



FACULTY
OF SOCIAL
SCIENCES

COURSE SYLLABUS

Reg. No.
U 2023/242

2023-04-19

SGR002F Philosophy of Science for the Social Sciences, 7.5 credits, third cycle

The course was established by the board of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lund University on 6 June 2018 and the course syllabus was approved by the Research Studies Council on 19 April 2023.

The syllabus is valid from autumn semester 2023.

General information

The course is offered as a freestanding course for the social sciences. The language of instruction is English.

Course content

The course introduces a broad range of classical and contemporary texts in the tradition of the philosophy of science for the social sciences as well as influential debates in the field. The course provides an overview of the history of the philosophy of science for the social sciences and critical contemporary positions in the field such as positivist theory, realism, and materialism as well as hermeneutics, phenomenology, critical theory, constructivism, post-structuralism, and postcolonialism. The course brings together contesting epistemologies and ontologies focused on how to grasp, understand, and analyse various social worlds. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to reflect on and consider the ways in which the tradition of the philosophy of science for the social sciences could provide an analytical entry to enhance their research.

Course goals

On completion of the course, the student shall be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate knowledge and overview of various influential schools in the philosophy of science for the social sciences.
- Show familiarity with theoretical key concepts in a range of schools in the philosophy of science for the social sciences.

Competence and skills

- Identify analytical strengths and shortcomings of various schools in the tradition of the philosophy of science for the social sciences.
- Conceptualise and explore dissertation related research questions and problems by engaging with different schools in the philosophy of science for the social sciences.

Judgement and approach

- Critically consider a range of contributions in the philosophy of science for the social sciences and their impact on diverse social science disciplines.
- Reflect on the relevance of different philosophy of science for the social sciences schools for critical social scientific inquiry, research, and debate.

Course design

The course consists of lectures and seminars to offer an overview of the tradition of the philosophy of science for the social sciences, contemporary main positions, inquiries, debates, and critique. Themes such as fact-value, truth, distinction, verification, validation, perceptions, structures, intersections, deconstruction as well as realities, practices, and agency are critically explored at lectures and seminars. Seminars are composed of group presentations of course literature and discussions of students' research. Aiming at being of direct relevance for students' own doctoral dissertation research, the seminars provide a space for engaging with social science analysis

and the dissertation writing process. A final essay related to students' research is produced.

Assessment

Active participation is required. Students make oral presentations for the seminars as well as written contributions. At a workshop, individual texts will be presented while the submission of a final essay will conclude the course.

Grades

The grades awarded are Pass or Fail. To receive a Pass the doctoral student must fulfil the learning outcomes of the course. At the beginning of the course, students will be informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus as well as the grading scale and how it is applied at the course.

Entry requirements and selection

Applicants must be admitted to a doctoral programme. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places in the course, students from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University, will be given priority.