

**PGR Course unit outline 2022/23**

<b>Unit code:</b>	<b>BMAN82541</b>
<b>Title:</b>	Research Philosophy and Introductory Methodological Issues
<b>Credit value:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Semester:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Course Coordinator contact details:</b>	Laszlo Czaban AMBS 6.004, x6388, <a href="mailto:Laszlo.czaban@manchester.ac.uk">Laszlo.czaban@manchester.ac.uk</a> , office hour: by appointment (but very flexible)
<b>Other staff involved contact details:</b>	Oliver Laasch
<b>Pre-requisites Co-requisites Dependent course units Restrictions</b>	None.

**Course unit overview**

The goal of the module is to enhance the participants' awareness of the philosophical problems (epistemology, ontology, and social) in research in social science. This is done through highly interactive sessions, centred around several key papers in which philosophical issues are particularly important.

Participants will also be provided with the implications of these issues when applying some commonly used methodologies, and creating methodological narratives.

The sessions are built around group presentations that give the basis of further discussions as it is likely that groups (and members of each of the groups) perceive the philosophical problems in the given paper differently. These presentations are parts of the assessment (but they don't have to be a formal presentation).

**Aims**

While participants will gain an understanding of the philosophy of social science, the main aim is to provide the ground for the ability of the participant to apply the philosophy elements to have a better understanding to his or her own research, as well as the ability to engage with other people's academic work. Thus, it covers the ways in which epistemology, ontology and social contexts influence research, conclusions and the formulation of theoretical frameworks, the tools of research, and the presentation of the theory.

**Objectives (Learning outcomes)**

While participants will gain an understanding of the philosophy of social science, the key learning outcome is the ability of the participant to apply this understanding to his or her own research, as well as the ability to engage with other people's work.

Students will be able to

- Understand the key philosophy problems and thoughts (epistemology, ontology and social) in social science

- Understand the effects of these problems and thoughts on the methodology that they would use in their own research.

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Apply the necessary corrective measures when philosophical issues influence the research outcomes (findings)

Being able to interact with thoughts coming from different philosophical stances.

The group work element (mentioned in the course unit overview), in addition to creating a dynamics and a learning environment for philosophical questions, would also enable students to

Structure their argument along the lines normally followed in keynote speeches and conference presentations

Encourage students to be able to respond to questions and objections on the fly

Provide skills of defending arguments while being inclusive of appropriate objections

### Syllabus content

The module covers all the key issues in philosophy's influence on research in social science, conclusions and the formulation of theoretical frameworks. While all these aspects are covered in the course, in 10 weeks it would be impossible to address them to the sufficient depth, thus a combination of highlighting issues, experiential learning and discussions are used.

The course discusses the key approaches to knowledge (rationalism, positivism, Marxism, critical realism, methodological individualism, functional analysis, social constructivism, etc.), their differences and similarities. Special attention is paid to the influence of personal (and social) values and beliefs to the formation of knowledge.

This is followed by discussions about the philosophical basis of the key tools of research such as categories, relationships, causalities, and so on (and the philosophical bases of some commonly used methodologies and their consequences). This then raises the question of the existence of theoretical laws in social science (ontology and epistemology).

The course then covers the relationship between such assumed laws (or causalities) and the phenomenon, and the description of this (in particular the relationship between the narratives and the evidence).

Systemic views of the phenomena, multidisciplinary approaches are commonly applied, but the philosophical implications are often skipped or even ignored. The course covers these implications to enable the participants to recognise the need of managing these through methodology and/or construction of a framework, thus the course also covers the relationship between methodology and epistemology.

Finally, the course discusses the philosophical basis of the presentation of the research or analysis – the need of simplification and the danger of it in creating knowledge.

Throughout the course these issues will be discussed at the level of the individual, at the level of the institutional influences and at the level of social influences, thus the social aspect of philosophy is present throughout the course.

