

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2020-2021

Epistemology II (A001235)

Due to Covid 19, the education and evaluation methods may vary from the information displayed in the schedules and course details. Any changes will be communicated on Ufora.

Course size (nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)
Credits 5.0 Study time 150 h Contact hrs 45.0 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2020-2021

B (semester 2)	Dutch	Gent	lecture	30.0 h
			self-reliant study activities	15.0 h

Lecturers in academic year 2020-2021

Vanrie, Wim	LW01	staff member
Van Dyck, Maarten	LW01	lecturer-in-charge
Present, Pieter	LW01	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2020-2021

Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy	crdts	offering
	5	B

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Rationality, science, objectivity, Kuhn

Position of the course

In this course we build on a critical lecture of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to analyse different views concerning the rationality of scientific practices.

Contents

We start from Kuhn's attempt to trace the rationality of scientific practices to the nature of their historical development processes. This analysis contains a number of innovative epistemological ideas, but has also been often criticized for its relativistic or anti-objectivist implications. We will investigate both a number of these critiques and the possible fruitfulness of these ideas. We also pay explicit attention to their implications for the place of science in society.

This investigation takes place in two ways: by relating Kuhn's ideas to philosophical tradition (Kantian views on objectivity, pragmatist anti-representationalism, logical-positivist analyses of science, Wittgenstein ...); and by discussing a number of case studies from the history of science.

Themes: underdetermination of theory by empirical evidence, theory-ladenness of observation, distinction between analytic and synthetic statements, science as social practice, the nature of expertise

Initial competences

To have successfully completed the course Epistemology 1 and Philosophy of science 1, and Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy or to have acquired the necessary skills by other means.

Final competences

- 1 Being able to correctly use crucial concepts used in the debates concerning the rationality of science (paradigm, incommensurability, theory-ladenness, ...).
- 2 Understanding the implications of underdetermination and theory-ladenness for scientific rationality.
- 3 Being able to put the debates concerning the rationality of science in a wider philosophical context.
- 4 Being able to assess the relevance of the debates concerning the rationality of science for the place of science in our society.

5 Being able to develop the outlines of a position on the rationality of science.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture, self-reliant study activities

Extra information on the teaching methods

In preparation for each of the lectures, the students read assigned texts dealing with topics treated in the lecture.

Learning materials and price

- Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.
- Further texts are made available through Minerva.

References

Course content-related study coaching

By the lecturer, on appointment.

Evaluation methods

end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period

Oral examination

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period

Oral examination

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

examination during the second examination period is possible

Calculation of the examination mark

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

- 1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during and after office hours

Extra information:

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy