

Theory of Knowledge

Kinds of Knowledge Claims

Adapted from *Theory of Knowledge Course Companion*, 2007, Dombrowski et al.

Rational Claims

These claims are steps in rational thinking, such as $x^2 + x = x(x + 1)$. They are justified by reasoning, and tested for consistency within a system by the coherence truth test.

Empirical/Observational Claims

Statements about what we can observe through our sense perception and through technologically extended perception. The claims are justified by observation and tested by further observation, using the correspondence truth test.

Value Claims/Judgments

These are claims with evaluations on a scale that is not calibrated in units. Unless the claim is put in observational terms, based on a measurable scale, it is not fact but opinion.

Metaphysical Claims

These are statements about the nature of reality, beyond physical reality. They differ from observational claims because they cannot be tested with sense perception and measured. They can have large numbers of people believing them but cannot be proved true or false by our truth tests.