

## ***Cognitive epistemology***

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This seminar will study the status and functional role of normative evaluations involved in the elaboration of knowledge, both at the individual and at the collective level. It is open to EHES and ENS students and PhDs.

*Day and time:* Two Mondays per month, 15:00-17:00

*Frequency:* 12 sessions total (two per month), starting October 9, 2023

*Location:* Seminar room of the Pavillon Jardin, ENS

### **Object of the seminar:**

Epistemology traditionally aims to provide an account of our concept of knowledge, based on folk psychology and conceptual analysis. Cognitive epistemology aims rather to investigate, on the basis of scientific evidence, how our cognitive equipment allows for reliably extracting and processing information about the environment. A classical objection raised against this aim is that a descriptive investigation cannot account for normative recommendations. A teleo-functional analysis, however, can causally explain why evaluative mechanisms are constitutive and uneliminable components of cognitive actions.

The seminar will examine the various forms of *truth-conduciveness* at work in the individual and social mechanisms that allow individual and collective agents to reliably seek, evaluate and share information, across phylogeny, ontogeny, and cultural accumulation.

### **Breakdown of topics**

1. Representation & normativity: discussing the functional definition of representations
2. Main trends in conceptual epistemology
3. The epistemological contribution of cognitive functions (perception, memory, imagination, reasoning).
4. Beliefs and affordances, and their conditions of correction.
5. How to define an epistemic norm?
6. Pragmatic encroachment: Do informational and pragmatic forms of regulation interact?
7. What are the biases that may prevent individuals or groups to reach their epistemic goals?
8. What is the role of epistemic self-evaluation in a socially extended, "suprapersonal" cognitive framework?