

**Philosophy of social science - an introduction**  
**Guido Palazzo**  
**2023-24**

The course "Philosophy of science" will confront you with the various schools of thought in philosophy that build the (potential and too often only implicit) background of your own research project. It helps you to understand the various ways, scientific projects can be positioned, and it clarifies the numerous hidden assumptions about reality, objectivity, truth, values and other ontological and epistemological constructs, which are at the core of scientific work. Furthermore, we will work on the criteria of successful publication and try to better understand the process of publishing in international peer-review journals.

<b>Session</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time/Room</b>	
1	19.9.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<b>Introduction - The Enlightenment project</b>
2	25.9.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<b>Positivism as a philosophical theory</b>
3	27.9.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<b>Positivism applied in management research: Methodological individualism and rational choice theory</b>
4	2.10.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<b>Towards post-empiricism</b>
5	4.10.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<b>The interpretative tradition</b>
6	9.10.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<b>The interpretative tradition applied in management research</b>
7	11.10.	<b>14:00 – 15:30</b> Extranef 109	<b>The critical tradition</b>
8	16.10.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<b>The critical tradition applied in management research</b>
9	18.10.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<b>Structuralism, poststructuralism and postmodernism, constructivism</b>
10	23.10.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<b>Structuralism and postmodernism applied in management research</b>
11	25.10.	08:30 – 10:00 Extranef 109	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Pragmatism</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Wrap-up of theories</b></li> </ul>
12	30.10.	08:30 – 10:00 Anthropole 3077	<b>The art of scientific writing: Writing an abstract and writing a review</b>
13	01.11.	<b>14:00 – 15:30</b> Extranef 109	<b>Continuation</b>

## **Session 1. Introduction**

- No readings

## **Session 2: Positivism as a philosophical theory**

- \*Otto Neurath: The scientific world conception
- \*Karl Popper: The problem of induction
- \*\*John Elster: The nature and scope of rational-choice explanations.
- Ludwig Wittgenstein: Tractatus logico-philosophicus (extracts)
- \*\* Milton Friedman: The methodology of positive economics.

## **Session 3: Positivist methods in management research**

- Bacharach, S. 1989. Organizational theories: Some criteria for evaluation. *Academy of Management Review*, 14: 496-515.
- Whetten; D. A. 1989. What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 14: 490-495

## **Session 4: Towards Post-Empiricism**

- Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophical investigations (extracts)
- \*Thomas Kuhn: A role for history
- \*Imre Lakatos: Falsification and the methodology of scientific research programmes
- \*Paul Feyerabend: Against method

## **Session 5: The interpretative tradition**

- \*Hans-Georg Gadamer: Hermeneutical understanding
- Schwandt, T. A. 2000. Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry. In: N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 189-213.

## **Session 6: The interpretative tradition applied in management research**

- Klein, H. K. & Myers, M. D. 1999. A set of principles for conducting and evaluating interpretive field studies in information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 23: 67–94/
- Eisenhardt, K. M. & Graebner, M. E. 2007. Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50: 25–32.
- Smircich, L./Stubbart, C. 1985: Strategic Management in an Enacted World. In: *Academy of Management Review* 10: 724-736.
- Ferraro, F., Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. I. 2005. Economic language and assumptions: How theories can become self-fulfilling. *Academy of Management Review*, 30: 8-24.
- Ghoshal S., & Moran, P. 1996. Bad for practice: A critique of the transaction cost theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 21: 13-47.

## **Session 7: The critical tradition**

- \*Max Horkheimer: Traditional and critical theory
- \*Jürgen Habermas: Knowledge and human interest/The tasks of a critical theory
- Jenkins, S. 2020. The new intolerance. *Times Literary Supplement*, October 2. <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/cynical-theories-helen-pluckrose-james-lindsay-book-review/>

## **Session 8: The critical tradition applied in management research**

- Steffy, B.D./Grimes, A.J. 1986: A Critical Theory of Organization Science. In: *Academy of Management Review* 11: 322-336.
- Alvesson, M. & Willmott, H. 1996. Making sense of management. A critical introduction. London: Sage. 9-42; 91-109.

## **Session 9: Structuralism, poststructuralism, postmodernism & feminism**

- \*Emile Durkheim: What is a social fact?
- \*Claude Lévy-Strauss: Structural analysis in linguistics and in anthropology/Language and the analysis of social laws
- \*Michel Foucault: The order of things/Power and knowledge
- Donna Haraway. *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Autumn, 1988), 575-599

## **Session 10: Structuralism and Postmodernism applied in management research**

- Calàs, M & Smircich, L. 1999. Past Postmodernism? Reflections and Tentative Directions. In: Academy of Management Review 24: 649-671.
- Firat, A. F. & Venkatesh, A. 1995. Liberatory Postmodernism and the Reenchantment of Consumption. The Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 22, No. 3: 239-267.
- Levy, D. 2008. Political contestation in global production networks. Academy of Management Review, 33 (4): 943-962
- DiMaggio, P. & Powell, W. 1983. The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields, American Sociological Review, 48(2): 147-160.

