

Philosophy of Social Science

Wednesday 2 to 5PM Buchanan B216

Professor Margaret Schabas, Buchanan E358

Office Hours W 12:30 to 1:30; Thursday 2 to 3PM

Course Description: Do the social sciences have the same aims and methods as the natural sciences? Are they more value-laden and less objective? Are social phenomena qualitatively different from natural phenomena? What demarcates the social from the natural, particularly given that we are animals and have kinship, through our evolutionary history, with other species? These are some of the questions we will address over the term. Be prepared for some surprising answers.

Texts: Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, ed. Steven Lukes (Free Press, 1982)
Nancy Cartwright and Eleonora Montuschi, eds. *Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction* (Oxford, 2014) [for rent at the Book Store]
On-line readings (see list and links on Canvas)

Requirements and Grading:

Three short essays (500 words)	30 (Jan. 29; Feb 27; March 19)
Research Essay Outline	5 (March 5)
Research Essay (2000 words)	45 (April 9)
Participation	<u>20</u>
	100%

Caveat: Unless granted a concession, late assignments are penalized at 5% per day. No AI Tools are permitted. This means no Chat GPT, no Deepl, etc.

Logistics: The short essays will be on an assigned question drawn from the course readings. The research essay is on a topic of your choice, provided it fits the course subject. You will find five to eight journal articles that debate a particular topic and adjudicate the debate. Instructions for both types of essays will be posted on Canvas. For the participation grade, you are expected to attend and speak at every class. You will also be assigned to be the lead-off discussant for two classes and present your research essay in the last seminar. Think of the participation as in lieu of a final exam.

Class Schedule

January 8	Preliminaries
January 15	Durkheim, Chs. 1-3
January 22	Durkheim, Chs. 4-6
January 29	Heath, Joseph (2011) "Methodological Individualism" (SEP, online)
February 5	Cartwright, Intro and Parts II: Ontology (pp. 1-6; 85-120)
February 12	Cartwright, Part III: Objectivity (pp. 123-182)
February 17-21	Midterm Break
February 28	Cartwright, Part I: Current Debates (pp. 9-47)
March 5	Cartwright, Part I: Current Debates (pp. 48-82)
March 12	Cartwright, Part IV: Models (pp. 185-229); Hausman, Sugden (online)
March 19	Cartwright, Part V: Methods (pp. 233-262)
March 26	Cartwright, Part VI: Methods (pp. 265-326)
April 2	Presentations of Research Essays
April 9	Research Essay Due (online 10PM)