

Epistemology of Social Sciences

Code: 101128
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Sociology	OB	3

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

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 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 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. Defining the main micro and macro sociological concepts.
2. Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
3. Developing self-learning strategies.
4. Documenting their connections with several sociological hypothesis, observing the epistemological distinction between facts and value judgements.
5. Identifying the use of these approaches in different moments of the sociological theory.
6. Rearranging the different meanings of the problems derived from the application of public policies and conflict situations.
7. Recognising the sociological implications of several intellectual debates (about the subject, action, social order, language, etc.).
8. Relating their usage and criticism in the historical context in which they emerged.
9. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
10. 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 indicatory epistemology
4. Sociology and art
5. Metaphors and paradoxes

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

1. Why Sociology?
2. Un exercici de crítica epistemològica
3. Social problem-Sociological problem
4. What is science?
5. Art and Sociology
6. Feminist Epistemologies
7. Science and Religion
8. Discussion about reflexivity in sociological practice

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Individual work	8	0.32	3, 2, 4, 10, 9
Presentation sessions on the subjects of course	22	0.88	1, 4, 6
Type: Supervised			
Seminary sessions	22	0.88	2, 4, 7, 6, 9
Type: Autonomous			
Group working	16	0.64	3, 2, 4, 10, 7, 6
Readings proposed at the seminars	60	2.4	4, 10, 7

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.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
1. Seminar exercises	10 %	5	0.2	3, 2, 4, 10, 7, 6, 9

2. Self-analysis essay	20%	3	0.12	2, 4
3. Written exam on the reflexive sociology	35 %	2	0.08	1, 2, 4, 10, 5, 7, 8
4. Final group work	35 %	12	0.48	3, 4, 10, 7, 9

The continuous assessment will take into account:

- a. a brief essay on what led you to study sociology (self-socioanalysis exercise) (20 per cent).
- b. practical exercises, carried out in the classroom throughout the course, of reflection and debate on the subject. Active participation will be assessed (10 per cent).
- c. a final course work, carried out in a group (3 members) of epistemological critique, written and with oral presentation in the classroom (35 per cent).
- d. a final exam on the contents of the syllabus developed in class, and in relation to the compulsory readings (35 per cent).

Regular class attendance (minimum 70%), which will be assessed randomly, is necessary in order to be able to follow the continuous assessment.

Passing the course means having passed each of the parts independently.

Single evaluation

In the event that you can not attend the class regularly for justified reasons, at the beginning of the course you can opt for the single evaluation. This will consist on a series of readings indicated by the teacher at the beginning of the course (40%), and a final exam on the overall content of the subject (60%). The date of submission will be announced at the beginning of the course.

Use of artificial intelligence: In this subject, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is not allowed in any of its phases. Any work that includes fragments generated with AI will be considered a lack of academic honesty and may lead to a partial or total penalty in the grade of the activity, or higher penalties in serious cases.

Non-assessable: Students who have not submitted any of the assessment activities will be classified as "no evaluable".

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

Bibliography

Basic Bibliography

Compulsory

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

Salvador Cardús, ed. **La mirada del sociòleg**. Barcelona: Proa, 1999, p. 171-198

Complementary Bibliography

Sociological perspective

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.

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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

Anna Berga. "La violència: problema o síntoma? Una mirada sociològica", *Educació Social*, núm. 23, 2003, p.11-22.

Biglia, Bárbara. "Avances dilemas y retos de la epistemología feminista en la investigación social" en Iranzu Mendiola, Marta Lúxan, Matxalen Legarreta, Gloria Guzmán. Iker Zirion, Jokin Azpiazu (eds.) *Otras formas de (re)conocer Bilbao*: UPV, Hegoa, SIMReF. 2015, pp.21-44.

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

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

Jean Bricmont i Alan Sokal. *Impostures intel/lectuals*. 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: Sigo 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*. Mèxic: 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 española: *La ciencia como escritura*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1997

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

Josep-Maria Terricabras. *Atreveix-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

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

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

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

Fiction

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

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

Annie Ernaux. *El lloc*. Barcelona: Angle Editorial, 2024.

David Foster Wallace. *This is water*. Little, Brown & Company. 2009.

Magazines and webs

Mètode: www.metode.cat

Singularity University: www.su.org

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

Medium. Intersection of Science, Art and Business: www.medium.com

Software

Any text editor

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(SEM) Seminars	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(SEM) Seminars	51	Catalan	second semester	afternoon
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	51	Catalan	second semester	afternoon