Course: PPPA 8190  Semester: Fall, 2014
Thursday, 6:10-8:00 p.m.

Course Title: Philosophical Foundations of Policy and Administrative Research

Instructor: Michael Harmon
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Required Readings: Books

Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions
Bent Flyvbjerg, Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again
Michael M. Harmon, Public Administration’s Final Exam: A Pragmatist Restructuring of the Profession and the Discipline
Dvora Yanow & Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds.), Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn

Articles and Book Chapters (most posted on Blackboard)

O. C. McSwite, “Theory Competency for MPA-educated Practitioners”
Michel Foucault, “So Is It Important to Think?”
Gareth Morgan, “Part III: Conclusions,” from Beyond Method
Michael Harmon, “Is a Research Question Really Necessary?”
Karl R. Popper, Chapters from Popper Selections
George Soros, “Thinking and Reality”
Stephen Jay Gould, “Our Natural Place” and “Evolution as Fact and Theory”
Michael Harmon, “Truth and the Burden of Proof”
Alasdair MacIntyre, “The Character of Generalizations in Social Science”
Gibson Burrell & Gareth Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis*, Chs. 1-3
Peter Berger & Thomas Luckmann, “Reification,” from *The Social Construction of Reality*
Ian Hacking, “Introduction” to *The Social Construction of What?*
Michael Harmon, “Social Constructionism”
Robert Solow, “How Did Economics Get That Way and What Way Did It Get?”
Kathryn Ierulli, Edward Glaeser, and Mariano Tommasi, “Introduction” in *The Economics of Human Behavior*
Steven Rhoads, *The Economist’s View of the World*
Milton Friedman, “The Methodology of Positive Economics”
Daniel Hausman, “Economic Methodology in a Nutshell”
Louis Menand, “An Introduction to Pragmatism,” in *Pragmatism: A Reader*
Richard Rorty, “Solidarity or Objectivity?” and “Science as Solidarity”

**Description:** This course is intended to expose beginning Ph.D. students in TSPPPA to a range of literature in philosophy, the history and philosophy of natural and social science, and social theory that bears on a critical understanding of organizational and management research and scholarship. The purposes of our conversations about this literature will be:

1. to heighten your awareness of important linkages between philosophical concerns and the conduct of research;
2. to reveal the hidden biases and assumptions that underlie various research approaches, and
3. to develop your capacity to engage in critical and reflective discourse about scholarly inquiry in public policy and administration.

**Requirements:**

1. Each student will keep a detailed journal of ideas and reactions to readings and class discussions. The journal will be submitted for the instructor’s comments twice during the semester. The journal should be written as formally or informally as you like, the chief stipulations being that you write complete sentences and paragraphs (not simply bulleted phrases), and that you write personal and reflective commentary in addition to whatever summarizing of the readings that might be appropriate. If you wish, include cartoons, poems, diagrams, newspaper clippings—anything that conveys the meaning of the course to you.
2. In consultation with their faculty advisors, students will prepare and briefly annotate a bibliography of at least ten “classics” in their primary field. Each student will also select one of the classics from his or her bibliography and write a critique of it from the standpoint of various concepts and arguments covered in the course literature.

3. Preparation of a one-page (single-spaced) summary of a chapter from either Part II, III, or IV of Yanow and Schwartz-Shea's *Interpretation and Method*. Be prepared to lead a brief discussion of your chapter summary on October 30.

4. Active participation and careful reading of the course literature is expected.

**Class Sessions:**

August 28  Introduction to the Course

September 4  Thinking Theoretically

*Readings:* McSwite, “Theory Competency for MPA-educated Practitioners”
Foucault, “So Is It Important to Think?”
Morgan, from *Beyond Method*
Harmon, “Is a Research Question Really Necessary?”

September 11  Mainstream Philosophy of Science

*Readings:* Popper, *Popper Selections*, “Editor’s Introduction,” Chs. 7, 8, 12, 14
Soros, “Thinking and Reality”

September 18  Truth, Facts, and Prediction in the Natural and Social Sciences

*Readings:* Gould, “Our Natural Place”
Gould, “Evolution as Fact and Theory”
Harmon, “Truth and the Burden of Proof”
MacIntyre, “The Character of Generalizations in Social Science”
September 25  Paradigms and the History of Science

Readings:  Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

October 2  Paradigms and Organizational Analysis

Readings:  Burrell and Morgan, from *Paradigms and Sociological Analysis*
Berger & Luckmann, “Reification”
Hacking, “Introduction” to *The Social Construction of What?*
Harmon, “Social Constructionism”

October 9  What Economists Do (Burt Barnow)

Readings:  Solow, “How Did Economics Get That Way and What Way Did It Get”
Ierulli, Glaeser, and Tommasi, “Introduction” to *The Economics of Human Behavior*
Rhoads, *The Economist’s View of the World*

October 16 Competing Views of the Methodology of Economics (Joseph Cordes)

Readings:  Friedman, “The Methodology of Positive Economics”
Hausman, “Economic Methodology in a Nutshell”

October 23 Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn

Readings:  Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, "Introduction" and Part I

October 30 Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn, cont.

Readings:  Selected chapters from Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, Parts II, III, & IV (student summaries and presentations)
November 6  Pragmatism

*Readings:*  Menand, “Introduction” to *Pragmatism: A Reader*
Rorty, “Solidarity or Objectivity?” and “Science as Solidarity”

November 13  Pragmatism

*Readings:*  Harmon, *Public Administration’s Final Exam*, Chs. 4-6, “An Epilogue on Maturity”

November 20  Social Science and Social Practice; Psychoanalysis and Public Administration


December 4  Social Science and Social Practice, cont. ("Classics" annotations, critiques, and journals due)

*Readings:*  Flyvbjerg, Chs. 7-11
Harmon, “Business Research and Chinese Patriotic Poetry”