Course description

In this course we will study an introduction to Bayesian epistemology. We will learn probability as a mathematical theory as well as its application to epistemology. We will also look at applications to confirmation and decision theory as well as some famous arguments for adopting a Bayesian framework.

Note on course difficulty

As stated above, we will learn probability as a mathematical theory, and we will apply the theory in exercises and problems. The math is by no means advanced and can be mastered relatively easily, but you must be willing to invest time on it.

Required text

We will use Fundamentals of Bayesian Epistemology, by Michael Titelbaum. The book is forthcoming with Oxford University Press, and Titelbaum has made it available to us before publication.

• Unit 1: Beliefs and Degrees of beliefs
  – Required reading:
    * Titelbaum, chapter 1
  – Optional/background reading:
    * Foley, “Beliefs, Degrees of Belief and the Lockean Thesis”
    * Christensen, “Two Models of Belief”

• Unit 2: Probability Distributions
  – Required reading:
    * Titelbaum, chapter 2
Course requirements

Probability is not especially hard to learn, but it can only be mastered through practice. Students are expected to attend lectures. All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with a particular religion.
Evaluation

There will be homework due semi-weekly. In addition, there will be one in-class exam and a final. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

   Homework: 50%
   Exams: 50%

The in-class exam will take place on October 6, and final is on December 11, from 1:00 to 3:00.

Plagiarism

You are encouraged to work in groups and consult with your fellow students. There is a discussion forum on the d2l website for your course. However, the work that you submit must be your own. If it isn't, you will be penalized accordingly, and you may end up failing the course or worse. Please read the UA plagiarism policy at: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/code-academic-integrity

Classroom behavior

No electronic devices (like laptops or cell phones) are allowed in class. You are also not allowed to read the newspaper, do Sudokus, etc. To sum up: you should be paying attention to what is going on in class, and only to that. Your interaction with me and other students should conform to the usual norms of politeness.