

Faculty of Business
Intellectual Foundations of Social Sciences
Course Outline

Course Overview

This course is concerned with the nature of social science inquiry. It is intended for students in the business and management disciplines and those early in their masters and doctoral research program. The course is broken into four sections: (1) an introductory overview to the philosophy of science, (2) a review of epistemology – the nature and scope of knowledge – (3) a review of ontology – the what can be said to exist – and (4) specific applications to the major disciplinary areas.

Objectives

The main objectives of the course are:

1. To introduce the philosophy of science and its application to social science.
2. To outline major differing classes of theory in social science and to explicate their meta-theoretical foundations.
3. To familiarize students with the plurality of views on these issues in the intellectual community.
4. To provide students with an opportunity to apply these concepts to the analysis of issues in social science.
5. To provide students with an opportunity to practise scholarly discourse.

Method

The course will take the form of a seminar. Students will be pre-assigned readings and will lead the discussion. There will also be three written assignments.

Assessment

The assessment for this subject will be based 40% on class participation and 60% on written materials. The class participation is split 50:50 between participation in the discussion (including attendance) plus your own presentations. The two written assignments are worth 30% each.

For the first assignment, each student will be assigned one/two reading(s) in the epistemology or ontology components of the course. For each of these papers: (1) you are to prepare a short overview of the assigned paper (500 words) plus a discussion of relevance of that paper to thinking in your chosen field (500 words) and (2) two power point slides summarizing your overview and two power point slides summarizing the relevance to your field. These papers are due at the beginning of each class.

For the second assignment you will be assigned one/two readings relevant to your area from readings in the disciplinary application component of the course. You are to write an essay reviewing and evaluating critically the discussion in the assigned readings. Although your focus will be on the assigned articles you must integrate this with the relevant readings and discussion throughout the course. This essay is restricted to 2,000 words.

Class work

Students will be required to do pre-reading from the reading list in preparation for each of the seminars. For each particular item on the reading list students will give a presentation of the main points in order to initiate discussion. Readings will be assigned at the beginning of the course.

Required Texts

Chalmers, A.F. (1999) *What is this thing called Science? An assessment of the nature and status of science and its methods*. Third Edition. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press. (Designated Chalmers).

Curd, M. and Cover, J.A. (1998). *Philosophy of Science: The Central Issues*. New York: W. W. Norton. (Designated C &C).

Kincaid, H. (1996) *Philosophical Foundations of the Social Sciences: Analyzing Controversies in Social Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Designated Kincaid).

Other readings will be available in the course package.

READINGS

INTRODUCTION

Philosophy of (Social) Science

Fay, B. and D. Moon (1977), "What would an adequate philosophy of social science look like?" *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 7(3), 209–227.

Kuhn: "The nature and necessity of scientific revolutions"; "Objectivity, value judgment, and theory choice" in C & C.

McMullin: "Rationality and paradigm change in science" in C & C.

Longino: "Values and objectivity" in C & C.

Kincaid: "Issues and arguments"; "Challenges to scientific rationality".

Science and Pseudoscience

Popper: "Science: Conjectures and refutations" in C & C.

Kuhn: "Logic of discovery or psychology of research?" in C & C.

Lakatos: "Science and pseudoscience" in C & C.

Thagard: "Why astrology is a pseudoscience" in C & C.

Ruse: "Creation-science is not science" in C & C.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Induction

Chalmers: "Science as knowledge derived from the facts of experience"; "Observation as practical intervention"; "Experiment"; "Deriving theories from facts: Induction".

Lipton: "Induction" in C & C.

Popper: "The problem of induction" in C & C.

Falsification

Chalmers: “Introducing falsificationism”; “Sophisticated falsificationism, novel predictions and the growth of science”; “The limits of falsificationism”.

Paradigms and Programs

Chalmers: “Theories as structures I: Kuhn’s paradigms”; “Theories as structures II: Research Programs”.

Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge

Chalmers: “Feyerabend’s anarchistic theory of science”; “Methodical changes in method”.

Bayesianism & Probability

Chalmers: “The Bayesian Approach”.

Glymour: “Why I am not a Bayesian” in C & C.

W. Salmon: “Rationality and objectivity in Science or Tom Kuhn meets Tom Bayes” in C & C.

Experimentation

Chalmers: “The new experimentalism”.

Duhem: “Physical theory and experiment” in C & C.

Quine: “Two dogmas of empiricism” in C & C.

Gillies: “The Duhem thesis and the Quine thesis” in C & C.

Laudan: “Demystifying underdetermination” in C & C.

ONTOLOGY

Causation, Explanation and the Laws of “Nature”

Chalmers: “Why should the world obey laws?”

Kincaid, “Causes, confirmation and explanation”.

Humphreys, P. (1986), “Causation in the Social Sciences: An Overview,” *Synthese*, 68(1), 1–12.

Ayer: “What is a law of nature?” in C & C.

Dretske: “Laws of Nature” in C & C.

Mellor: “Necessities and universals in natural laws” in C & C.

Cartwright: “Do the laws of physics state the facts?” in C & C.

Realism and Rationalism

Chalmers: “Realism and anti realism”.

