

SYLLABUS MASTERPIECES IN METHODOLOGY, 2017-2018.

CONTENTS:

Research methodology is a core theme in the PML Bachelor, and students learn a wide variety of research and analytical skills. But when you take a look at methodology through the philosophical looking glass, you find there are many issues in psychological methodology that are unsolved. Do psychological attributes exist in the real world or are they ‘constructs’? Do parameters in scientific models refer to reality or are they only useful tools? What type of knowledge do we obtain from psychological experiments, and how valuable is that knowledge? In Masterpieces in Methodology, students learn how to approach these methodological issues from a philosophical perspective. Spread over four weeks, we discuss four methodological and philosophical themes: ‘ontology and scientific realism’, ‘scientific models’, ‘the experiment’, and ‘methodological pluralism’. By debating, discussing and presenting, students learn how to understand literature from influential writers as Duhem, Latour and van Fraassen, and apply it to relevant methodological issues.

LEARNING GOALS:

A key goal in this course is abstracting complex ideas from scientific literature. In essays students reflect on the literature (paraphrasing and analyzing). During the tutorials, students learn to debate and discuss about these ideas (paraphrasing). In the group assignment, students transform the literature into an assignment for the other students (applying). In this course students learn to 1) apply philosophical theories to methodological problems (applying), 2) integrate theories in a coherent essay (analyzing and evaluating), and 3) develop and present their own ideas about the content (applying, critical thinking).

PRESENCE IS MANDATORY.

COMMUNICATION:

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TESTING AND ASSESSMENT (THREE PARTS):

- **SUBMIT QUESTION ABOUT LITERATURE FOR EACH SESSION**

For this course, the students will submit a question about the literature for each session. The question can be about something you don't understand, or something you (dis)agree with. During each session, a number of students will be asked to share their questions with the group, and the questions will be used as topic for discussion.

DEADLINE: one hour before session.

GRADING: 7 questions submitted: +0.25 on final grade. 5 or less questions submitted: -0.25 on final grade.

- **GROUP ASSIGNMENT ON THURSDAY**

In the group assignment, students prepare and teach the first half of the Thursday tutorial, either in week 2, 3 or 4. The assignment entails that the student have to prepare a 45 minute tutorial, based on the prescribed literature. In this tutorial, the students have to prepare an activity, which will enhance the understanding of the literature of the other students. Giving presentations or lectures are not allowed: the session should encourage active participation. Possible sessions are:

- a debate
- laptop assignments, 'expert groups'
- quiz
- an interview assignment
- close-reading
- a mock-trial

The presenters are not supposed to understand every detail of the literature, but rather use this session as an opportunity to enhance their own and the participants' understanding. Presenters are allowed to make use of literature of earlier sessions. The presenters are expected to discuss their plans for the tutorial with the teachers on the **Wednesday**.

Learning goals:

1. formulate learning goals of the tutorial.
2. translate ideas from literature into a group assignment.
3. improve presenting skills.

- **ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS:**

In the weeks the students are not doing a group assignment, they write an essay assignment (so that's three essay assignments in total). The students write a total of three essays. In the essay-assignment, the students write an essay of 1200 words maximum on the topic of that week. The students can either choose the 'free' topic and formulate their own question, or answer a given essay question. It

is important to use scientific language and follow APA rules. Proper spelling and grammar are prerequisites for a pass.

Learning goals:

- 1) provide a good structure.
- 2) formulate a clear essay question or point of view.
- 3) answer essay question through 2 or 3 arguments.

All three essays will be sent to both teachers, and submitted through Turnitin. The deadline for each essay is Sunday at 23.59.

TESTS AND ASSESSMENTS:

| | Deadline | Weighting | Min. grade | Compensatory? | Resit |
|----------------------|--|--|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Essay assignment | Weekly, deadline is Sunday at 23.59. Every student writes 3 essays in total. | 30% | Not applicable | Yes | Not applicable |
| Group assignment | Second session, Thursday. | 10% | Not applicable | Yes | Not applicable |
| Submitting questions | 1 hour before each session. | +0.25 when all quotes are submitted in time, -0.25 when 2 or more questions are not submitted on time. | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

TIMETABLE

Week 1: ONTOLOGY AND REALISM

Teacher: Lisa Wijsen

Session 1, April 3, 13.00 – 15.00, REC-JK B.26

Before break:

- Introduction of students and teachers
- Discussing syllabus and assessments.
- Group up for group assignments
- Schedule group assignments.

