

**Epistemology of Social Sciences**

Code: 101128  
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2500262 Sociology	OB	3	2

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face class attendance imposed by the health authorities.

**Contact**

Name: Salvador Cardús Ros  
Email: Salvador.Cardus@uab.cat

**Use of Languages**

Principal working language: catalan (cat)  
Some groups entirely in English: No  
Some groups entirely in Catalan: Yes  
Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

**Other comments on languages**

Compulsory readings are provided in languages that the student knows

**Prerequisites**

There is no prerequisites

**Objectives and Contextualisation**

The course of Epistemology of Social Sciences invites the student to develop a critical perspective and a reflexive habit on the practice of sociology. The accent of the course is put in the analysis of the particularities of sociological discourse in relation to its practice, that is, with the profession of sociologist. It is not, then, a course based on theories, but rather it intends to promote the capacity for epistemological vigilance at the service of a rigorous professional practice, regardless of the theoretical perspective that follows. To achieve this purpose, the course is developed in three blocks of contents: brief previous observations on the sociological perspective; some considerations about scientific knowledge and the conditions of its production in social sciences and, finally, a review of the particular epistemological problems posed by research in sociology and the dissemination of sociological knowledge.

**Competences**

- Analysing the problems arising from the implementation of public policies and conflict situations by recognising the complexity of the social phenomena and political decisions affecting democracy, human rights, social justice and sustainable development.
- Demonstrating a comprehension of the analysis of social phenomena presented in English, as well as observing their strengths and weaknesses.
- Demonstrating a comprehension of the approaches of the sociological theory in its different aspects, interpretations and historical context.
- Describing social phenomena in a theoretically relevant way, bearing in mind the complexity of the involved factors, its causes and its effects.

- Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
- Developing self-learning strategies.
- Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
- Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
- Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Comparing theoretical approaches about the macro- and micro- sociological phenomena.
2. Defining the main micro and macro sociological concepts.
3. Demonstrating a comprehension of the analysis of social phenomena presented in English, as well as observing their strengths and weaknesses.
4. Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
5. Developing self-learning strategies.
6. Documenting their connections with several sociological hypothesis, observing the epistemological distinction between facts and value judgements.
7. Identifying the use of these approaches in different moments of the sociological theory.
8. Rearranging the different meanings of the problems derived from the application of public policies and conflict situations.
9. Recognising the sociological implications of several intellectual debates (about the subject, action, social order, language, etc.).
10. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
11. Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
12. Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

## Content

### GENERAL PROGRAM

#### The Sociological Perspective

1. Sociology and reflexivity
2. Body of knowledge or perspective?
3. Social and sociological problems
4. Common knowledge and sociological knowledge
5. Positive ingenuity and systematization of doubt

#### The production of sociological knowledge

1. On "reality"
2. Thought and action. Theory and provocation
3. An indiciary epistemology
4. Confusion and discovery
5. Metaphors and paradoxes
6. Idle curiosity and instrumental knowledge

#### The office of sociologist as Pierre Bourdieu. Epistemological challenges

1. The initiation to the trade
2. Relational thinking
3. The radical doubt
4. Criticism of cultured tradition
5. Participating objectivation

## Practical sessions

- A. Why, sociology?
- B. An exercise in epistemological criticism
- C. Languages 1: The conference
- D. Languages 2: Graphic representations
- E. Languages 3: Audiovisual language
- F. Languages 4: The informative article
- G. Science, art and revelation. (In memory of Jorge Wagensberg)
- H. Discussion about ways of professionalization

## Methodology

The methodology that will be followed during the Epistemology of Social Sciences will be based on what is defended by the subject's program: reflexivity. Therefore, the activity will be divided as follows:

1. A common two-hour weekly session to establish a minimum critical starting point on the concepts to be used
2. A second weekly session of two hours in order to develop practical sessions and seminars from materials that will be distributed in a timely manner. All sessions are open to participation, but the second ones, in a special way, will be devoted to the debate. In these second sessions, it will usually be based on a brief reflection in order to tackle the subsequent debate. The discussion materials will be added to the Virtual Campus.
3. A compulsory reading will be required from among those proposed in the bibliography, which in the final exam will be related to the topic presented.

