COURSE SYLLABUS:

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

LECTURE NOTES:

PROFESSOR: Chris Latiolais, Chair
Philosophy Department
Kalamazoo College
Humphrey House #201
Telephone # 337-7076

OFFICES HOURS

- Mon. 8:00 - 10:00.
- Tues. 10:30 - 11:30.
- By Appointment.

COURSE GOALS:

By surveying classical and contemporary debates on the logic of the social sciences, this course introduces students to the philosophical examination of basic epistemological and normative presuppositions that underwrite contemporary empirical social scientific inquiry. 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. By addressing such questions, the course offers an historical and critical introduction to contemporary debates about multiculturalism.

EVALUATION:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF EVALUATION</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation: Seminar presentations, classroom discussion and email correspondence</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10 @ 6%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Assignments (10-15 pages)</td>
<td>2 @ 15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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POLICIES:

Students are expected to follow the reading schedule and come to class prepared to actively discuss the texts they have read. More specifically, students must bring their texts to class with marginal notes and highlighted passages of particular importance. Quizzes offer students the opportunity to identify and clarify central terms and concepts. The midterm assignments allow students to write an essay on key philosophical issues and arguments, 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. Late papers will be marked down a half grade for the first day and a full grade for the second day. All work must be turned in at the end of term, unless alternative assignments have been given by the instructor.

TEXTS:

- A few selected articles from the following list:
  - Koegler, Hans Herbert
READNG SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION: TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES:

TUESDAY (WEEK ONE):
- Introductory Lecture: The philosophy of the Social Sciences.
- Course Mechanics.

THURSDAY
- Introduction to Part 1: “Explanation, Prediction, and Laws”
- Introduction to Part 2 “Explanation, Prediction, and Law”
- Introduction to Part 3 “Interpretation and Meaning”
- Introduction to Part 4 “Rationality”

THE EXPLANATION/UNDERSTANDING CONTROVERSY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: THE VERSTEHEN APPROACH:

TUESDAY. (WEEK TWO)

THURSDAY
- Quiz # 1.

TUESDAY: (WEEK THREE)
- Quiz. #2.

THURSDAY
- “Another Look at the Doctrine of Verstehen,” Jane Roland Martin (pp. 247-259).
- “Taylor on Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” Michael Martin (pp. 259-281).

TUESDAY (WEEK FOUR)
- Introduction (Bohman)
- "The Old Logic of Social Science: Action, Reasons, and Causes"
- Quiz #3

THURSDAY
- "The New Logic of the Social Sciences: Rules, Rationality, and Explanation” (Bohman)
- "Interpretation and Indeterminacy” (Bohman, pp. 102-146).
- Midterm Assignment # 1

RATIONLITY AND INTERPRETATION:

TUESDAY: (WEEK FIVE)
- “Some Problems about Rationality,” Steven Lukes (pp. 285-299).
- “The Status of Rationality Assumptions in Interpretation and in the Explanation of Action,” Dagfinn Follesdal (pp. 299-311).
THURSDAY
- "The Principle of Charity and the Problem of Irrationality" (Translation and the Problem of Rationality (Martin, 323-343)
- Quiz #4.

TUESDAY: (WEEK SIX):
FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATIONS:

THURSDAY
- "Functional Explanation: In Social Science" Jon Elster (Martin 403-415).

REDUCTIONISM, INDIVIDUALISM AND HOLISM:

TUESDAY: (WEEK SEVEN)
- "Social Facts" Emile Durkhein (Martin, 433-441).
- "The Macro-Micro Relation" (Bohman).

THURSDAY:
- "Reduction, Explanation, and Individualism" Harold Kincaid (Martin, 496-515).
- Quiz # 5.

TUESDAY: (WEEK EIGHT)
- "Criticism and Explanation" (Bohman).
- "Conclusion: Philosophy and the Social Sciences" (Bohman).
- Quiz #6
- Midterm Examination #2.

A TEST CASE FOR THE LOGIC OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: CONTEMPORARY WORK IN NARRATIVE PSYCHOLOGY:

THURSDAY:
- Selected Articles

TUESDAY: (WEEK NINE)
- Selected Articles

THURSDAY:
- Selected Articles

TUESDAY: (WEEK TEN)
- Selected Articles

THURSDAY:
- Student Evaluations.

FINALS WEEK