

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 and 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 *technein* 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) FrankfurtSchool 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

1. Bob Pokrant, *Ways of knowing in the social Sciences*.
2. Brian T. Keane & Robert M. Mason, *On the Nature of Knowledge: Rethinking Popular Assumptions*, Proceedings of the 39th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences - 2006.
3. Carl G. Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1966
4. *Controversies in Social Science and Related Applied Fields of Research*, Pergamon Press, Oxford 1987
5. Gavin J. Fairbairn & Susan A. Fairbairn, *Reading at University: A Guide for Students*, Open University Press, Philadelphia 2001
6. George Heffernan, *Discourse on the Method: of Conducting One's Reason Well and of Seeking the Truth in the Sciences*; University of Notre Dame Press, 1994
7. Gorayska B. & R. O. Lindsay (1993). The Roots of Relevance. *Journal of Pragmatics* 19, 301–323. Los Alamitos: IEEE Computer Society Press.
8. Hjørland, Birger & Sejer Christensen, F. (2002). Work tasks and socio-cognitive relevance. A specific Example. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 53(11), 960–965.
9. Hjørland, Birger (2000). Relevance Research: The Missing Perspectives: "Non-relevance" and "Epistemological Relevance". *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 51(2), 209–211. (Letter to the Editor).
10. Hjørland, Birger (2010). The foundation of the concept of relevance. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 61(2), 217-237.
11. Hull L. W. H., *History and Philosophy of Science*, Longmans, London
12. Jason Stanley & Timothy Williamson, 'Knowing How', *Journal of Philosophy*, 98.8, 2001
13. John Quay, *Knowing how and knowing that: a tale of two anthologies*, www.latrobe.edu.au/education/assets/.../2004_conference_quay.pdf
14. Keynes, J. M. (1921). *Treatise on Probability*. London: MacMillan
15. Leonard Nelson, Thomas K. Brown III, *Socratic Method and Critical Philosophy*; Yale University Press, 1949
16. Leslie J. Walker & S.J. M.A., *The Theories of Knowledge: Absolutism, Pragmatism, Realism*, longmans, Green & Co, london 1910.
17. Lindsay, R. & Gorayska, B. (2002) Relevance, Goals and Cognitive Technology. *International Journal of Cognitive Technology*, 1, (2), 187–232
18. McGinn, C., 1984. *The Concept of Knowledge*, Midwest Studies.
19. *Paul Feyerabend, Against Method*, 4th Ed. , Verso, London and New York 2010
20. Paul Snowdon, *Knowing How & Knowing That: A Distinction Reconsidered*, Presidential Address of the Aristotelian Society, University of London, 13th Oct. 2003.
21. Phillips D.C., *Philosophy of Science, and Social Inquiry: Contemporary Methodological*
22. Richard S. Rundner, *Philosophy of Social Science*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1966
23. Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, Second Edition, Routledge, New York 2003
24. Robert Dubin, *Theory Building: A Practical Guide to the Construction and Testing of Theoretical Models*, The free press, New York 1967
25. Sidney Hook, *Psychoanalysis, Scientific Method, and Philosophy: A Symposium*, New York University Press, New York 1959

26. Sperber, D. & D. Wilson (1986/1995) *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell.
27. Sperber, D. & D. Wilson (1987). Précis of *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. *Behavioural and Brain Science*, 10, 697–754.
28. Thomas s. Kuhn, *The Road Since Structure*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2000
29. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd Ed., The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 1996
30. Zhang, X, H. (1993). *A Goal-Based Relevance Model and its Application to Intelligent Systems*. Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford Brookes University, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, October, 1993.