Van Fraassen: “Arguments concerning scientific realism” in C & C.

Musgrave: “Realism versus constructive empiricism” in C & C.

Boyd, R. (1989) “What realism implies and what it does not,” *Dialectica*, 43(1-2), 5–29.

Friedman, M. (1953) “The methodology of positive economics”, in *Essays in Positive Economics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 3–43.

Simon, H. (1978) "Rationality as process and as product of thought," *American Economic Review*, 68(2), 1–16

Kincaid, H. (2000) "Formal rationality and its pernicious effects on the social sciences," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 30(1), 67–88.

Functionalism and Individualism

Kincaid: "Functionalism defended"; "The failures of individualism".

Hermeneutics and Critical Theory

Kincaid: "A science of interpretation".

Habermas, J. and Ben-Habib, S. (1981) "Modernity versus postmodernity," *New German Critique*, 22(Winter), 3–14.

Habermas, J. and Cronin, C. (1996) "On the cognitive content of morality," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series*, 96, 335–358.

DISCIPLINARY APPLICATION AND INTERPRETATION

Economics, Finance and Accounting

Kincaid: "Economics: A test case".

McCloskey, D. (1983) "The rhetoric of economics," *Journal of Economic Literature*, 31, 481–517.

Gibbard, A. and Varian, H. (1978) "Economic Models," *Journal of Philosophy*, 75(11), 664–677.

Gul, F. and Pesendorfer, W. (2008) "The case for mindless economics"; Camerer, C. (2008) "The case for mindful economics"; Hausman, D. (2008) "Mindless or mindful economics: A methodological evaluation," all in A. Caplin and A. Schotter (Eds.), *The Foundations of Positive and Normative Economics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Watts R, and Zimmerman, J. (1990) "Positive accounting theory: A ten year perspective," *The Accounting Review*, 65(1), 131–156.

Frankfurter, G. and McGoun, E. (2001) "Anomalies in finance: What are they and what are they good for?" *International Review of Financial Analysis*, 10(4), 407–429.

Law & Society

Leiter, B. (2001) "Legal realism and legal positivism reconsidered," *Ethics*, 111(2), 278–301.

Hardin, R. (1992) "The morality of law and economics," *Law and Philosophy*, 11(4), 331–384.

Little, D. (2000) "Explaining large-scale historical change," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 30(1), 89–112.

Fuchs, S. and Ward, S. (1994) "What is deconstruction, and where and when does it take place? Making facts in science, building cases in law," *American Sociological Review*, 59, 481–500.

Gibbons, M. (2006) "Hermeneutics, political enquiry, and practical reason: An evolving challenge to political science," *American Political Science Review*, 100(4), 1–9.

Management

Bourgeois, J.L. III (1984) "Strategic management and determinism," *Academy of Management Review*, 9(4), 586–596.

Powell, T. (2001) "Competitive Advantage: Logical and Philosophical Considerations," *Strategic Management Journal*, 22(12), 875-888. Plus the follow up commentary and reactions: Durand R. (2002) "Competitive advantages exist: A critique of Powell," *Strategic Management Journal*, 23(9), 867–872; Powell (2002) "The philosophy of strategy," *Strategic Management Journal*, 23(9), 873–880; Powell (2003) "Strategy without ontology," *Strategic Management Journal*, 24(3), 285–291.

Donaldson, L. (2003) "A critique of postmodernism in organizational studies," in E. Locke (Ed.) *Postmodernism and Management: Pros, Cons and the Alternative*, *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 21, 171–204.

Astley, A. and Zammuto, R. (1992) "Organization science, managers and language games"; Donaldson, L. (1992) "The Weick stuff: Managing beyond games"; Beyer, J. (1992) "Metaphors, misunderstandings and mischief: A commentary" all in *Organization Science*, 3(4), 443–474.

Marketing & Operations

Calder, B. (1977) "Focus groups and the nature of qualitative marketing research," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 14(3), 353–364.

Hunt, S. (2005) "For truth and realism in management research," *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 14(2), 127–138.

Tadajewski, M. (2004) "The philosophy of marketing theory: Historical and future directions," *The Marketing Review*, 4(3), 307–340.

Kleindorfer, G., O'Neill, L. and Ganeshan, R. (1998) "Validation in simulation: Various positions in the philosophy of science," *Management Science*, 44(8), 1087–1099.

Meredith, J. (2001) "Reconsidering the philosophical Basis of OR/MS," *Operations Research*, 49(3), 325–333.

Henrickson, L. and McKelvey, B. (2002) "Foundations of "new" social science: Institutional legitimacy from philosophy, complexity science, postmodernism, and agent-based modeling," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 99(10, Supplement 3), 7288–7295.

CONCLUSION:

Davis, M. (1971) "That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 1(4), 309–344.

Lamont, M. (1987) "How to become a dominant French philosopher: The case of Jacques Derrida," *The American Journal of Sociology*, 93(3), 584–622

Blaug, M. (2001) "No history of ideas, please, we're Economists," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 15(1) 145–164.

Van de Ven, A. (2007). "Engaged scholarship in a professional school"; "Philosophy of science underlying engaged scholarship"; "Practicing engaged scholarship," in *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.