

Department of Philosophy, KCL
First Year Epistemology and Methodology, 1998-99
Lecture 2: Empirical Knowledge 1--Perception

Readings

The required readings represent the bare minimum necessary for the course. You should also aim to do most of the recommended reading, and some at least of the supplementary reading. The book by Irvin Rock gives a very readable brief summary of the most important aspects of the psychology of perception.

Required:

Adam Morton, *A Guide Through the Theory of Knowledge*, Chapter 2.

Jonathan Dancy, *An Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology*, Chapter 10.

Recommended

Charles Landesman, *An Introduction to Epistemology*, Chapter 2

Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, first four chapters.

P. F. Strawson, "Perception and its Objects", in *Philosophy and Identity*, ed. G. MacDonald, reprinted in the Dancy anthology listed below.

Supplementary

Frank Jackson, *Perception*.

Jonathan Dancy, ed., *Perceptual Knowledge*, in the Oxford Readings series.

Irvin Rock, *Perception* (Scientific American Library, 1984)

Points to ponder

- 1) Is it true that you are always more certain of how things seem to you than of how things really are?
- 2) Try to justify your belief that Britain is an island. Do you find that the justifying beliefs to which you are finally driven are all perceptual beliefs?
- 3) We sometimes misidentify things we perceive--we mistake a cat for a dog, for example. In such a

case, we might say that we see a cat, but we see it as a dog. But would we be prepared to say that someone was really seeing a cat even when the misidentification involved was extreme?

4) Suppose you do not have the concept of a cat. Could you nevertheless *see a cat*? Could you *see something as a cat*? Could you see *that there was a cat on the mat*?