

## Ethics and Normativity Seminar Series

### “Hegel’s Externalist Epistemology of Empirical Knowledge”



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I argue that Hegel was an epistemic externalist about empirical knowledge. Epistemic externalism is the denial of epistemic internalism, the view that to know I must know (or be in a position to know) that my justification is good enough for knowledge. I show that Hegel argues that a believer cannot know that her perceptual justifications and explanatory justifications for empirical beliefs are good enough for knowledge, but rather must have faith that they are. He does this by showing that perceptual knowledge cannot stand alone but is rather dependent upon empirical explanatory knowledge. In turn, empirical explanatory knowledge is regressive in that the most basic empirical premises for one’s knowledge are always themselves in need of justification. This regress means that our empirical explanatory knowledge always rests on premises with a justification that we do not know to be good enough, which in turn means that we do not know that the justifications for our conclusions are good enough. Unlike typical contemporary externalists, Hegel accepts a significant aspect of internalism: the fact that within empirical knowledge we cannot know that our justifications are good enough means that we cannot be satisfied with empirical knowledge – we must also possess another kind of knowledge which does satisfy us.

**Friday, Dec 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**Old Science Building - S102**  
**3:00 – 5:00**

Everyone is invited to continue discussion at *Axelrad* after the talk.