Midterm Paper

The Question

Your paper should address the following question:

• Do we have justification to form beliefs on the basis of perception only if we have independent justification to believe that perception is reliable?

Guidelines

Your paper should include the following components:

(1) An introduction that explains the question and its significance.

(2) A brief overview of the paper that includes a statement of the thesis that you will be arguing for.

(3) A valid skeptical argument for the conclusion that none of our perceptual beliefs about the external world are justified. Note: your argument should include the premise that we have justification to form beliefs on the basis of perception only if we have independent justification to believe that perception is reliable.

(4) An anti-skeptical response that rejects one of the premises of the skeptical argument. Note: you should present either James Pryor’s or Crispin Wright’s response to the skeptical argument.

(5) A critical discussion of the anti-skeptical response that includes at least one objection and a reply. Note: your critical discussion can repeat moves you’ve encountered in the readings or in class, but it should also make some distinctive, original contribution to the debate.

(6) A brief summary that explains how your critical discussion supports the thesis of your paper.

Instructions for Submission

• Please email your paper to the teacher’s assistant before class on Monday 7 April.

• Papers will be graded anonymously so please include your MIT student number not your name.

• Your paper should be no more than 5 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt font with 1 inch margins.

• You should include an additional page listing all references you have used in writing your paper.

• Late papers will be penalized by a third of a letter grade repeating every 24 hrs after the deadline.
24.211 Theory of Knowledge
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