COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course Name: Philosophy of Method
Course Code: ARTS 9102
Credit Units: 3
Credit Hours: 45

Brief Description

As a candidate leaves formal education, method is the last educational act meant to accompany him/her in life, not just as a skill, but above all as an attitude. Humanity is never satisfied; we are ever searching for a better life, exploring new areas, ever interested in what is (or may be) beyond our reach.

The final act of formal education (Ph.D research thesis) sensitizes a candidate to the fundamental vocation of method which provides one with a sense of purpose and direction. We may recall the etymological Greek roots of the word "method", which were meta (to be, to follow) and odos (the way, the path, the road). Method therefore etymologically meant to follow the way, path or road.

Following the way, path or road required of a follower - discipline, orderliness, systematicity, continuity, and perseverance - and at the end of the day, there was always that "more", the "horizon" to be traversed.

Objectives of the Course

1. To give a student a historical perspective on knowledge science and research to stimulate him/her to relate his/her own research to this perspective.
2. To help the student to form a considered opinion about the concepts of knowledge, science and research.
3. To give the student a deeper understanding of the concepts of causation, correlation, scientific explanation, and scientific law.
4. To enhance the student’s perspective in comparing the evaluating quantitative and qualitative methods.
5. To give the student some training in analyzing the hypothetic-deductive/inductive structure in research papers.
6. To enhance the student’s awareness about ethical conflicts and problems relating to science and research.
7. To provide the student with a forum in which he/she can discuss his/her own research proposal with other PhD students.

Expected Outcomes

- Students conversant with the vocation of method wand having a sense of purpose and direction in the conduct of research
- Better appreciation of the underpinnings of ethical conflicts
- Better understanding of the hypothetico-deductive-inductive process
Course Content

1. The Human Creative Process in History

   A. General Cultural Perspective

   The conditions of creativity; The birth and death of ideas; The process of creative thinking; conformity and creative thinking;

   The human journey in history: From the Emergence of *homo sapiens*, THROUGH the Development of social organization, culture, religion, To the Global Society.

   B. Human Creativity at Work

   Satisfying basic needs, like food, shelter, clothing and the discoveries of fire, metal, and wheel, the taming of animals, agriculture.
   Following the urge of searching, exploring, migrating, traveling, and the inventions related to land, sea, and air transport (vehicles, roads, maps, logistics)
   Mapping (places and times) of specific inventions: The history of technology and science and the philosophy of it. The present technological age.

2. Valid Knowledge: Its Source and Purpose

   A. Nature and Method of Knowledge
   Defining characteristics of knowledge; Knowing ‘how’ and knowing ‘that’; Knowledge, opinion, and belief; Knowledge, data, and information; Common features of knowledge; Scientific discovery and artistic creation

   B. Sources of Knowledge
   Skepticism and certainty; The empiricist tenets; The rationalist tenets; Naturalism (preconceptions for categorization)

   C. Theories of Truth
   The correspondence theory; The coherence theory; The coherence theory; The pragmatic theory; The meta-linguistic theory; The redundancy theory

   D. Purpose of Knowledge
   The empirical-analytical disciplines linked to technical control; The historical hermeneutic disciplines linked to social interaction; Critical theory linked to emancipation

3. Causation, Explanation, Laws
   Explanation and Prediction; The Nature of Laws; Observation, Observational sentences, Data
4. Theory and Praxis

A. Theory and Praxis
Pre-theoretical approaches: science and politics in the ancient civilizations of Babylon, Egypt, and Greece; The Babylonia record of observed facts; Greek development of theory and hypothesis: Theory and techne in physics, theory and phronesis in politics; The positivistic conception of theory and praxis in the modern period

5. Historical Analysis of Epistemology

A. Ancient and Modern
The maieutic method of Socrates (469-399 B.C.); The dialogical method of Plato (427-347 B.C.);
The inductive and deductive (logic) method of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

B. Contemporary
Hermeneutics (Hans-Georg Gadamer, 1900)

6. Present Situation of Epistemology

A. Karl Raimund Popper’s Method of falsifiability
The Logic of Scientific Discovery
   i) Structure of a theory
   ii) Cognitive growth and theory change
   iii) Paul K. Feyerabend’s anarchistic theory of knowledge
   iv) Larry Laudan’s methodology of research traditions
   v) Frankfurt School and critical theory

7. Applied Methodology

A. Methods in Science
Typical examples from the sciences, like medicine, physics, technology; Influence of the social sciences (Hobbes, Comte)

B. Methods in Humanities
Typical examples from humanities, like philosophy, history, language, literature, religion

C. Quantitative and Qualitative Methods
Comparing the methodologies of science and humanities

D. Ethical Foundations
Significance of ethics of human life; Basic principles of ethics; Relationship of ethics to research; Research and human rights; Research vis-à-vis its social, cultural and financial costs

E. Applicability Of Ethics To Research
Professional Ethics and specific ethical issues related to the medical, legal, teaching, accounting, managerial, engineering, and other professions; Codes of ethics; Responsibility towards research
subjects in health, educational, social, and technologically related research; Informed consent and deception, privacy and confidentiality, Government regulations on research.

8. Some Crucial Issues for Research
A. Crucial Issues In General

Creation and distribution of wealth, World Poverty, New Economic Order, Globalisation and Localisation, Cultural Heterogeneity, Human Rights, The power of multinational corporations vis-à-vis the interests of smaller communities; The widening gap between developing and developed countries.

B. Crucial Issues in Africa and Uganda

Political issues in (Sub-Saharan) Africa: African government; African democracy; development; militarization; instability; migrations; health (aids); education (UPE); privatization, planning, prioritizing and implementation of research

9. From A Skill To Attitude

Acquiring the right approach to study and research within an ethical context; Transferring theory into life (Bios-theoreticos) and emancipating life from the enslavement of “opinion” (doxa)

A. Characteristics of Research Attitude

Critique Assessment; Systematicity, orderliness; Continuity, perseverance, meekness

Course Delivery

- Didactic Lectures
- Discussion groups
- Students’ research presentations

Reading List

Rene Decrates. A Discourse of Method

Other reading material to be provided during the course delivery
Readings