

MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
DEPT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SPRING 2005
IR 224: RESEARCH METHODS IN IR
MONDAY, 14:40-17:30
INSTRUCTOR: N. POLAT

Philosophy of Social Science

One of the two principal objectives of this course is to try and familiarize the student with the issues and concerns of the philosophy of social science as applicable to the study of International Relations, a theme which will revolve around the nature and problems of knowledge. The discussions will entail references to the philosophy of science and philosophy of language, exploring the question of method for social and political research in the wider setting of methodology for human sciences. What exactly is social inquiry? What, if any, are the inherent limitations of political analysis? What to make of concepts such as theory, interpretation, objectivity and subjectivity, in the acquisition and use of social and political data?

Research Techniques

The other main objective of teaching on this course is to introduce the student to the research techniques employed in International Relations. The technique employed in a systematic study signifies the specific procedure by which the researcher makes sense of phenomena in a given field. The technique, informed by any one of a number of possible sets of abstract premises, termed epistemological assumptions, and discussed under the philosophy of social science on this course, often also indicates the manner in which phenomena are perceived and identified by the researcher. The course addresses both quantitative and qualitative research techniques.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course will be conducted in the lecture mode. The essential reading material on the course, indicated below, is to be provided by the instructor. Students will need to sit for one mid-term examination to be held in April, and a final, in June, each with equal weight on the final grade. The examinations, similar in nature, will last about 90 minutes each, expecting the student to respond to two questions, out of possible three, based on the course material.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

I. Introduction

Weeks 1-2

Introducing the Course Topics

Week 3

Meaning, Context, Culture, and IR

II. Knowledge and Method in Human Sciences

Week 4: Normativism, Weber and Parsons on Natural and Social Science

Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, Volume II (New York: Free Press, 1968), 591-601.

Week 5: Positivism, Verifiability and Falsifiability

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, transl. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 1974).

Karl Popper, 'The Growth of Scientific Knowledge,' in D. Miller (ed), *Popper Selections* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 171-180.

Weeks 6: Post-Positivism, Kuhn on Theory Choice in Science

Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 136-159.

Weeks 7: Post-Positivism, Feyerabend on Method

Paul K. Feyerabend, 'How to Defend Society Against Science', *Radical Philosophy* (No. 2, 1975), 4-8; reprinted in I. Hacking (ed), *Scientific Revolutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 156-167.

Weeks 8: Post-Positivism, Wittgenstein on Language and Meaning

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, transl. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988) pars. 241-293 (pp. 88-100).

Weeks 9: Post-Positivism, Foucault on Sciences of Man

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London and New York: Tavistock/Routledge, 1989), xv-xxiv.

Week 10

MID-TERM EXAMINATION

III. Research Techniques

Week 11: Case Study Approaches

Andrew Bennett, 'Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages,' in D. Sprinz and Y. Wolinsky (eds), *Cases, Numbers, Models: International Relations Research Methods* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 27-64.

Week 12: Quantitative Approaches

Bear F. Braumoeller and Anne E. Sartori, 'Empirical-Quantitative Approaches to the Study of International Relations,' *ibid*, 139-63.

Week 13: Formal Approaches

Duncan Snidal, 'Formal Models of International Politics,' *ibid*, 242-83.

Week 14: Classical Approach

Hedley Bull, 'International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach,' *World Politics* (Vol. 18, No. 3, 1966), 361-377.