

Philosophy 3520/5520: Philosophy of Social Science

Winter 2020
W 13:35-17:25
Campbell 2107

Can people from different cultures understand each other? What is it to be a member of a culture? Are societies best thought of as collections of individuals, or are individuals constituted by societies? In what sense are the social sciences "sciences"? Are societies describable by explanatory laws? What counts as an explanation of human behaviour?

This class will explore these and related questions through a reading of Brian Fay's Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science: A Multicultural Approach (Routledge, 1996) and an examination of writings by such authors as Anthony Appiah, Elizabeth Anderson, Donald Davidson, Emile Durkheim, Michel Foucault, Ian Hacking, Helen Longino, Alasdair MacIntyre, Karl Marx, Charles Taylor, Peter Winch and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Instructor: Dr. Michael Hymers <Michael.Hymers@Dal.Ca>, McCain 3129
(Office Hours: MF 1:30-2:30pm)

Prerequisite: Two full credits in Philosophy

Crosslisting: Political Science 3496

Texts: Brian Fay, Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science: A Multicultural Approach (Routledge, 1996).

Assorted electronic resources on Brightspace.

Evaluation:

Phil 3520 and PoliSci 3496 Undergraduates:

Weekly Short Assignments (250-500 words each): **40%**

Best 4 to 8, depending on class attendance. (See below.) At least two of those to be counted must be done by **February 12**.

One essay (2500-3000 words) **due: April 6** **60%**

Graduates:

Short Assignments (250-500 wds each); best 8: **40%**

One essay (4000-5000 wds) **due : April 6** **60%**

Term-work will be assigned a numerical mark, which will be converted to a letter-grade at the end of the term.

Grading Scale

Grade	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
/100	100-90	89-85	84-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-65	64-60	59-55	54-50	49-0

The Class: There will be weekly reading-assignments. You should bring your text to class and be prepared to discuss the material covered. Short, weekly writing-assignments (see "Evaluation") will be due on Wednesday of each week (unless otherwise indicated).

Weekly Assignments: Each weekly assignment will pertain to the readings for week in which the assignment is due. For graduate students I shall count the best eight. For undergraduates I shall count the best four to eight, depending on class attendance, according to the following (ingenious) formula:

Classes Attended	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
# of Assignments required	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	8

If you miss three consecutive classes, that will further increase the number of assignments required by 1 (to a maximum of 8). At least two of the assignments to be counted must be completed by February 12.

To be considered, all work must be submitted when due, subject to the following policy.

Late Work: Late work will be penalized 5% per working day up to a maximum of seven days, after which it will not be accepted.

Plagiarism: All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on plagiarism and academic honesty as referenced in the Undergraduate Calendar at <https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=69&chapterid=3456&topicgroupid=14204&loaduseredits=False> and <https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=69&chapterid=3456&topicgroupid=14206&loaduseredits=False>.

Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations. Please attend to the following excerpt from the Dalhousie Calendar:

Dalhousie University defines plagiarism as the submission or presentation of the work of another as if it were one's own.

Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence that may lead to the assignment of a failing grade, suspension or expulsion from the University. If a penalty results in a student no longer meeting the requirements of a degree that has been awarded, the University may rescind that degree.

Some examples of plagiarism are:

- failure to attribute authorship when using a broad spectrum of sources such as written or oral work, computer codes/programs, artistic or architectural works, scientific projects, performances, web page designs, graphical representations, diagrams, videos, and images;
- downloading all or part of the work of another from the Internet and submitting as one's own; and
- the use of a paper prepared by any person other than the individual claiming to be the author.

The University attaches great importance to the contribution of original thought to learning and scholarship. It attaches equal importance to the appropriate acknowledgement of sources from which facts and opinions have been obtained.

The proper use of footnotes and other methods of acknowledgement vary from one field of study to another. Failure to cite sources as required in the particular field of study in the preparation of essays, term papers and dissertations or theses may, in some cases, be considered to be plagiarism.

Students who are in any doubt about how to acknowledge sources should discuss the matter in advance with the faculty members for whom they are preparing assignments. In many academic departments,

written statements on matters of this kind are made available as a matter of routine or can be obtained on request.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with severely in this course. "Severely" means severely. If I find evidence of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty on any of your papers, I am required by the University to report it to the Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, who may then refer the matter to the Senate Discipline Committee, and I will do so. If that happens, I will not be allowed to discuss the matter with you, and you will not receive a mark for the work in question until after the evidence has been reviewed by the AIO and, if deemed necessary, a hearing of the Committee, to which you will be invited and given the chance to respond to the allegations. These hearings are not pleasant, and almost every case that I have reported to the Academic Integrity Officer has resulted in a penalty being applied to the student in question.

Accommodation:

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests, quizzes and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Centre prior to or at the outset of each academic term (with the exception of X/Y courses). Please see <www.dal.ca/access> for more information and to obtain Form A: Request for Accommodation.

A note taker may be required to assist a classmate. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term. If you are interested, please contact the Advising and Access Centre at 494-2836 for more information.

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom so that students who require their usage will be able to participate in the class.

Troubles? If you are having problems with the course, please see me.

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments
(Subject to Change)

*=pdf or link on Brightspace

January 8

Reading:

Introduction

Fay, Chapter 1, "Do You Have to Be One to Know One?"

January 15

Readings:

Atomism vs. Holism

*J. W. N. Watkins, "Methodological Individualism"

Fay Chapter 2, "Do We Need Others to Be Ourselves?"

