

Public Abstract

First Name:Andrew

Middle Name:Youngmin

Last Name:Moon

Adviser's First Name:Peter

Adviser's Last Name:Markie

Co-Adviser's First Name:Matthew

Co-Adviser's Last Name:McGrath

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A question tracing back to Plato's Meno asks, "What is knowledge?" Very plausibly, a person knows a proposition only if he believes it and it is true. However, true belief is not sufficient for knowledge. A person who believes that *the smiling man next to me is a murderer* because of his schizophrenia does not know that the man is a murderer, even if his belief happens to be true. Hence, many epistemologists think that knowledge requires a justified or rational, true belief, one that was not acquired by luck or accident. Understanding this *epistemic* (or normative) requirement for knowledge has been a focus of contemporary philosophy

Unfortunately, there has been a neglect of the important question of whether there are any further nonepistemic, psychological requirements for knowledge beyond simple belief. Insofar as it is worth knowing what knowledge is, it is worthwhile to explore this question. That is the purpose of this dissertation. In Chapter 1, I explore whether a certain degree of belief is required for knowledge. In Chapter 2, I explore whether confidence is required for knowledge. In Chapter 3, I explore whether the absence of doubt is required for knowledge. In Chapter 4, I explore whether certainty is required for knowledge.

The upshot is that beliefs do not come in degrees (and so is not required for knowledge), confidence is not required for knowledge, the absence of doubt is required for knowledge, and certainty is not required for knowledge. In short, the only nonepistemic, psychological requirement for knowledge other than belief is the absence of doubt. A key result of my dissertation is that we achieve greater insight into the nature of knowledge.