

University of Waterloo
Department of Philosophy
Phil 674: Seminar on Philosophy of Social Science

Fall 2014
Tuesdays 11:30-2:20 HH 357

Instructor Information

Instructor: Patricia Marino

Office: HH 332

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4 and by appointment

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Course Description

This seminar will concentrate on related topics in philosophy of social science including 1) epistemological questions of explanation, prediction, law, and models 2) the status of rationality assumptions 3) the idea of "socially constructed" concepts 4) values and objectivity in social sciences and 5) social science and normative connections, e. g. in policy.

Course Requirements

Since this is a seminar, attendance at each meeting is essential. If you expect to miss any of the meetings let me know as soon as possible and we can discuss the reasons. If you miss any meetings, it may impact your grade; if you miss more than three meetings for any reason you cannot pass the course. I will use LEARN for announcements etc. so please check it daily.

Every week, you'll have to submit a 300-600 word paper on the readings. This paper should examine critically some particular idea from one of the texts assigned for that day, and should have a thesis and argument. These will be graded out of 10 points. These must be submitted via the LEARN dropbox, in pdf format, before noon the Monday before the class for which they apply. Participation in class discussion is also an important part of the course. If you raise questions or offer comments or responses twice at each meeting of the seminar the participation part of your grade will be a B or 75%. More frequent participation will raise your grade, less frequent participation will lower it. If you attend class without participating, your grade for participation will be D or 55. Participation is worth 10% of your grade.

There is one long paper required, which should be 4500-6000 words. Everyone will do a presentation during the last two weeks of class. The idea is for you to present a work-in-progress version of your final paper, which you can then revise in response to feedback and questions. When you do your presentation you must also submit a version of your paper that represents the content of your presentation. You can present in any style you like -- slides, talking, reading, whatever -- but this paper should contain the ideas of your presentation expressed in written-paper style. I will comment on this, and you should use these comments to improve the final version of the paper to be handed in during the exam period. The final version of the final draft will be due December 18th at 5:00pm, again via the LEARN dropbox.

Course Schedule and Readings (all readings will be posted on LEARN):

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Naturalism, humanism, interpretation

- Charles Taylor. Interpretation and the Sciences of Man. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 25(1) (1971) 3–51.
- Brian Fay and J. Donald Moon. What Would an Adequate Philosophy of Social Science Look Like? In Martin and McIntyre, eds., *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* (MIT Press 1996), 21-35.

Week 3: Explanation, prediction, and laws

- Carl Hempel. The Function of General Laws in History. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 39(2) (1942), 35–48.
- Brian Fay. General Laws and Explaining Human Behavior. In In Martin and McIntyre, eds., *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* (MIT Press 1966), 91-110.
- Harold Kincaid. Defending Laws in the Social Sciences. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 20(1) (1990), 56–83.

Week 4: Models and idealization

- Nancy Cartwright. The limits of Causal Order, from Economics to Physics. In Uskali Mäki, ed., *Fact and Fiction in Economics* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 137-151.
- Tarja Knuutila and Jaakko Kuorikoski. Idealised Representations, Inferential Devices and Cross-Disciplinary Tools: Theoretical Models in Social Sciences. In Ian Jarvie and Jesús Zamora-Bonilla, *The Sage Handbook of The Philosophy of Social Sciences* (SAGE, 2011), 530-550.

Week 5: Rationality assumptions 1

- Føllesdal, Dagfinn. The Status of Rationality Assumptions in Interpretation and in the Explanation of Action. *Dialectica* (1982), 301-316.
- Jon Elster. The Nature and Scope of Rational Choice Explanation. In Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science. In Martin and McIntyre, eds., *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* (MIT Press 1996), 311-322.

Week 6: Rationality assumptions 2

- Debra Satz and John Ferejohn. Rational Choice and Social Theory. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 91(2) (1994), 71–87.
- Ann Cudd. How to Explain Oppression: Criteria of Adequacy for Normative Explanatory Theories. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 35(1) (2005), 20–49.

Week 7: Social construction: the example of race

- Kwame Anthony Appiah. The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race. *Critical Inquiry*, 12(1) (1985), 21–37.
- Ron Mallon. Passing, Traveling and Reality: Social Constructionism and the Metaphysics of Race. *Noûs*, 38(4) (2004), 644–673.

Week 8: Values and objectivity 1

- Max Weber, "Objectivity" in Social Science and Social Policy. Reprinted from his *Methodology of the Social Sciences*, in Martin and McIntyre, eds., *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* (MIT Press 1996), 535-546.
- Eleonora Montuschi. Rethinking Objectivity in Social Science. *Social Epistemology* 18(2-3) (2004), 109–122.
- Heather Douglas. Facts, Values, and Objectivity. In Ian Jarvie and Jesús Zamora-Bonilla, *The Sage Handbook of The Philosophy of Social Sciences* (SAGE, 2011), 513-529.

Week 9: Values and objectivity 2

- Elizabeth Anderson. Knowledge, Human interests, and Objectivity in Feminist Epistemology. *Philosophical Topics* 23 (2) (1995), 27-58.
- Sharon Crasnow. Feminist Anthropology and Sociology: Issues for Social Science. In Stephen Turner and Mark Risjord, eds., *Handbook of the Philosophy of Science, Volume 15: Philosophy of Anthropology and Sociology* (Elsevier, 2006).

Week 10: Social science, values, and policy

- Daniel Hausman. Evaluating Social Policy. In *The Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Social Science* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 607-624.
- Anna Alexandrova. Values and the Science of Well-Being: A Recipe for Mixing. In *The Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Social Science* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 625-645.
- Joseph Davis. Social Science, Objectivity, and Moral Life. *Society*, 50(6) (2013), 554–559.

Week 11: presentations

Week 12: presentations

Assessment

- Participation: 10%
- Short papers: 10%
- Presentation: 10%
- Presentation paper: 20%
- Final paper: 50%

Late Work

If you experience unexpected difficulties like illness or personal difficulties, please let me know as soon as possible. Obviously it's best to just submit everything on time. But if you must be late, I will subtract one point per day (out of ten) for the weekly papers and three percentage points (out of 100) per day for the presentation and final paper. If anything arises that gets in the way of you doing your work for this class, please do not hesitate to talk to me: I'm here to help and I'll do what I can.

Information on Plagiarism Detection

No formal or technological plagiarism detection mechanisms will be used in this class.

Electronic Device Policy

There is no formal policy against the use of laptops or tablets in class, but there are two rules: 1) you may not use any technology in ways that are distracting to me or to the other students and 2) you must be mentally present for what is going on in the classroom. This means no videos, no social networking, no email, no checking your phone during class. If you must use your phone, please leave the classroom to do so. You may return when you're done.

Institutional-required statements for undergraduate course outlines approved by Senate Undergraduate Council, April 14, 2009

Cross-listed course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#).

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Other sources of information for students

[Academic integrity](#) (Arts) [Academic Integrity Office](#) (uWaterloo)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services office](#), located in Needles Hall Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.