The methodology, on the other hand, will seek to fulfill the competencies provided for this subject as closely as possible.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

## Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Individual work	8	0.32	11, 5, 4, 6, 12, 10
Presentation sessions on the subjects of course	22	0.88	1, 2, 6, 8
Type: Supervised			
Seminary sessions	22	0.88	11, 3, 4, 6, 9, 8, 10
Type: Autonomous			
Group working	16	0.64	11, 5, 4, 6, 12, 9, 8
Readings proposed at the seminars	60	2.4	11, 3, 6, 12, 9

## Assessment

The assessment will take into account:

- a. Regular attendance in class (minimum 70%), which will be evaluated randomly
- b. Individual work, paying special attention to progress in mastering the formal aspects of sociological discourse (35 percent).
- c. An epistemological critique group work, and its presentation (35 percent)
- d. A final written exam about the third part of the course (30 percent)
- e. Voluntary evidence can add 1 points to the final mark

The approval of the course, in addition to the assistance, requires that each of the parties has been approved. In the event that you can not attend the class regularly for justified reasons, at the beginning of the course you must agree with the teacher an alternative form of assessment.

The portfolio

The last day of class will be delivered with all the corrected works and will contain:

1. A brief text, of a sheet, on the motivations to study sociology
2. A 2100-character disclosure article on a suggested subject
3. A text comment (2 sheets / 1000 words) about the chosen reading
4. Course work - individual or group - of a maximum of 5 sheets (2500 words)
5. A collection of readings and complementary activities that have been carried out outside the teaching framework, but which are related (voluntary)

In accordance with article 117.2 of the UAB Academic Regulations, the evaluation of those students who have been enrolled before may consist of a single synthesis examination. The students who wish to be evaluated this way should contact the professor at the beginning of the semester.

In case of plagiarism, the evaluation of the test will be 0

## Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
1. Seminar exercises and reading reviews	30 %	8	0.32	11, 1, 5, 4, 6, 12, 9, 8, 10
2. Final group work	35 %	12	0.48	11, 1, 3, 5, 6, 12, 9, 10
3. Written exam on the reflexive sociology	35 %	2	0.08	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12, 7, 9

## Bibliography

Bibliografia bàsica

### **Basic Bibliography**

### **Compulsory**

Pierre Bourdieu "La pràctica de la sociologia reflexiva" a **Per una sociologia reflexiva**. Barcelona. Herder, 1994, pp. 189-229. (Edició original: **Réponses.Pour une anthropologie réflexive**. París. Éd. du Seuil, 1992. Ed. espanyola: **Una invitación a la sociología reflexiva**. Siglo XXI, 2005)

### **To choose:**

Anthony Browne. *Ridículament correcte. El perill totalitari de la correcció política*. La Campana, 2010

Anne Game i Andrew Netcalfe. *Passionate Sociology*. Londres: Sage, 1996. Ed. esp. *Sociología apasionada*. Barcelona: UOC, 2015

Hans Rosling, with Ola and Anna Rosling. *Factfulness*. New York: Flatiron Books, 2018 Ed. catalana: *Factfulness*. Barcelona: Edicions La Campana, 2018

Paul Watzlawick *¿Es real la realidad?* Barcelona: Herder, 5a ed., 1992

Jorge Wagensberg *Si la naturaleza es la respuesta, ¿cuál es la pregunta?* Barcelona: Tusquets, 2006

## **Complementary Bibliography**

### ***Introduccions a la perspectiva sociològica***

Peter L. Berger and Brigitte Berger. *Sociology. A biographical approach*. New York: Penguin Books 1976

Peter Braham. *Key Concepts in Sociology*. Londres: Sage, 2013

Steve Bruce. *Sociology. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1999

Salvador Cardús, ed. *La mirada del sociòleg*. Barcelona: Proa, 1999

Randall Collins. *Sociological Insight. An Introduction to Non-Obvious Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Richard Osborne i B. Van Loon. *Sociology for Beginners*. Cambridge: Icon Books, 1998.