*Emile Durkheim, "What is a Social Fact?" (50-59) + from "Rules for the Observation of Social Facts" (69-72).

Fay Chapter 3, "Does Our Culture or Society Make Us What We Are?"

Recommended:

*Deborah Tollefsen, "Social Ontology"

*Charles Taylor, "Atomism"

*Helen Longino, "Individuals or Populations?"

January 22Readings:**Conceptual Schemes and Rationality**

*Donald Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme"
Fay, Chapter 4, "Do People in Different Cultures Live in Different Worlds?"
Fay, Chapter 5, "Must We Assume Others Are Rational?"

Recommended:

*Bjørn Ramberg, "The Principle of Charity"
*Ian Hacking, "Language, Truth and Reason"
*Donald Davidson, "Actions, Reasons, and Causes"
*Michael Hymers, Philosophy and Its Epistemic Neuroses, Chapter 5

January 29Readings:**Understanding**

*Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough"
*Frank Cioffi, "Wittgenstein and the Fire Festivals"
Fay, Chapter 6, "Must We Comprehend Others in Their Own Terms?"

Recommended:

*James G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, 3d ed.
*Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is Understanding Religion Compatible with Believing?"
*Peter Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society"
*Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science"
*Ian Hacking, "The End of Captain Cook"
*Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man"
*Charles Taylor, "Understanding and Ethnocentricity"

February 5Readings:**Nomological Explanations**

*C. G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History"
Fay, Chapter 8, "Is Our Understanding of Others Essentially Historical?"

Recommended:

*Lee McIntyre, "Complexity and Social Scientific Laws"
*Donald Davidson, "Psychology as Philosophy"
*Nancy Cartwright, "Causal Inference"
*Mark Risjord, "Causality and Law in the Social World"

February 12Readings:**Marxism and Functional Explanation**

*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The German Ideology, "Preface," "First Premises of the Materialist Method," "History: Fundamental Conditions," "Civil Society and the Conception of History," "Ruling Class and Ruling Ideas"
<<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/>>
*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Various short excerpts
*G. A. Cohen, "Functional Explanation in Marxism"
*Jon Elster, "Functional Explanation: In Social Science"
*G. A. Cohen, "Reply to Elster on 'Marxism, Functionalism, and Game Theory'"

Recommended:

*Jon Elster, "Cohen on Marx's Theory of History"
*G. A. Cohen, "Functional Explanation: A Reply to Elster"

February 26Readings:**Foucault**

- *Michel Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned"
- *Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures"
- *Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power"
- *Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth,"

Recommended:

- *Barry Allen, "Government in Foucault"
- *Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*, Chapter 7
- *Gary Gutting, "Michel Foucault," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- *Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power"

March 4Readings:**Meaning and Narrative**

- *R. G. Collingwood, "Human Nature and Human History," 204-217
<http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Collingwood/1946_1.html>
- Fay, Chapter 7, "Is the Meaning of Others' Behavior What They Mean by It?"
- Fay, Chapter 9, "Do We Live Stories or Just Tell Them?"

Recommended:

- *Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Chapter 15
- *Louis O. Mink, "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument"

March 11Readings:**Objectivity**

- *Charles Taylor, "Social Theory as Practice"
- *Richard Rorty, "Science as Solidarity"
- Fay, Chapter 10, "Can We Understand Others Objectively?"

Recommended:

- *Helen Longino, "Subjects, Power and Knowledge"
- *Helen Longino, "The Fate of Knowledge in Social Theories of Science"
- *Alison Wylie, "Community-Based Collaborative Archaeology"
- *Richard Rorty, "Method, Social Science, and Social Hope"
- *Michael Hymers, "Truth and Metaphor in Rorty's Liberalism"
- *Daniel Little, "Evidence and Objectivity in the Social Sciences"

March 18Readings:**Feminist Philosophy of Social Science**

- *Helen Longino, "The Fate of Knowledge in Social Theories of Science"
- *Elizabeth Anderson, "Uses of Value Judgments in Science: A General Argument, with Lessons from a Case Study of Feminist Research on Divorce"

Recommended:

- *Linda Martin Alcoff, "Feminist Theory and Social Science: new knowledges, new epistemologies"
- *Helen Longino, "Subjects, Power and Knowledge"
- *Richmond Campbell, *Illusions of Paradox*, 67-70.
- *Sharyn Clough, "Solomon's Empirical/Non-Empirical Distinction and the Proper Place of Values in Science"
- *Alison Wylie, "Reasoning about Ourselves"
- *Sandra Harding, "How Standpoint Methodology Informs Philosophy of Social Science"

March 25

Readings:

Social Constructionism

- *Ian Hacking, "Making Up People"
- *Ian Hacking, "Why Ask What?"
- *Sally Haslanger, "The Sex/Gender Distinction and the Social Construction of Reality"

Recommended:

- *Ian Hacking, "Too Many Metaphors"
- *Sally Haslanger, "Ontology and Social Construction"
- *Ian Hacking, "Madness: Biological or Constructed?"

April 1

Readings:

Race

- *Anthony Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race"
- *Chike Jeffers, "The Cultural Theory of Race: Yet Another Look at Du Bois's 'The Conservation of Races'"
- *Ian Hacking, "Why Race Still Matters"

Recommended:

- * W.E.B. DuBois, "The Conservation of Races"
- *Paul C. Taylor, "Appiah's Uncompleted Argument: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Reality of Race"
- *Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?"
- *Ian Hacking, "Why Ask What?"
- *Ian Hacking, "Too Many Metaphors"