COURSE GOALS:

This course introduces students to the basic epistemological and normative presuppositions of the social inquiry by surveying both classical and contemporary debates on the logic of the social sciences. Case studies of classical debates raise the following questions: What distinguishes the social sciences from both the Humanities and the sciences of nature? In studying human beings, do social researchers look at the micro-level -- for the causes, reasons, motives, meanings, or rules of individual actions -- or, at the macro-level -- for social functions, institutions, structures, practices and fields? How do micro-individual and macro-social levels of explanation connect up? Do social scientists explain or interpret human affairs? Are the social sciences "descriptive," "prescriptive" or both? Contemporary case studies raise the following questions: How has the critique of Western Logocentrism altered traditional conceptions of individual and social development? Do the Western social sciences offer universal standards of rationality or merely one -- among many — ethical value systems? Are radical ethnomethodology and multiculturalism alternatives to, or merely critical realignments of, the Western social sciences. This course is intended as an historical and critical introduction to contemporary debates about multiculturalism.

This course is also linked with participation in the following conference:
“Bahktin, Dialogue and Identity”

EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of class participation, vocabulary quizzes, midterm examinations and a final paper.

Class Participation Seminar presentations and discussion 20%
Midterm examinations 2 @ 15% each 30%
Quizzes 5 @ 5% each 25%
Final Paper 10-15 pages 25%

POLICIES:

Open, respectful and critical discussion is the life-blood of this course. Quizzes offer students and professor the opportunity to identify and to clarify central terms/concepts. The midterm examinations test comprehension of key philosophical issues, and the final paper offers students the opportunity to respond in depth to a single topic. The final paper is due on the day scheduled for the final examination. 3 unexcused absences will result in a full grade reduction.

TEXTS:


4. Koegler, Hans Herbert:


McAdams, Dan P.
2. “What Do We Know When We Know a Person,” Journal of Personality 63:3, September 1995.


Recommended:


**READING SCHEDULE**

1. TRADITIONAL DEBATES CONCERNING THE LOGIC OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY FORMATION IN PSYCHOLOGY:
TUES: WEEK ONE
1. Introductory Lecture.

WED: FILM: My Beautiful Launderette (DEW 103, 8:00 PM)

THUR:

1. McAdams, Dan P.
   A. “What Do We Know When We Know a Person,” Journal of Personality 63:3, September 1995.


TUES: WEEK TWO


THURS:


2. Koegler, Hans Herbert:
3. Quiz #1

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY CONFERENCE: “Bahktin, Dialogue and Identity”**

**TUE: WEEK THREE**

1. Conference Debriefing.

2. Introduction (Bohman).

3. Introduction to Part 2 “Explanation, Prediction, and Law,” Introduction to Part 3 “Interpretation and Meaning,” & Introduction to Part 4 “Rationality” (Martin)

**2. THE EXPLANATION/UNDERSTANDING CONTROVERSY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES:**

**THUR:**


**3. INTERPRETATION AND MEANING: THE VERSTEHEN APPROACH:**

**TUE: WEEK FOUR**

1. “Interpretation and Indeterminacy” (Bohman, pp. 102-146).


4. Quiz #2.

**THUR:**


**TUE: WEEK FIVE**


2. “Hermeneutics and the Hypothetical-Deductive Method,” Dagfinn Follesdal (Marin,
3. Quiz #3.

THUR:

1. “Another Look at the Doctrine of Verstehen,” Jane Roland Martin (pp. 247-259).
3. Midterm Examination # 1.

3. RATIONALITY AND INTERPRETATION:

TUES: WEEK SIX

1. “Some Problems about Rationality,” Steven Lukes (pp. 285-299).

THUR:

2. Quiz #4.

4. FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATIONS:

TUES: WEEK SEVEN


THURS:

1. Midterm Examination #2.

5. REDUCTIONISM, INDIVIDUALISM AND HOLISM:

TUES: WEEK EIGHT


THURS:

1. “Reduction, Explanation, and Individualism” Harold Kincaid (Martin, 496-515).
2. Quiz # 5.

6. RATIONALITY; OBJECTIVITY AND VALUE:

TUES: WEEK NINE

1. “Criticism and Explanation” (Bohman).
2. “Conclusion: Philosophy and the Social Sciences” (Bohman).

7. THE CRITIQUE OF POWER AND MULTICULTURAL UNDERSTANDING:

THUR:

1. Chapters One and Two (Koegler).

TUES: WEEK TEN

1. Chapters Three and Four (Koegler).

THUR:

1. Student Evaluations.

FINALS WEEK