Robert Nisbet. *La sociología como forma de arte*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1979

Zygmunt Bauman. *¿Para qué sirve realmente...? Un sociólogo*. Barcelona: Paidós, 2014

### ***Epistemological reflections***

Pierre Bourdieu. *Le métier de sociologue*. París: Mouton, 1973 (2a ed.). Ed. espanyola: *El oficio de sociólogo*. México: Ediciones del Siglo XXI, 2a ed. 2013

Pierre Bourdieu. *Science de la science et réflexivité*. París: Raisons d'Agir Éditions. 2001

Jean Bricmont i Alan Sokal. *Impostures intellectuales*. Barcelona: Empúries, 1999

Salvador Cardús i Joan Estruch. "Teoria i provocació" a *Papers*, núm. 26, 1986, p. 69-104

Alan Chalmers. *Qué es esa cosa llamada ciencia?* Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1982

Paul Feyerabend. *Tratado contra el método*. Madrid: Tecnos, 1981

Carlo Ginzburg. "Señales. Raíces de un paradigma indiciario" a *Crisis de la razón. Nuevos modelos en la relación entre saber y actividad humana*. México: Siglo XXI, 1983

Darrell Huff. *Cómo mentir con estadísticas*. Barcelona: Ares y Mares, 2011

Leszek Kolakowski. *Husserl y la búsqueda de la certeza*. Madrid: Alianza, 1994

David Locke. *Science as Writing*. Yale University, 1992. Edició espanyola: *La ciencia como escritura*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1997

Josep-Maria Terricabras. *Fer filosofia, avui*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, reed. 1995

Josep-Maria Terricabras. *Atreix-te a pensar*. Barcelona: Ed. La Campana, 1997

Jesús Tusón. *Això és (i no és) Allò*. Barcelona. Ara Llibres, 2008

Jorge Wagensberg. *A más cómo, menos por qué*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2006

Paul Watzlawick. *El arte de amargarse la vida*. Barcelona: Herder, 1984

Max Weber. *La ciència i la política*. València: Pub. de la Universitat de València, 2005

Louis Wirth. "Pròleg" a Karl Mannheim, *Ideologia i utopia*. Barcelona: Ed 62, 1978, pp 27-42

## **Fiction**

Marià Alemany. *El virus de la glòria*. Barcelona. Edicions La Campana, 1994

Gilbert K. Chesterton. *La innocència del Pare Brown*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1965

Gilbert K. Chesterton. *L'home que fou dijous*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1969

Tomasi di Lampedusa. *El Guepard*. Barcelona: Grup Editor, 1996

Monica Lewycka. *La petita història dels tractors en ucraïnès*. Barcelona: Ed. La campana, 2006

David Lodge. *Changing Places*. Penguin Books, 1975. Ed. catalana: *Intercanvis*, Vic: Eumo, 1989

David Lodge. *Small World*, PenguinBooks, 1985. Ed. esp.: *El mundo es un pañuelo*, Barcelona: Versal, 1989

David Lodge. *Nice Work*, Penguin Books, 1988. Ed. catalana: *Bona feina*. Vic: Eumo, 1990

## **Magazines and webs**

Mètode: [www.metode.cat](http://www.metode.cat)

Singularity University: [www.su.org](http://www.su.org)

Heterodox Academy: <https://heterodoxacademy.org>

Medium. Intersection of Science, Art and Business: [www.medium.com](http://www.medium.com)

## **Software**

Any text editor