



## Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Autumn Semester 2022

### 10,400: Philosophical and Methodological Foundations of Social Science Analysis

ECTS credits: 6

#### Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (50%)

Examination time: term time

Decentral - Presentation (individual) (30%)

Examination time: term time

Decentral - Active participation (20%)

Examination time: term time

#### Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[10,400,1.00 Philosophical and Methodological Foundations of Social Science Analysis](#) -- Englisch -- [Dingwerth Klaus](#)

#### Course information

#### Course prerequisites

This is a course for students enrolled in the DIA program. Students from other doctoral programs should seek the permission of the course instructor prior to enrolling in this class.

Please note: Students who plan to take this course as a regular course or as an optional course with an examination should register via the bidding system. Students who plan to take this course as an optional course and without an examination should not register via the bidding system but contact the lecturer directly. Enrollment in a course is binding: students have to attend the course and take the exam.

#### Learning objectives

Participants...

- ... understand on which philosophical assumptions their work as well as the work of their peers is based.
- ... understand the methodological implications these assumptions have for their research.
- ... identify strengths and weaknesses of different philosophical positions and critically reflect upon the foundations of social scientific work.
- ... evaluate research, both within and across disciplines.

#### Course content

What distinguishes "science" from "non-science"? What, more specifically, does it mean to do "social science"? And on which philosophical and methodological foundations do different approaches in / to the social sciences rest?

Researchers are expected to satisfy quality standards derived from the philosophy of science. At the same time, they are embedded in the practice of their profession. The aim of the seminar is to confront the normative positions on doing science, including their philosophical basis and methodological implications, as they are being upheld in the social sciences with positive positions on how we are observed actually doing scientific work. At the end of this course, participants will have an improved understanding of the philosophical assumptions their work (and the work of their peers) is based on and of the methodological implications these assumptions have for their research.



## Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course is taught in six weekly 4-hour sessions during the first half of the term. (The session on 11 October may need to be postponed. In this case, I would seek to arrange for one additional date after the term break in which students can present and discuss their term papers.)

As to the substantive structure, I imagine each session to have three parts. In a first part, we will introduce and discuss a classical "-ism" in the philosophy (and methodology) of social science. A second part will be dedicated to introducing and discussing a classical topic in the philosophy (and methodology) of social science. The third part will give participants an opportunity to reflect upon their own projects - or, if they prefer, to reflect on social scientific study or research programme - from a philosophy of science perspective.

A tentative structure could e.g. be:

1. Introduction: The Philosophy of Social Science / Post-Truth Society?
2. Positivism / Theories, Laws & Explanations (or Causal Explanation)
3. Rational Choice / Methodological Individualism
4. Critical Rationalism / Causal Mechanisms
5. Interpretivism / Case Studies
6. Post-Modernism / Objectivity and Truth in the Social Sciences
7. or: A Feminist philosophy of science / Facts and Values in the Social Sciences

## Course literature

The list of introductory books and compendiums of classical readings in the philosophy of the social sciences is long (e.g., Alexander Rosenberg, *Philosophy of Social Science*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Westview Press; Ted Benton and Ian Craib, *Philosophy of Social Science*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Macmillan; Nancy Cartwright and Eleonora Montuschi, *Philosophy of Social Science*, Oxford University Press; Gerard Delanty and Piet Styrdom, *Philosophies of Social Science*, McGraw Hill; Lee McIntyre and Alex Rosenberg, eds, *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Social Science*, Routledge; Michael Martin and Lee McIntyre, eds, *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, MIT Press).

In the field of International Relations, Martin Hollis and Steve Smith's *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Clarendon Press, 1991) is a widely cited work on the difference between positivist and interpretive approaches to studying world politics. More recently, Patrick Thaddeus Jackson's textbook *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (Routledge, 2011) has also drawn attention to the philosophy of science.

As each of the major books focuses on slightly different aspects, I will seek to put together a reading list that (a) covers major aspects/debates in the field and (b) addresses some of the more specific issues participants mentioned in response to my survey of student needs before the term. I will make the core readings available on Canvas by 13 September 2020.

Candidates should master the literature suggested on the syllabus but, in particular for their own papers, also orient themselves within a given subject area by consulting both historical and contemporary contributions to the relevant debates.

## Additional course information

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## Examination information

### Examination sub part/s

#### 1. Examination sub part (1/3)

##### Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (50%)

Examination time: term time

##### Remark



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## Examination-aid rule

Term papers

Written work must be written without outside help according to the known citation standards, and a declaration of authorship must be attached, which is available as a template on the StudentWeb.

Documentation (quotations, bibliography, etc.) must be carried out universally and consistently according to the requirements of the chosen/specified citation standard such as e.g. APA or MLA.

The legal standard is recommended for legal work (cf. by way of example: FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R., SCHINDLER B., Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende (the latest edition in each case), or according to the recommendations of the Law School).

The reference sources of information (paraphrases, quotations, etc.) that has been taken over literally or in the sense of the original text must be integrated into the text in accordance with the requirements of the citation standard used. Informative and bibliographical notes must be included as footnotes (recommendations and standards e.g. in METZGER, C., Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien (latest edition)).

For all written work at the University of St.Gallen, the indication of page numbers is mandatory, regardless of the standard chosen. Where page numbers are missing in sources, the precise designation must be made differently: chapter or section title, section number, article, etc.

## Supplementary aids

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## Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

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## 2. Examination sub part (2/3)

### Examination time and form

Decentral - Presentation (individual) (30%)

Examination time: term time

### Remark

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### Examination-aid rule

Presentations

In presentations, aids for visual presentation can be used. These aids can be specified or restricted by the lecturers.

### Supplementary aids

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### Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

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## 3. Examination sub part (3/3)

### Examination time and form

Decentral - Active participation (20%)

Examination time: term time

### Remark

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## Examination-aid rule

Active classroom participation

In the "Active classroom participation" examination form, regular participation in class is assessed.

The assessment criteria can be as follows:

- Requests to speak enrich the discussion (productive) / requests to speak disturb the discussion (counterproductive);
- Requests to speak are correct/requests to speak are incorrect;
- Requests to speak are frequent/average/rare;
- No requests to speak, but students follow the lesson/no requests to speak and students do not noticeably follow the lessons.

## Supplementary aids

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## Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

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## Examination content

**Presentation:** Participants will provide two introductory inputs - one on an approach we discuss, and one on a topic we highlight. The input will be based on the key readings plus maybe 1-2 additional texts selected by the students.

**Term paper:** In addition, course participants write a paper in which they relate their own scholarly work to (some aspect of) the philosophical traditions we discuss in the seminar or in which they answer a more specific question drawn from the area of the philosophy and methodology of the social sciences.

The final version of the paper (of max. 4'500 words) will be due on November 11, 2022 (=at the end of the term break) or a mutually agreed later date.

**Active participation:** Students attend class and actively participate in the discussion.

## Examination relevant literature

Candidates should master the literature suggested in the syllabus. In particular for their term papers, they should also orient themselves within a given subject area by consulting both historical and contemporary contributions to the relevant debates.



## Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW51) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 42 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 34 (Thursday, 25 August 2022);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 17 October 2022);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 17 October 2022);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before the end of the registration period in CW 45 (Monday, 7 November 2022).