Pragmatist Revival

   Rorty on Truth

   Rorty on Uncertainty

2. Plato and Descartes were political in the sense that they challenged the views of those in power. Plato was under house arrest when he wrote *The Republic*, trying to prevent the Athenians from sinning again against philosophy after executing his mentor, Socrates. Thinking of *The Republic* as a thought-experiment in which the model of a city-state illustrates the workings of the just and knowing soul, his epistemological thinking was political. Descartes eventually took refuge with Queen Christina in Sweden, living in exile as an advisor to her court. His secret notebook reveals that he entertained heretical ideas such as alchemy and the heliocentric model of the cosmos. But neither thinker merged epistemology with politics as fully as Foucault, for whom *power/knowledge* and *regimes of truth* became constructs of his philosophy. For Foucault, knowledge is intertwined with power relations. Rorty defended his Deweyan belief in democracy, as our hope for the future, on the basis of having solidarity with fellow bourgeois liberals. Rorty is also political in the sense of moving beyond philosophy, seeing himself as a professor of cultural and literature studies that include philosophical texts. Look up the following video titles (available on YouTube) for additional information on Richard Rorty:

   Richard Rorty

   Rorty on the End of Inquiry

   Rorty and the End of Philosophy

Pages 290-291: Chapter Review

1. The organizer chart that follows on the next page presents the main attributes of the different philosophers' arguments about how we know. Two other terms students should attempt to identify and define:

   Foundational: The essential task of epistemology is to bridge the gap between the knower and the known, through perception and/or reason, giving us a firm and permanent basis for knowledge.

   Post-foundational: In this approach to epistemology, language serves as the *a priori*, coordinating how we see and think of things, and giving us historically fluctuating or impermanent ground for knowing. Historicizing and making epistemology relative to language loosens the foundations, and puts into question the certainty we have in knowledge.

Philosopher	Main ideas and terms associated with their epistemology
Descartes	He employed methodical doubt as a tool of inquiry; rationalism as a way of arriving at God-given, innate ideas. "I think, therefore I am" results in a subject-object dualism, and a divide between the basic substances of reality: extended and thinking substances.
Locke	He stated that the mind is a *tabula rasa* or blank slate on which we record sensory impressions, and from which we build inferences. Correct inferences match the way nature is, as in Newton's laws, hence truth in correspondence with reality.
Hume	He stated that we bundle perceptions to allow for inductive inferences; knowledge comes by relations of words we discover analytically or by facts we discover empirically.
Kant	He asserted that the mind imposes *a priori* concepts on perceptions, thus combining empiricism with rationalism.
Heidegger	Heidegger's view is that we need to overcome the subject-object dualism inherited from Descartes by seeing our *thrownness* in language as the medium through which we see and think of beings. We have limited horizons of knowing, based on our language, that constitute the ground or being or range of possibilities for something to be thought or known at a given time in history.
Wittgenstein (later thought)	His view of knowledge is based on agreement within language-games into which we are trained and initiated when we are young. This gives us a shifting, historically fluctuating or eroding and sedimentous bedrock on which to base our knowledge claims.
Foucault	Throughout history there are different *epistemes* or basic structures that determine the "order of things," or the rules by which we can assert something as true or declare someone to be sane, normal, etc. He refers to this as *games of truth*, connecting knowing to power relations.
Rorty	He is famous for breaking the "mirror of nature"–that is, the correspondence theory of truth as a foundation for knowledge (central to foundationalists). Rorty makes knowing a matter of our solidarity with historically and linguistically united communities of thinkers.

2. One visual example of an artistic rendering of the linguistic turn is shown on the Web site of EZCT Architecture & Design Research (2000), at the Architectural Association School of Architecture. EZCT gives a history-and-theory-studies seminar entitled *The Linguistic Turn of Contemporary Production*. Follow the link (and scroll to the bottom of the Web page) to see how they portrayed this idea as a building. What does the design say about how they see the linguistic turn?

   http://scriptedbypurpose.wordpress.com/participants/ezct/

   Look up the following video titles (available on YouTube) for additional information:

   The Challenge of Postmodernism

   Derrida's Deconstruction of Philosophy

3. See BLM 11.4 for connections to this writing activity. It could also be fun for students to draw connections from the 3-D movie *Avatar*, in which trees are sacred beings. Cato the Elder wrote about having to pray to trees before cutting them down. As Rome expanded, to save time, a prayer was given to entire forests before cutting them down.

4. This reflection could be done as a journal entry, using BLM J, and serve as learning *for* or *of* assessment. A graphic organizer might also help in making connections between the subtopics of philosophy and related concepts (e.g., mind map or web diagram).

5. Consider linguistic determinism as either a discussion or mini-debate topic. Use the quotes as a catalyst, but ask students to critically examine claims that French is, for instance, a language of love or Innu a language of snow. Is this too simplistic and idealistic (i.e., positing something that does not really exist)? Does this exile us into

isles of language (something Rorty claimed was the result of misreading Heidegger and Wittgenstein)? How can we fuse horizons to cross these boundaries, through translations? (See Heidegger's student Hans-Georg Gadamer's work on hermeneutics [interpretation]: *Truth and Method*, or *Philosophical Hermeneutics*.)

6. In this activity, we are considering the idea that, as Wittgenstein said, "The limits of my language are the limits of my world." Does this idea, taken too literally, trap us in a prison house of language? What would a non-linguistic thought be, if one exists? Is art a medium that takes us beyond our words, into the ineffable and giving expression to the ineluctable? You could organize the class into a values line, standing on a continuum from affinity with foundationalist to post-foundationalist thought. Then try pairing students from opposite ends of this spectrum. Also consider assigning this question as a journal topic, using BLM J to assess the writing.