**Philosophy of science for PhD students in social sciences, 7,5 credits, PhD level**

**Credit points:** 7.5

**Course code:**

**Responsible Department:** the Department of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies

**Field of Education:** Philosophy

**Level:** PhD studies

**Name:** Vetenskapsteori för doktorander i samhällsvetenskap

**Grading scale:** Fail-Pass

**Requirements for admission:** The course is open for PhD students within the faculty of Social Sciences at Umeå University.

1. Confirmation

The course syllabus is established by the dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences’ on 2014-01-27. The course syllabus is valid from 2014-02-01.

2. Content

The course consists of two parts. The first, which consists of two lectures, is about issues and concepts in the theory of knowledge and general philosophy of science. The issues and concepts include truth, knowledge, evidence, research methods and confirmation.

The second part, which consists of two lectures and six seminars, is about issues in the philosophy of social science. The issues include whether all social phenomena can be explained by reference to individuals or some social phenomena can be explained only by reference to large-scale social phenomena or “structures” (individualism versus holism), whether social phenomena can be investigated and explained in the same way as phenomena in non-social nature (naturalism versus interpretivism), whether social phenomena can be explained by reference to their having a function and whether social phenomena and knowledge about them are social constructions. In addition, the significance of gender in social science and the fruitfulness of postmodernism and post-structuralism in social science will be discussed.

3. Expected learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students are expected to:

• have a sound orientation of issues and concepts in the theory of knowledge and general philosophy of science

• have a sound understanding of issues and concepts in the philosophy of social sciences

• have accomplished a deeper ability to discuss critically and independently issues and concepts in the philosophy of social sciences

• have accomplished a deeper ability to discuss critically and independently his/her research from the perspective of the philosophy of social sciences

4. Required knowledge for admission

Applicants are required to be registered at a PhD program at Umeå University.

**5. Focus of instruction**

The focus of instruction will be lectures and seminars (see Content section above). All teaching will be in English.

6. Examination

The examination consists of a take home exam in which the student is asked to discuss some of the issues and concepts that have been covered in the course and relate them to his or her discipline (sociology, political science, economics etc.) or his or her own research project. The student is expected to submit between 3 000 and 6 000 words.

7. Academic credit transfer

Academic credit transfers are reviewed individually. For more information, please see Umeå University’s set of rules and academic credit transfer regulations.

8. Course Literature

Bicchieri, Christina (2014). “Norms, Conventions and the Power of Expectations”. In Nancy Cartwright & Elenora Montuschi (eds.): *Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 208-229.

Bicchieri, Christina & Mercier, Hugu (2014): “Norms and Beliefs: How Change Occurs”. *The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly, 63*, pp. 60-82.

Culler, Jonathan (2011). *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*.Revised Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 1, ”What is theory?”, pp. 1-18).

Durkheim, Emile (1895/1982). *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: The Free Press (Chapter 1, “What is a Social Fact?”, pp. 50-59).

Elster, Jon (1983/1994). ”Functional Explanation: In Social Science”. In Michael Martin & Lee C. McIntyre (eds.): *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1994, pp. 403-414.

Elster, Jon (1989). *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. First Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Chapter XV, “Social Institutions”, pp. 147-148).

Geertz, Clifford (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books (Chapter 1, ”Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture”, pp. 3-30).

Hacking, Ian (1999). *The Social Construction of What?* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press (Chapter 1, “Why Ask What?”, pp. 1-34).

Kourany, Janet (2012). “Feminist critiques: Harding and Longino”. In James Robert Brown (ed.): *Philosophy of Science: The Key Thinkers*. London: Continuum, 2012, pp. 236-254.

Kourtge, N. (2012). Critical perspectives on feminist epistemology. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (ed.): *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis, Second Edition* (pp. 119-134). Los Angeles: Sage.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1958/2003, 1963/2003): ”Structural analysis in linguistics and anthropology”, ”Language and the analysis of social laws”. In Gerard Delanty & Piet Strydom (eds.): *Philosophies of Social Science: The Classic and Contemporary Readings.* Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003, pp. 330-339.

Mullen, Eward J. (2015). “Reconsidering the ‘idea’ of evidence in evidence-based policy and practice”. *European Journal of Social Work, 19*.

Munro, Eileen (2014). “Evidence-Based Policy”. In Nancy Cartwright & Elenora Montuschi (eds.): *Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 48-67.

Paglia, Camille (2013). ”Scholars in Bondage: Dogma dominates studies of kink”. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 20, 2013. Available at

http://chronicle.com/article/Scholars-in-Bondage/139251/

Scull, Andrew (2007). “Scholarship of fools: The frail foundations of Foucault’s monument”. *The Times Literary Supplement*, March 23, 2007, pp. 3-4.

Searle, John R. (1983). ”The world turned upside down”. *The New York Review of Books*, October 27, 1983, pp. 74-79.

Watkins, J.W.N. (1957). “Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences”. *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 8, pp. 104-117. Accessible via JSTOR: http://www.jstor.org/stable/685790

Articles, chapters and other printed material may be added at any time