### Methods of delivery

<b>Lectures</b>	Lectures and interactive sessions (these are strictly speaking not seminars, but participant-led parts). Three hours a week for 10 weeks
<b>Seminar/Tutorial/Workshop/Lab Hours</b>	
<b>Independent Study</b>	120 hours (including group work)
<b>Total Study Hours</b>	150 hours

### Reading List

Core reading:

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Hayek (1967): *The Theory of Complex Phenomena*, pp 22-42 in *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Kuhn, T.S. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Mahner, M. and Bunge, M. (2001): *Function and Functionalism: A Synthetic Perspective Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 68, No. 1, pp. 75-94

Kincaid, H. (1986): *Reduction, Explanation and Individualism*, *Philosophy of Science* Vol 53 pp 492-513

Kincaid, H. (1990): *Defending Laws in the Social Sciences*, *Philosophy of Social Sciences* Vol 20 pp, 56-83

McIntyre, L (1993): 'Complexity' and Social Scientific Laws, *Sythese* Vol 97

Whitley (2000) *The intellectual and social organisation of science*, Oxford: OUP

Margaret Archer (2012): *The Reflexive Imperative*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Leitch et al (2009): *The Philosophy and Practice of Interpretivist Research in Entrepreneurship: Quality, Validation, and Trust*, *Organisational Research* 13(1)

Kincaid, H. (1990): *Defending Laws in the Social Sciences*, *Philosophy of Social Sciences* Vol 20 pp, 56-83

Lewis, M. W., & Grimes, A. I. (1999). *Metatriangulation: Building theory from multiple paradigms. Academy of Management Review*, 24(4), 672-690

Hodgson, G. (2007). *Meanings of methodological individualism. Journal of Economic Methodology*, 14: 211-226

In addition, there is pre-reading for Session 1-9 (all will be uploaded to Blackboard)

Session 1: Joan Robinson: What are the questions?

Session 2: Pinch and Bijker: The social construction of facts and artefacts: or how the sociology of science and the sociology of technology might benefit each other

Session 3: Hofstede: The cultural relativity of the quality of life concept

Session 4: F. A. Hayek: The Theory of Complex Phenomena

Session 5: Wallerstein, I: Does India exist?

Session 6: Rosenkopf and Tushman: The Coevolution of Technology and Organization

Session 7: Miller, R. (1978): Methodological Individualism and Social Explanation

Session 8: Mahner, M. and Bunge, M. (2001): Function and Functionalism: A Synthetic Perspective

Session 9: Hodgson, G.: Optimization and evolution

### Assessment

Mode of Assessment	Length required	Weighting within unit	
<p><b>Group presentations</b> of discussion articles (from session 4 to session 9). Guiding feedback is provided to the first three presentations to guide the students. The mark is the average of the 6 assessed presentations (the presentations do not have to be formal, although conference-type discussions will be encouraged). The mark will be based on the relative performance of the groups (in comparison to each other).</p>	N/A	Both peer and tutor feedback will be provided in class	50%
<p><b>Assignment</b></p> <p>Students will have a choice.</p>	Max of 2,500 words	Summative feedback is provided 15 working days after submission and through Blackboard, with the option of further discussion if required.	50%

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<p>Choice 1: An essay on the research philosophy, research design and methodology of the participant's research project.</p> <p>Choice 2:</p> <p>A particular article (or other type of literature) particularly relevant for the participant's research – evaluated from the perspective of philosophy of knowledge.</p>		
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**Resits:**

### Feedback methods

Feedback is provided at the end of every session (for the presentations), and detailed feedback will be provided for the assignment.

Apart from the normal student feedback (survey), the last session will be a guided discussion on the relevance of the module to the students' research, academic development, understanding of the epistemological institutions within academia and research.

### Social Responsibility

*AMBS aims for our graduates to develop not only academic and professional skills, but also a sense of social, ethical and environmental responsibility towards the societies of which they are part. Please give details of how social responsibility is addressed in your course unit by highlighting any knowledge or skills that support students' social and ethical understanding and conduct.*

The module is based on the philosophy of The Enlightenment, and hence its perspective is the done from the public good.

The discussion parts of the sessions cover a large variety of issues that allow the students to utilize their own personal experiences, and also have a critical, professional/academic reflection on these. The teamwork element (preparations for the presentations) in the module allows students to engage with colleagues from different background (nationality, gender, education, etc), and the implications of the different perceptions for academia and the individuals.

*Please indicate by ticking the box(es) below, which specific aspect of SR your module is linked to:*

A UN SDGs\*

Environmental Sustainability

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Other (please specify)

4, 5, 8, 9

*\* If a UN SDG, please note which one by reviewing the list [here](#)*

*For additional support on how embed SR into your module, please review the resources here:*

<https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=51837>

<https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=47017>