Course Title: Philosophy of Social Science

Course Code:

Course Status: TSU Faculty of Social and Political Studies, Center for Social Sciences.
Required course for the Interdisciplinary English-language master’s program
Transformation in the South Caucasus

Duration: One Semester (Intensive course - 8 weeks)
Starting from June 16 till July 30, 2010

Schedule: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 12.00-14.00 pm (2 contact hours per class)

ECTS: ECTS – 5; Contact hours – 30; Hours for independent work – 95

Lecturer: Tamar Tskhadadze, tamunats@gmail.com

Course Objectives: The course is intended to introduce students to central concepts and trends of the philosophy of the social science; to ontological, epistemological and methodological issues connected with social sciences; to acquaint students with alternative models of scientific explanation and their application in social sciences, the debates over explanation vs. understanding, causality and the place of intentionality in it, structure vs. subject, objectivity vs. personal engagement, etc.

Prerequisites: The course has no prerequisites.
**Course Format:** The course will heavily rely on classroom discussions and students' presentations, with the minimal number of monologue lectures – one-hour introductory lecture for each broad topic.

**Course Content:**

**Session 1. Introduction to the Course (16.06)**
Introduction of the course syllabus; discussion of some technical matters. General overview of various paradigms and controversies in the philosophy of social science. Key logical and philosophical concepts. Themes from epistemology and philosophy of natural science.

**I. Empiricism and Post-empiricism. Explanation and Prediction. Explanation in the Social Sciences (sessions 2-4) (18.06)**

**Session 2. Empiricism and Positivism; observational/theoretical dichotomy; hypothetic-deductive model of scientific explanation. Causal explanation; concepts of cause and effect**

*Required reading*

*Recommended reading*

**Session 3. Status of the hypothetic-deductive model in the social science (21.06)**

*Required reading*

*Recommended reading*

**Session 4. the post-positivist criticism of the positivist model of science and the observational/theoretical dichotomy; observation as theory-laden (23.06)**

*Required reading*

*Recommended reading*
Background/Remediation reading for topic I (sessions 2–4):


II. Basic Assumptions of Rational Choice Explanations. Conceptions of Rationality (sessions 5–6)

Session 5. Basic concepts and assumptions of Rational-choice explanations; decision rules, rationality of collective actions; reasons as causes. (25.06)

Required reading

Recommended reading

Session 6. Necessity of the assumption of rationality and the problem of irrationality. (28.06)

Required reading

Recommended reading

Background/Remediation reading for topic II (sessions 5–6):

III. Understanding and Interpretation (session 7) (30.06)

Session 7. Understanding versus explanation; theories of interpretation; the idea of hermeneutical method. Interpretation and agency; primacy of culture.

Required reading

Recommended reading

**Background/Remediation reading for topic III (session 7):**

**IV. Functional and Structural Explanations. Post-structuralism (sessions 8-11)**

**Session 8. Function and cause; functional explanation; functionalism in the social science.**

**Required reading**

**Recommended reading**

**Session 9. Structuralism; structure and subjectivity.**

**Required reading**

**Recommended reading**

**Sessions 10-11. Post-structuralism**

**Required reading**
- Foucault, Michel, “Method” (chap 2 of “The Deployment of Sexuality”) // The History of Sexuality Vol. 1: The Will to Knowledge (Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 82-102

**Recommended reading**
Background/Remediation reading for topic IV (sessions 8-11):

- Michel Foucault, “Power and Sex” // Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984 (Ed. Lawrence Kritzman, Routledge, 1990), pp. 110-124

VI. Objectivity of Science; Value-Neutrality in Question (sessions 13-14)

Session 13. Feminist critique of scientific objectivity.

- Helen Longino, “Can There Be a Feminist Science?” // Feminist Theory, A


Background/Remediation reading for topic VI (sessions 13-14):

Session 15. Concluding Discussion.

Assessment:

The assessment will be based on the fulfilments of the following course requirements:

1. Participation in classroom discussions: to fulfil this requirement, the student shall be actively engaged in the classroom discussion and demonstrate having read all reading assignments required for the class (10%)

2. Presentations on assigned readings: each student will have 2 occasions to present assigned readings. One presentation shall last about 10 minutes. Students are expected to summarize essential aspects of the problem addressed, solutions to it proposed, and arguments adduced in the text. Students are encouraged, though not required to use presentation tools like PowerPoint, flipchart, etc. (one presentation 10%, total 20%)

3. Midterm Examination: by the end of the session 8, students will be given several (up to 5) questions on the covered material written answers to which to be turned in within one week (20%)

4. Final examination part 1 (take home): a short (up to 1500 words) on a topic previously agreed with the instructor (30%)

5. Final examination part 2 (in class): on the final exam day, students shall answer in writing several (up to 5) questions set by the instructor (20%)

Required Readings:
There is no standard textbook for this course. All required readings are listed above in the relevant sections.

Additional Resources:
All recommended and background readings are listed above in the relevant sections.

Learning Outcomes:
In case of successful completion of the course, the student shall have command of key concepts of the philosophy of science, be acquainted with dominant trends and controversies in the philosophy of the social science, have acquired skills of critical reading and understanding philosophical arguments and of using philosophical concepts and argumentative strategies for analyzing various problems and standpoints.
მოკლე ინფორმაცია კვლევის მეთოდების მოდულის შესახებ:

სოციალურ მეცნიერებათა ცენტრის მიერ ადმინისტრირებული კვლევის მეთოდების მოდული შედგება ორი ნაწილისგან და შედგება: а) მოსამზადებელი კურსები და ბ) ძირითად კურსები რომლებიც ჩატარდება ცენტრის ბაზაზე, თბილისის სახალისო ოქროს უნივერსიტეტში.

მოსამზადებელი კურსები ტარდება ა.წ. 16 ივნისიდან 6 აგვისტომდე სოციალურ მეცნიერებათა ცენტრში საერთაშორისო სადოქტორო პროგრამების "საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობები" და "გენდერის კვლევი" თემებზე აქტიურად ამოღებასთან.

ძირითად კურსები ჩატარდება ცენტრის ბაზაზე, თბილისის სახალისო ოქროს უნივერსიტეტში. აქტიურად უნდა მოხდეს 14 ივნისმდე.

რეგისტრაციის შემთხვევაში რეგისტრაციის ლოგინს უნდა გაიყენოს მსახურით mmikaberidze@ucss.ge. თავის უნდა წარმოადგინოს სამეგრელო-ჯავახისთა ფილოსოფიის ფაკულტეტის ელფოსტასფეროთ. აგრეთვე უნდა წარმოადგინოს ფილოსოფიის ფაკულტეტის პროგრამებზე ან დროს ცენტრში.

კვლევის მეთოდების ზაფხულის მოდული შედგება შემდეგ კურსებით:

1) სოციალურ ფილოსოფია (5 ECTS, 30 საკონტაქტო საათი)
2) გამოყენებითი სტატისტიკი (5 ECTS, 30 საკონტაქტო საათი)
3) სოციალურ კვლევის მეთოდები (5 ECTS, 30 საკონტაქტო საათი)

სოციალურ გუნდირების დოქტორალური პროგრამები (თეზისით, გამოცემით) (5 ECTS, 30 საკონტაქტო საათი)