

PSP 111 – Introduction to Social Sciences Syllabus

Spring 2021

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Office Hours: Friday, 11:00-13:00

Course Description:

By adopting an integrated and interdisciplinary perspective, this introductory course aims to explore key thinkers, issues, themes and agendas in social sciences. The course pays special attention to the rise, establishment and institutionalization of modern social sciences. In addition, this course focuses on the major transformations and paradigmatic shifts in all-related disciplines of social sciences. It is necessary to underline that this course is especially designed for the first-year undergraduate students in economics, management, political science, public administration and international relations programs at Istanbul Medeniyet University.

Textbooks:

- *Open the Social Sciences – Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences*, California: Stanford University Press, 1996
- Patrick Baert, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences: Towards Pragmatism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005
- Richard E. Lee & Immanuel Wallerstein, *Overcoming the Two Cultures: Science vs. the Humanities in the Modern World-System*, New York: Routledge, 2005

Evaluation:

- Midterm exam (multiple choice type of test): % 40
- Final exam (a few short essays): % 60

Disclaimer:

- 1) All students are obliged to subscribe to the Edmodo (PSP111) account, as all readings will be shared in the library folders.
- 2) Cheating and plagiarism will be severely penalized according to the current regulations of Istanbul Medeniyet University.

Course Schedule & Readings:

Week 1: Some Remarks – Tricks of Trade

- Addressing your professor, composing proper e-mails, doing online research, writing short-essays and articles, etc.

Week 2: Natural and Social Sciences

- Boris Strelin, “Constructing Authority: The Rise of Science in the Modern World,” *Overcoming the Two Cultures*, pp. 9-34
- Eric Mielants, “Reaction and Resistance: The Natural Sciences and the Humanities, 1789-1945,” *Overcoming the Two Cultures*, pp. 34-54.

Week 3: Emergence of Social Sciences

- *Open the Social Sciences*, “The Historical Construction of the Social Sciences, From Eighteenth Century to 1945,” pp. 1-33
- Mauro Di Meglio, “The Social Sciences and Alternative Disciplinary Models,” *Overcoming the Two Cultures*, pp. 55-72.

Week 4: Founding Figures – Durkheim & Weber

- Baert, “Emile Durkheim’s Naturalism,” “Max Weber’s Interpretive Method,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, pp. 10-36, 37-60.

Week 5: Founding Figures – Marx

- Jonathan Wolff & David Leopold, “Karl Marx,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2021, E. N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/marx/>

Week 6: From 1945 to Present

- *Open the Social Sciences*, “Debates within the Social Sciences, 1945 to the Present,” pp. 33-70.

Week 7: Critical Theory

- Baert, “Critical Theory,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, pp. 37-60.

Week 8: Midterm Exam

Week 9: Nature of Social Knowledge: Kuhn & Popper

- Alexander Bird, “Thomas Kuhn,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2018, E. N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/thomas-kuhn/>
- Baert, “Karl Popper’s Falsificationalism,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, pp. 61-86.

Week 10: Cultural Turn in Social Sciences

- Biray Kolluoğlu & Deniz Yükseser, “The Cultural Turn in the Social Sciences and Humanities,” *Overcoming the Two Cultures*, pp. 128-143.

Week 11: Towards Pragmatism

- Baert, “A Pragmatist Philosophy of Social Sciences,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, pp. 146-166.

Week 12: Future of Social Sciences I

- *Open the Social Sciences*, “What Kind of Social Science Shall We Now Build?,” pp. 70-94; “Conclusion: Restructuring the Social Sciences,” pp. 94-105.

Week 13: Future of Social Sciences II

- Lazer, David, et al. "Life in the network: the coming age of computational social science." *Science*, 2009, available online <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2745217/>

Week 14: Final Exam