POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY, AND ECONOMICS

PPE/ETHR2207: PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019
FALL SEMESTER

COURSE SYLLABUS

1. COURSE INFORMATION

Classes held: ST, 11 - 12:20
Credits: 4
Prerequisite: none

2. FACULTY INFORMATION

Faculty Name: Elena Popa
Email: elena.popa@auw.edu.bd
Office Location: H600
Office Hours: ST 9:30-10:30, 4:30-5:30; W, 2-4; other times by email appointment

Qualifications: PhD in philosophy, Central European University

Areas of Expertise: Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Cognitive Science

Profile: My research is on the problem of causation and uses of causal concepts in the sciences. I am interested in philosophy of science (causal explanation, causal realism), philosophy of psychology (causal reasoning and causal learning) and historical aspects (early versions of action-based theories of causation). My teaching interests are broader, ranging from philosophical subjects, interdisciplinary courses incorporating literature, psychology, history of science, and social sciences, and writing seminars.

3. TEXT AND OTHER COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts: Excerpts from A. Rosenberg, Philosophy of Social Science; D. Lewis, Convention: A Philosophical Study; H. Longino, Individuals of populations?, In Cartwright and Montuschi, Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction; R. Millikan, Language Conventions Made Simple, The Journal of Philosophy; M. Gilbert, Walking Together: A Social Phenomenon, MidWest Studies in Philosophy; H. Kincaid, Contextualism, explanation and the social sciences, Philosophical Explorations; H. Douglas, Values in Social Science, In Cartwright and Montuschi, Philosophy of Social Science: A New

There will be hard copies of the required readings. Electronic copies will also be uploaded on the moodle page.

4. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

Social sciences appear to be different from natural or formal sciences in several respects. For instance, while the domains of sciences such as physics or biology are fairly clearly delimited, the question of the entities studied is social science is still an open question. Likewise, while explanations in natural sciences typically refer to laws, social phenomena cannot be subject to satisfactory explanations referring to laws of nature. Following these issues, some of the most notable questions philosophers have asked concerning social sciences are: What are social facts? What models of explanation do social scientists use? How should groups, or group actions be understood? Is social science a unified domain, or different disciplines such as economics, sociology, social psychology study separate fields, supporting different models? This course will introduce students to some of the classic answers to these questions, and the subsequent debates. Students will be encouraged to use the conceptual toolkit that this course provide to think about the social sciences they study, and provide their own case studies and illustrations of how central concepts subject to philosophical analysis are at work within the social science disciplines.

5. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Method of Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. By the end of this course students should be able to explain the concepts, methods and views discussed during each session.</td>
<td>Seminar participation.</td>
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<td>Written assignments.</td>
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<td>Written exam.</td>
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<td>2. Students should be able to reconstruct, analyze and assess arguments from the given texts, and/or related literature.</td>
<td>Seminar participation.</td>
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<td>Written assignments.</td>
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<td>Written exam.</td>
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<td>3. Students should be able to connect the themes and arguments discussed in class.</td>
<td>Seminar participation.</td>
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<td>Written assignments.</td>
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<td>Written exam.</td>
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<td>4. Students should be familiar with the main views of the main debates on social ontology, explanation in the social sciences, naturalist vs. non-naturalist approaches, values and social sciences, and discipline-specific issues.</td>
<td>Seminar participation.</td>
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<td>Written assignments.</td>
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<td>Written exam.</td>
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<td>5. Students should be able to critically read, analyze, and contextualize philosophical and social science texts.</td>
<td>Seminar participation.</td>
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<td>Written assignments.</td>
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<td>Written exam.</td>
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6. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT & GRADING POLICY

Attendance

The students are required to attend 80% of the classes. Missing more than 20% of the classes would result in a 10% penalty on the final grade per absence. Missing more than 50% of the classes will result in failing the course. If students have a good reason for missing classes, they should inform the instructor within a week from the absence and provide the justifying document (medical certificate etc).

Assessment

25% seminar activity in connection to the readings
35% mid-term
40% final exam

Class activity will be evaluated given students’ participation to class – in analyzing the text, participation to group discussion, asking questions related to text understanding. The students are also encouraged to use reading notes.

7. CONTACT WITH YOUR PROFESSOR

Students can contact me during office hours, or at other times with a previous appointment by email, or agreed upon in conversation after the class. I will provide written feedback on drafts, or reading suggestions, which can also be discussed in person. Students can also request feedback on their class progress, major concerns with the course etc.

You can email me anytime, and I will try to get back to you within 24 hours. It is highly probable that on week-ends, or days off I may take longer to reply.

8. COURSE SCHEDULE

**WEEK 1: Philosophy of science and social science: basics**

Student Learning Objective: 1, 4, 5.

**WEEK 2: Social facts and social ontology**

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 4.
Required Readings: H. Longino, Individuals of populations?, In Cartwright and Montuschi, Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction

**WEEK 3: Convention and group action I: methodological individualism**

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 4.
Required Readings: D. Lewis, Convention: A Philosophical Study, Ch. I: 1, 2.

**WEEK 4: Convention and group action II: biological approaches**

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 3, 4.

**WEEK 5: Convention and group action III: sociological approaches**

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 3, 4.

**WEEK 6: Explanation in Social Science**

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 4.

**WEEK 7: Revision and practice quiz**

Student Learning Objective: 3, 5.
Required Readings: Prepare questions in relation to the readings from weeks 1-6.

**WEEK 8: Mid-term**

Student Learning Objective: 3, 5.
Required Readings:

**WEEK 9: Fall break.**
WEEK 10: Social science and values

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 3, 4.
Required Readings: H. Douglas, Values in Social Science, In Cartwright and Montuschi, Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction

WEEK 11: Non-naturalistic approaches to social science: the case of history

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 3, 4.