After break:

Discussion of the literature

Literature:

Gergen, K. M. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology.
American Psychologist, 40, 266 – 275.

Hacking, I. (1983). What is scientific realism? In *Representing and intervening: Introductory topics in the philosophy of natural science* (pp. 21 – 31). Cambridge University Press.

Session 2, April 5, 11.00 – 13.00, REC-JK B.26

Literature:

Boyd, R. N. (1983). On the current status of the issue of scientific realism.
In *Methodology, epistemology, and philosophy of science* (pp. 45-90). Springer
Netherlands.

Deadline essay 1: Sunday April 8, 23.59.

Week 2: SCIENTIFIC MODELS

Teacher: Lisa Wijzen

Session 3, April 10, 13.00 – 15.00, REC-JK B.26

Weisberg, M. (2007). Three kinds of idealization. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 104, 639-659.

Bokulich, A. (2011). How scientific models can explain. *Synthese*, 180, 33 – 45.

Session 4, April 12, 11.00 – 13.00, REC-JK B.26

Before break: Group assignment #1.

After break: Discussion of the literature

Gould, S. J. (1981). The real error of Cyril Burt: factor analysis and the reification of intelligence. In: *The Mismeasure of Man*. (pp. 264-320). New York Norton.

Carroll, J. B. (1995). Reflections on Stephen Jay Gould's 'The Mismeasure of Man' (1981): A retrospective review. *Intelligence*, 21, 121 – 134.

Deadline essay 2: Sunday April 15, 23.59.

Week 3: THE EXPERIMENT

Docent: Lisa Wijsen

Session 5, April 17, 13.00 – 15.00, REC-JK B.26

Latour, B. (1999). Give me a laboratory and I will raise the world. *The Science Studies Reader*, 258-275.

Mook, D. G. (1983). In defense of external invalidity. *American psychologist*, 38, 379-387.

Anderson, C.A., Lindsay, J.J. & Bushman, B.J. (1999). Research in the Psychological Laboratory: Truth or Triviality? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 8, 3-9.

Session 6, April 19, 11.00 – 13.00, REC-JK B.26

Before break: Group assignment #2.

After break: Discussion of the literature

Duhem, P. (1976). *Physical theory and experiment* (pp. 1-40). Springer Netherlands.

Cronbach, L. J. (1957). The two disciplines of scientific psychology. *American Psychologist*, 12, 671 - 684.

Deadline essay 3: Sunday April 22, 23.59

Week 4: PLURALISM

Docent: Gaby Lunansky

Session 7, April 24, 13.00 – 15.00, REC-JK B.26

De Groot, A. D. (1995). A European perspective in psychology? *New Ideas in Psychology*, 13, 299 – 309.

Staats, A. W. (1991). Unified positivism and unification psychology: Fad or new field? *American Psychologist*, 46, 899 – 912.

Teo, T. (2010). Ontology and scientific explanation: Pluralism as an a priori condition of psychology. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 28, 235 – 243.

Session 8, April 26, 11.00 – 13.00, REC-JK B.26

Goertzen, J. R. (2010). Dialectical pluralism: a theoretical conceptualization of pluralism in psychology. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 28, 201-209.

Sternberg, R. J., Grigorenko, E. L., & Kalmar, D. A. (2001). The role of theory in unified psychology. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 21, 99 - 117.

Bonus read:

Dehue, T. (2005). Hoofdstuk 5: De psychologische voorspelling, p 180 – 215. In: *De regels van het vak. Nederlandse psychologen en hun methodologie 1900-1985*. Amsterdam University Press.

Before break: Group assignment #3.

After break: Discussion of the literature

Deadline essay 4: Sunday April 29, 23.59.