

Amsterdam Business Research Institute

Philosophy of Science for Business Administration

Course Manual

Academic year 2024 – 2025



Course title	Philosophy of Science for Business Administration
Coordinator(s)	dr. C.M.J. Wickert
Lecturer(s)	dr. C.M.J. Wickert
Study period	September 2024 – October 2025 (Period 1)
ECTS	3 ECTS
Tuition	€750 20% discount on early bird registration: €600
Course Objective	<p>Upon successful completion of this course, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the key concepts and problems in the philosophy of science. • Have developed the capacity to critically evaluate and defend concepts and approaches in management and organization theory with regards to fundamental problems in the philosophy of science. • Have started developing their capacity to employ the different research traditions in their own research projects.
Course content	<p>This course aims to explore questions in the philosophy of science and to discuss them in relation to examples from different areas of business studies, with a particular focus given on understanding differences and similarities of the positivistic, interpretative, and critical approaches to management research.</p> <p>Among the key questions addressed and discussed within the course are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is science? How do we decide what is scientific and what is not? • How can we demarcate science from other activities? • What are the ontological foundations, goals and epistemological interests of different scientific paradigms? • What are the philosophical problems that are particular to business research? • Can science be objective and value-free? What are the implications for theory development?
Teaching Methods	Weekly: One 2-hour session during 6 weeks of interactive lectures and discussions including student team presentations. Students need to come prepared (reading literature and writing a short essay each week).

Schedule

Date	Time	Room
Wednesday 28 Augustus 2024	15:30 - 17:00	TBA
Wednesday 4 September 2024	15:30 - 17:00	TBA
Wednesday 18 September 2024	15:30 - 17:00	TBA
Wednesday 25 September 2024	15:30 - 17:00	TBA
Monday 2 October 2024	15:30 - 17:00	TBA
Wednesday 9 October 2024	15:30 - 17:00	TBA

Assessment

- Individual essays (6) written by students based on the literature (40%)
- Presentation of different articles in groups and leading of discussion during class (1-2 per team of 2-3 students, depending on class size) (10%)
- Final assignment (individual essay) (30%)
- Participation in class (20%)

Conditions to pass the course

- The score for each individual essay, as well as the other assignments, must be 5.5 or higher, and the final grade is the average of all essays, and must be higher than 5.5.
- Attendance is mandatory. Students who miss more than one class will not pass the course.

Resit

- In the case of a resit only the individual assignments can be retaken;
- Results obtained for the group presentations will remain valid.

Literature

Tentative reading list:

- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). Understanding research philosophies and approaches. In: Saunders et al.: Research Methods for Business Students. Essex: Pearson: 106-119.
- Scherer, A.G. (2003). Modes of explanation in organization theory. In: Tsoukas, H. & Knudsen, C. (Eds.): The Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 310-344
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979). Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis. Ashgate: Hants & Burlington. Read only part 1: In search of a framework: 1-37.
- Gioia, D. & Pitre, E. (1990). Multiparadigm Perspectives on Theory Building. Academy of Management Review, 15: 584-602.
- Willmott, H. (2003). Organization Theory as a Critical Science? Forms of Analysis and 'New Organizational Forms'. In: Tsoukas, H. & Knudsen, C. (Eds.): The Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 88-112.
- Bacharach, S. (1989). Organizational theories: Some criteria for evaluation. Academy of Management Review, 14: 496-515.

- Gibbert, M. & Ruigrok, W. (2010). The "What" and "How" of Case Study Rigor: Three Strategies Based on Published Work.^[1]
^[SEP] Organizational Research Methods, 13: 710-737.

A complete and final list of literature will be provided by the instructor at the beginning of the course.

Target Audience This course is only available for research master and PhD students. All participating students are expected to be proficient in English.