WEEK 12: Philosophy of economics

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 4.
Required Readings: D.M. Hausman, Mistakes about Preferences in the Social Sciences, Philosophy of the Social Sciences.

WEEK 13: Philosophy and political science

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 3, 4.
Required Readings: J. Elster, Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences, Unintended Consequences

WEEK 14: Cognitive approaches to social science

Student Learning Objective: 1, 2, 4.

WEEK 15: Revision and practice quiz

Student Learning Objective: 3, 5.
Required Readings:

9. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Written exam
The written exam will consist in three types of questions:

i) Multiple choice and fill-in style exercises from the information in the lectures.

ii) Questions in relation to a chosen fragment from the seminar text – analysis, argumentation, and integration with the entire reading.

iii) Questions requiring analysis and argumentation on the basis of a topic discussed in class (students will have a choice between 3 questions on different texts).

**Seminar participation**

For class activity the most important criterion is having read the text. More in-depth interpretations, arguments, and counter-arguments from the students’ part will count towards a higher score. Note: class activity is not the same as attendance – while attending the majority of the session is mandatory, simply being present does not guarantee a good score for class activity.

**10. KEY DATES & DEADLINES**

Week 7: Practice quiz.
Week 8: Mid-term.
Week 15 Practice quiz.
Exam session: Final exam.

**11. PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

If you plagiarize any part of your assignment/exam, the assignment/exam will be considered failed. Upon plagiarizing a second time, the entire course will be considered failed.

All members of the AUW Community are bound by the Academic Honor Code published in the Academic Bulletin (http://www.auw.edu.bd/academics/course-bulletin/).

The integrity of students’ academic work is very important to AUW faculty. Universities are based upon the fundamental principle that the work presented truly belongs to the author, because the academic community revolves around ideas and creativity. Each person’s ideas are his or her contribution to the academic community. Therefore, taking another person’s ideas and representing them as one’s own is a serious form of dishonesty. Similarly, cheating (copying someone else’s work, asking for answers, sharing answers, etc.) and other forms of dishonesty (falsifying data, making up references, etc.) are also serious breaches of this honor code.

Plagiarism is intentionally or unintentionally taking credit for another’s words or ideas. You may not plagiarize in your academic work, and you must adhere to the following:

- When you use someone else’s words (whether they are from a distinguished author or a classmate’s paper), place the words you have copied in quotation marks and provide the appropriate citation of author and source. A good guideline to use to avoid plagiarism is to make sure quotes of three or more sequential words from someone else are put into quotation marks.
If you paraphrase (reword) another person’s ideas, then you must also cite the source. Paraphrasing must involve changing the words and sentence structure of the original source.

Cite materials you copy or paraphrase from the Internet, even if the author is not identified.

The various academic disciplines (humanities, social sciences, sciences) use slightly different formats for footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographies. Your professor for a particular class will tell you which format he or she wants you to use in that class.

Copying, asking for answers, sharing answers, and any other form of cheating (misrepresenting your own work and knowledge) on exams or quizzes are all forms of academic dishonesty.

Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty
1. Making up references, quoting wrong sources, etc.
2. Falsifying data.
3. Misrepresenting your situation to be excused from academic work.
4. Submitting the same paper in more than one class.
5. Informing a student in a later class about questions on tests or quizzes.
6. Misrepresenting your academic work or qualifications in any way.

Full details about plagiarism, academic dishonesty and penalties are available in the Academic Honor Code in the Academic Bulletin.

12. STRATEGIES TO PREVENT PLAGIARISM & VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Always indicate your sources – if you cite, or if you paraphrase. When taking notes prior to writing the essay always indicate the source and page number, so you have the correct reference for the essay. While it is helpful to discuss ideas with other students and incorporate feedback, make sure you do so in your own words.

Students are encouraged to consult the following guidelines for citation and paraphrasing:

Citation: https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_quoting.html

Paraphrasing: https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_paraphrase2.html

13. CLASS BEHAVIOUR

Aim to be in class on time – being late 3 times counts as an absence, with effect on the attendance score.

Absences for other reasons than those stated in the academic bulletin will not be excused.
The use of mobile phones in the classroom is not allowed. Students who fail to comply to this rule will first receive a warning and, on repeated breach of this protocol points will be deducted from their class activity score (with effect on the final grade). Note that no further warnings will be issued, and the points will be deducted automatically.

While I can provide feedback on students’ class performance at any time, under no circumstances will I negotiate grades or deadlines. If you think that you may have not been graded fairly do contact me while referring to the criteria set in the syllabus/discussed in class; any other reasons why you may need a higher grade are irrelevant.

14. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

How to study for this course

Philosophical texts tend to be difficult readings. Although the volume of reading is not as ample as in other humanities, it might be necessary to go through an article/book chapter more than once to get the main points. This is why attending the classes, asking questions and reading all of the seminar material is essential. Taking notes will also help – during the class and while reading.

As with other assignments, the exam requires reading, planning, and keeping track of the class discussions throughout the term. Do no expect a good grade if you only prepare the night before.

If at any point in the class you are unsure about the main discussions, definitions, and arguments, I strongly recommend using the allocated office hours when I can answer your questions or go though the more difficult material again.

Recommended readings

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (http://plato.stanford.edu) – entries on the discussed authors and topics.

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (http://www.iep.utm.edu/)

T. Honderich (ed.), The Oxford Companion to Philosophy – useful for looking up specific concepts/authors.