**Methodology of Economics and Political Science**

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**Description**

This course is divided in two parts. In the first part we will go through some of the most important philosophical/methodological issues in social science with particular emphasis on economic and political science. With reference to these disciplines, we will examine (i) the nature of explanation, (ii) the role of models and (iii) of experiments such as Randomized Control Trials, (iv) the theoretical and (v) the empirical challenges to rational choice theory, and (vi) the distinction between facts and values, with its repercussions on the notion of social scientific objectivity. As we explore these topics, references to public policy cases will punctuate our discussion. The second part of the course is structured more directly by a concern with public policy. Here, for example, we ask what, given the influence of scientific/expert knowledge on public policy making, should morally responsible scientific conduct look like. More generally we investigate what, politically, should be the proper relation between expertise and the ideals of democratic citizenship, and how, epistemically, we can help citizens and democracies take better policy decisions.

**Exam**

Examination consists in two essays of about (and no longer than) 12’000 characters each. The first essay is to be handed in during teaching term. It is not graded but is a requirement for writing the final, graded essay.

**Syllabus**

Topics in Philosophy of Science

1. Introduction: themes from Mill and Friedman (ASP)
   * J.S. Mill (1844): “On the definition of political economy; and on the method of investigation proper to it J.S. Mill (1847): *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, Library of Economics and Liberty. (17 pages) <http://www.econlib.org.ez.statsbiblioteket.dk:2048/library/Mill/mlUQP5.html>
   * M. Friedman (2008): “The methodology of positive economics”, In D. Hausman, ed. *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 145-178. (34 pages) (in compendium)
2. Social scientific laws and explanation (ASP)
   * C.G. Hempel (1942): “The Function of General Laws in History”, *Journal of Philosophy* 39: 35-48. (14 pages)
   * H. Kincaid (2004): “There are laws in the social sciences”, In Christopher Hitchcock (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Science*. Blackwell Publishing, 151-167. (17 pages) (in compendium)
   * J.T. Roberts: “There are no laws in the social sciences”, In Christopher Hitchcock (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Science*. Blackwell Publishing, 168-186. (19 pages) (in compendium)
3. Social scientific models (ASP)
   * A. Gibbard & H.R. Varian (1978): “Economic models”, *Journal of Philosophy* 75: 664-677. (14 pages)
   * R. Sudgen (2000): “Credible worlds: the status of theoretical models in economics”, *Journal of Economic Methodology* 7: 1-31. (31 pages)
4. Experiments in social science: the case of RCTs (ASP)
   * N. Cartwright & J. Hardie (2012): *Evidence-Based Policy: A Practical Guide to Doing It Better*, Oxford University Press: 3-58 (Part I) (available online via Statsbiblioteket) (56 pages)
5. Rational choice theory I: Limits and Challenges (RR)
   * D. Hausman and M. McPherson (2006): *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy and Public Policy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 45-77 (chapters 4, 5) (33 pages) (in compendium)
   * G. M. Hodgson (2012): “On the Limits of Rational Choice Theory,” *Economic Thought* 1: 94-108. (15 pages)
   * P. Pettit (1995): “The Virtual Reality of *Homo Economicus*,” *The Monist* 78,3: 308-329. (22 pages)
   * D. Hausman (2008): “Why Look Under the Hood?”, in D. Hausman, ed. *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:183-187. (5 pages) (in compendium)
   * Supplementary: H. Landemore (2004): “Politics and the Economist-King: Is Rational Choice Theory the Science of Choice”, *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 1.2: 185-207.
   * Supplementary: D. Green and I. Shapiro (1994): *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press: ch. 1,2, 3, 8 (online via statsbiblioteket)
   * Supplementary: J. Ferejohn, D. Satz,(1995): “Unification, Universalism, and Rational Choice Theory”, *Critical Review* 9.1: 71-84.
6. Rational choice theory II: Behavioural (Law &) Economics (RR)
   * C. Jolls, C.R., Sunstein, and R. Thaler (1998): ”A Behavioral Approach to Law and Economics”, *Stanford law Review*, 50,5: 1471-1550). (80 pages)
   * R. A. Posner (1998): ”Rational Choice, Behavioral Economics, and the Law”, *Stanford Law Review* 50,5: 1551-1575. (25 pages)
   * Supplementary: D. Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, pp. 199-300; 418-432.
   * Supplementary: G. Gigerenzer, P. Todd and the ABC Research Group (1999): *Simple Heuristics that Make Us Smart.* New York: Oxford University Press: Ch1.
7. Facts and values in economics (RR)
   * J. Broome (2008): “Why Economics Needs Ethical Theory”, in K. Basu and R. Kanbur (eds), *Arguments for a Better World: Essays in Honor of Amartya Sen Volume I: Ethics, Welfare, and Measurement.* Oxford: Oxford University Press (available online via Statsbiblioteket) (12 pages)
   * P. Dasgupta (2005): “What do economists analyze and why: facts or values?” *Economics and Philosophy* 21.2, 221-278. (58 pages)
   * A. Sen (1983): “Accounts, Actions, and Values: Objectivity of Social Science”, in C. Loyd (ed.), *Social Theory and Political Practice: Wolfson College Lectures 1981*, Oxford University Press: 87-107. (21 pages) (in compendium)
   * Supplementary: J. Dupré (2009): “Facts and Values”, in H. Kincaid, J. Dupré, A. Wylie (eds.), *Value Free Science: Ideal or Illusion?*, pp. 27-41 (available online via Statsbiblioteket)
   * Supplementary: H. Su and D. Colander (2013): “A failure to communicate: the fact-value divide and the Putnam-Dasgupta debate”, *Erasmus Journal of Philosophy and Economics, 6.*2: 1-23.
   * Supplementary: D. Hausman and M. McPherson (1996): “Introduction”, *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, pp.1-22.
8. Facts and values in environmental policy (RR)
   * N. Stern (2007): *Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change*. Sections 2 and 2A (23-52) (30 pages) http://mudancasclimaticas.cptec.inpe.br/~rmclima/pdfs/destaques/sternreview\_report\_complete.pdf
   * P. Dasgupta (2007): “Commentary: The Stern Review's Economics of Climate Change”, *National Institute Economic Review*, 199: 4-7. (4 pages)
   * S. Dietz and N. Stern (2008): “Why Economic Analysis Supports Strong Action on Climate Change: A Response to the Stern Review's Critics', *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy*, 2: 94-113. (20 pages)
   * Supplementary: J. Broome (2007): – “Climate Change: Why Economics Requires Ethics”, *The Knox Lecture*, University of St Andrews.
   * Supplementary: Martin Weitzman (2007): – “A Review of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change” (section 2), *Journal of Economic Literature*, 45: 703-725.
   * Supplementary: Amartya Sen (1999): – “Freedom and the foundations of justice”, chapter 3 (54-87) in *Development as Freedom*, Alfred A Knopf.

