



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2021-2022

Philosophy of Science

Course Code	S_PS
Credits	6
Period	P4
Course Level	200
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences
Course Coordinator	dr. E. Koster
Examiner	dr. E. Koster
Teaching Staff	dr. E. Koster, dr. J.D. Grayot, E.K.W. Werkman
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Study-group

Course Objective

In this course you will learn:

1. to identify different philosophical visions of science and (research) ethics in the social sciences;
2. about contemporary views on the way in which (i) society, (ii) your education and (iii) you as an individual influence the practice of science;
3. about the social and cultural character of scientific knowledge acquisition;
4. to differentiate between aspects that relate to the philosophy of science and (research) ethics in contemporary debates within the social sciences;
5. to reflect on your position within the academic world and to develop your academic attitude;
6. to express your own views on debates within the social sciences in a clear and well-substantiated manner;
7. to develop arguments, both orally and in written form, that are valid and persuasive.

Course Content

'Philosophy of Science' is a course for social sciences students and forms part of the 'academic core' curriculum. The wider objective of this course is to expand your understanding of the process of knowledge acquisition in the social sciences more generally, and of your own position as a scientist in particular.

The course looks at three fundamental themes within the philosophy of the social sciences: naturalism, reductionism and the need for normativity. Naturalism involves differentiating between explaining and understanding; reductionism involves differentiating between holism and individualism; and within normativity, the central distinction is between values-based and non-values-based knowledge on the one hand, and objectivity and relativism on the other.

Teaching Methods

Lectures, seminars, tutorials.

Method of Assessment

Written assignments and exam.

Literature

Book and Digital copy of the reader, available on Canvas.

Target Audience

2nd year bachelor students in Cultural Anthropology and Development
Sociology

Additional Information

Before the start of the course, a programme syllabus will be published on Canvas, including a timetable, precise instructions regarding (among others) tutorials and assignments, and a list of mandatory literature.