



UPPSALA  
UNIVERSITET

**Department of Sociology**

**Course Syllabus**

**Theory of Science for Social Scientists**

**Advanced Course for Phd Candidate**

**Spring 2022**

## **Theory of Science for Social Scientists**

Advanced Course for PhD Candidates

Spring 2022, Credits: 7.5 ECTS

### **Course Description**

The course aims to give a basic orientation in epistemology and the philosophy of science. It provides participants with a deeper understanding of epistemological issues that are fundamental to modern social scientific concept formation and construction of methods. It offers the possibility to analyze the logic, methodology, modes of explanation, and methods of inquiry of the social sciences.

The course covers a body of classical and contemporary original texts from different theoretical traditions, such as positivism, critical rationalism, phenomenology, hermeneutics and social constructivism. Among other topics covered by the course are mythological holism and individualism, as well as social mechanisms. With this background, the participants should be able to systematically reflect on their own research fields in a larger philosophical, historical and theoretical context. On the basis of these texts different issues are discussed: What is a scientific fact? What is meant by concepts such as knowledge and objectivity? What constitutes a valid sociological explanation? What is the relationship between science and values in the social sciences? What does the possible distinctive character of the social sciences consist of?

The course is given on a half-time basis, and stretches over seven weeks, March 24 – June 5, i.e. the periods three and four). The language of instruction is English.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon accomplishment of the course, the participants are expected to

- be able to discuss and account for epistemological problems in relation to social scientific concept formation and methodology.
- be able to describe generally the development of ideas in the philosophy of the social sciences.
- be able to carry out a critical analysis of the epistemological foundations within different areas of the social sciences.

### **Course Literature**

Bauman, Z. 1978 *Hermeneutics and Social Sciences: Approaches to Understanding* London: Hutchinson (selected parts)

Benton, T. and Craib, I. 2011 *Philosophy of Social Sciences* (2nd ed.) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (selected parts)

Rosenberg, A. 2015 *Philosophy of Social Science* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press (selected parts)

Ryan, A. 1970 *The Philosophy of the Social Sciences* London: MacMillan (selected parts)

Winch, Peter 1990 [1958] *The Idea of Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* London: Routledge (selected parts)

More literature in form of articles and book chapters will be added to the list above.

## **The Design of the Course**

Teaching takes the form of a series of lectures, each followed by a seminar. Lectures cover the essential parts of the course literature, which are discussed in the following seminar.

Whereas both presence at, and preparation before lectures are optional, the seminars are mandatory. Please notice that you for any reason miss more than two seminars you will be permitted to continue the course and will have to re-take it on another occasion.

Seminars are intended for the analysis and discussion of the assigned literature. Therefore, participants are expected to read the assigned texts carefully and to participate regularly and actively through their contribution to the analysis and discussion of the literature. Participants are also required to hand in summaries of the assigned literature for each seminar. The appropriate format is two full single-spaced pages. In case of absence, the participants are required to hand in a longer summary (4 full single-spaced pages) of the assigned literature by the end of the course (June 5).

The Topic and reading assignments for each session will be announced later.

## **Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Friday 25/3	13:15-15:00	2-1026	Lecture 1	Reza Azarian	
Tuesday 5/4	10:15-12:00	2-1026	Seminar 1	Reza Azarian	
Wednesday 6/4	10:15-12:00	2-1026	Lecture 2	Reza Azarian	
Tuesday 19/4	10:15-12:00	2-1026	Seminar 2	Reza Azarian	
Wednesday 20/4	10:15-12:00	2-1026	Lecture 3	Reza Azarian	
Tuesday 3/5	10:15-12:00	2-1026	Seminar 3	Reza Azarian	
Thursday 5/5	10:15-12:00	2-1026	Lecture 4	Miia Bask	
Tuesday 17/5	10:15-12:00	2-1026	Seminar 4	Miia Bask	
Wednesday 18/5	10:15-12:00	2-1026	Lecture 5	Reza Azarian	
Tuesday 31/5	10:15-12:00	2-1026	Seminar 5	Reza Azarian	
Sunday 5/6	Last day for handing in the Final Exam				

## **Examination**

The course is examined partly through the participants' active participation in the seminars along with the submission of all the summaries, partly through an individually written final paper (3000 to 4000 words). The paper should consist of a brief statement of a well-defined, specified research question (preferably the main key question of the dissertation). The final paper should also in detail address the related epistemological/methodological considerations, informed by the content of the course. Among such considerations are a presentation and a principal discussion of the choice of intended approach for examining the research question. In addition, the paper should also include well-argued motivations for, and critical as well as ethical reflections on the choice of approach. Detailed instruction and information regarding the requirements and grading will be provided later. Deadline for submission of the course paper is June 5, 2022.