Science and Public Policy

1. Responsible Scientific Practices and Institutions (RR)
   * H. Douglas (2014): “The Moral Terrain of Science”, *Erkenntnis* 79, Supplement 5, 961-979. (19 pages)
   * Kitcher, P. (2006): “Public Knowledge and the Difficulties of Democracy”, *Social Research*, 73: 1205-1224. (20 pages)
   * T. Christiano (2015): “Democracy”, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Sections 1-3 URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/democracy/>. (12 pages)
   * E. Anderson (2006): “The Epistemology of Democracy”, *Episteme* 3.1-2: 8-22. (15 pages)
   * Supplementary: J. Dewey (1946): *The Public and its Problems: An Essay in Political Inquiry*. Chicago: Gateway Books.
   * Supplementary: P. Kitcher (2011): *Science in Democratic Society*. New York: Prometheus Books: especially Chapters 5-8.
2. Responsible Epistemic Citizenship (RR)
   * E. Anderson (2011): “Democracy, Public Policy, and Lay Assessments of Scientific Testimony”, *Episteme*, 8,2: 144-164. (21 pages)
   * M. Lane (2014): “When the Experts are Uncertain: Scientific Knowledge and the Ethics of Democratic Judgement”, *Episteme*, 11,1: 97-118. (22 pages)
   * T. Christiano (2012): “Rational Deliberation among Experts and Citizens”, In J.Parkinson and J. J.Mansbridge (eds), *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*, pp. 27-51. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (available online via Statsbiblioteket) (25 pages)
   * Supplementary T. Christiano (1996): The Rule of the Many: Fundamental Issues in Democratic Theory, Boulder, CO: Westview Press: 1-11; 131-164; 165-204.
3. Judgment aggregation and group deliberation (ASP)
   * C. List (2005): “Group knowledge and group rationality”, *Episteme* 2: 25-38. (14 pages)
   * C.R. Sunstein (2006): “Deliberating groups versus prediction markets (or Hayek’s challenge to Habermas)”, *Episteme* 3: 192-213. (22 pages)
4. The epistemology of relying on experts (ASP)
   * A. Goldman (2001): “Experts: Which ones should you trust”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 63: 185-210. (26 pages)
   * D. Coady (2006): “When experts disagree”, *Episteme* 3: 68-79. (12 pages)

Total 751 pages

+ supplementary texts