## **Session 11: Pragmatism and Wrap up**

- Dewey, J. 1986. The later works, 1925 – 1953. Vol. 12: 1938. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press: 108-141.
- Rorty, R. 1981. Method, science and social hope. Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 11: 569-588
- Farjoun, M., Ansell, C. & Boin, A. 2015. Perspective – pragmatism in organization studies: Meeting the challenges of a dynamic and complex world. Organization Science, 26(6), pp. 1787–1804

## **Session 12: Publishing your work in top tier journals (writing an abstract + writing a review)**

*Please chose one of three papers for review and you have the choice between a quantitative, a qualitative and a theory project:*

- Qualitative: Vaccaro, N. and Palazzo, G. 2015. Values against violence. Institutional change in societies dominated by organized crime. Academy of Management Journal → Versions 1 and 2
- Quantitative: Antonakis J. & Jacquard, P. 2015. How do leaders emerge? Charisma and performance effects in U.S. presidential elections. Academy of Management Journal → Versions 1 and 2
- Theory: Schrempf, J., Palazzo, G. & Phillips, R. 2016. Historic CSR. Academy of Management Review, 41 (4):700-719 → version 1 and 2

## **Session 13: Publishing your work in top tier journals (continuation)**

*versions 3 and 4 of each paper*

### **Literature (will be provided on the moodle)**

\* = articles are taken from: Gerard Delanty & Piet Strydom, *Philosophies of Social Science. The classing and contemporary readings*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003.

\*\* = articles taken from Michael Martin & Lee C. MyIntyre, *Readings in the philosophy of social science*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994.

### **Exam:**

You get 6 credits for the course. How?

#### **1. Summaries of articles (session 2-11)**

For the sessions 2 to 11 you have to prepare a summary of 450-500 words of the respective literature (= 10 summaries). The summaries must be submitted *before*, at latest *at the beginning* of the session. If you miss the deadline, you will have to write a summary of 1000 words instead.

The summaries should include the following aspects:

- What are the key elements of the argumentations?
- How are the different articles and their arguments related (e.g. building on each other, refusing arguments of each other, applying arguments)?
- For the papers represent applications of the various philosophical schools of thought you have to discuss how they relate to the respective philosophical background theories (refers to the essay for the sessions 3, 6, 8, 10, 11)
- What are my three lessons learnt and my three questions for the session?

#### **2. Facilitation of the discussions**

Each session one or two students (depending on how many students will participate in the seminar) will have to take the lead in the discussion in one of the sessions, which means being better prepared to a) give the initial input and b) guide the discussion at the beginning.

### **3. Writing an abstract for a paper**

1. You will have to write an abstract for one of your PhD projects of 120 -150 words. It is not important, whether or not a paper already exists.
2. You will have to write a twitter message (140 signs) on your PhD project that best captures what you are doing

### **4. Writing a review for a manuscript**

Imagine, you were invited by a journal to write a review of a paper. This review should include all the points you find problematic in the current version of the manuscript and your propositions for fixing those problems. In addition, you must provide the editor with your overall evaluation. There are three options for the evaluation: Accept, reject, revise and resubmit. The length of your review should be between 500 and 800 words. You will have the choice between a qualitative and a quantitative paper. Both papers are conditionally accepted at the Academy of Management Journal. You will receive the first and the second version of the paper and will have to write the review in between version 1 and 2. Having both versions 1 and 2 makes it easier for you to imagine to what kind of concerns the authors of the paper might have reacted with their revision. You will write this review for session 11. For session 12 you will have to write another review on the second version of the paper without knowing the third version. You will afterwards receive both decision letters (after version 1 and version 2) and see, what reviewers and the editor really asked the authors to do. You will in the last session also see the third letter and the acceptance letter and get the final version of the paper.

### **5. Writing a short paper after the seminar**

Your final assignment is to write a paper (15 pages, double-spaced) on a topic you might select from the discussion in our class. Deadline for the paper: December 31, 2023. Your topic could be:

- An in-depth discussion on one of the schools of thought we discussed between session 2 and 11
- A comparison between different schools of thought (e.g. positivism against postmodernism)
- A reflection paper on a philosophical question you might pick from our discussions. E.g. what is the truth, what kind of concepts of truth exist, should science solve real world problems (or shouldn't it)
- An in-depth reflection of the philosophical foundations of your own PhD project, embedded in the discussions we had in class.

Except for the first session, there will be no powerpoints.