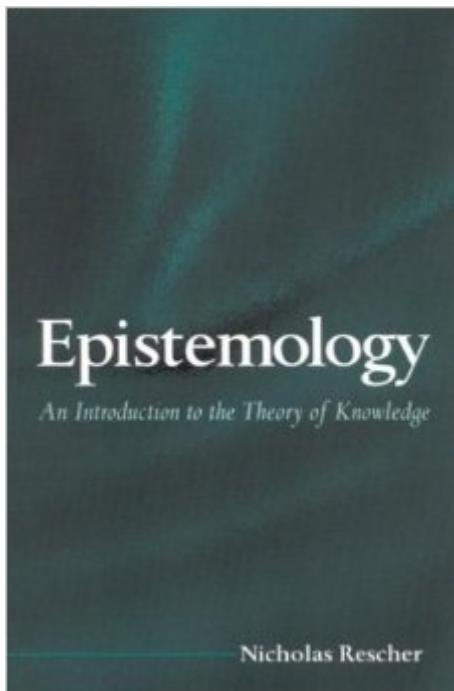


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Epistemology: An Introduction To The Theory Of Knowledge (SUNY Series In Philosophy (Hardcover))



Synopsis

Guided by the founding ideas of American pragmatism, Epistemology provides a clear example of the basic concepts involved in knowledge acquisition and explains the principles at work in the development of rational inquiry. It examines how these principles analyze the course of scientific progress and how the development of scientific inquiry inevitably encounters certain natural disasters. At the center of the book's deliberations there lies not only the potential for scientific progress but also the limit of science as well. This comprehensive introduction to the theory of knowledge addresses a myriad of topics, including the critique of skepticism, the nature of rationality, the possibility of science for extraterrestrial intelligences, and the prospect of insoluble issues in science."

Book Information

Series: SUNY Series in Philosophy (Hardcover)

Hardcover: 406 pages

Publisher: State University of New York Press (October 9, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0791458113

ISBN-13: 978-0791458112

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 1.1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,214,130 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #138 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Movements > Pragmatism #1138 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Epistemology #6061 in Books > Science & Math > History & Philosophy

Customer Reviews

This is an absolutely stunning synthesis of the outstanding work Rescher has been doing since the 1960s. In terms of specific epistemological questions, Rescher just deals masterfully with issue after issue. But the stunning part is how he interlocks the answers to particular issues into a broad, comprehensive (and coherent!) vision of the whole field. This is not a book easily accessible without a pretty good background in philosophy. Rescher's prose is exceedingly precise, clear, and accurate, but it would be dauntingly dense for the lay reader. A typical example: "But indispensability apart, what is it that justifies making presumptions, seeing that they are not established truths? The answer is that this is not so much a matter of probative considerations, but of procedurally practical

ones." Crystal clear, but daunting, encountered in mass, for some readers. And Rescher is covering a huge territory here, and moves at a good clip. Other readers may be irked by Rescher's annoying habit of being right on so many issues.

This 400 page book qualifies as Rescher's most important synoptic effort since the 3 volume summa that he put together for Princeton UP. Those coming to NR for the first time are encouraged to begin here. Of course, he has written a great deal since 2003 on knowledge (esp. in regard to its deficiencies) so we can hope that he will offer another overview, before he packs it in. I suspect that his work in the philosophy of knowledge, as found herein, along with his meta-philosophical reflections upon the failure and progress of philosophy itself (e.g. *The Strife of Systems*), will prove to be his most important philosophy. The jury is still out, of course!

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