

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	APSS611																	
Subject Title	Epistemology of Social Work Knowledge																	
Credit Value	3																	
Level	6																	
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Nil																	
Assessment Methods	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">100% Continuous Assessment</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Individual Assessment</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Group Assessment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Review Essay</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Class Participation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Seminar presentation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Term paper</td> <td style="text-align: center;">50%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			100% Continuous Assessment	Individual Assessment	Group Assessment	1. Review Essay	20%	0%	2. Class Participation	10%	0%	3. Seminar presentation	20%	0%	4. Term paper	50%	0%
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The grade is calculated according to the percentage assigned; ▪ The completion and submission of all component assignments are required for passing the subject; and ▪ Student must pass all components (standard of passing) if he/she is to pass the subject. 																		
Objectives																		
<p>The primary objective of this course is the study of knowledge in social work. It is organized around understanding and analyzing the conditions, sources, structure, justification and limitation of the knowledge systems of social work.</p> <p>Social work is the profession committed to the pursuit of social justice and to the enhancement of people’s quality of life. In keeping with these professional commitments, this course is also designed to assist students in articulating and developing their own “personal epistemology”, and to integrate their knowledge in a moral framework for the service of their clients. The objectives of this course can be divided in two levels, <i>know it</i> (1 to 3) and <i>know thou</i> (4 to 6), as follows:</p>																		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe and analyze the epistemological standards of different paradigms of social work knowledge. 2. Understand and analyze the basic epistemological criteria for evaluating social work goals and outcomes. 3. Evaluate and respond to the current debates on the knowledge of social work. 																		

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Understand and evaluate the relationship between social worker and social work theories, and the interaction between social worker (as the “knower”) and clients in the construction of knowledge in social work interventions. 5. Identify and critically reflect on our own epistemological stances in social work knowledge. 6. Explore the direction of indigenization of social work knowledge in our culture. 								
Intended Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Understand the epistemological base of social work practice and the links between theory and practice in social work. b. Appreciate how professional practice is informed by formal theories, propositional knowledge, and how it is grounded in the practice wisdom that is embedded in specific intellectual and social contexts. c. Critically examine the nature of social work as a form of moral practice and the epistemology that underpins its moral values. d. Integrate the knowledge and values in an intellectual framework that can contribute to the consolidation of professional competency. 								
Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Brief introduction: Knowledge, science, theory and the practice of social work</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Empiricism and social work</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Empiricism and Its Fall: Some Notes on Post-Empiricism</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Some general ideas about postmodernism and social work</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alternatives (1): Postmodernism and social work</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alternatives (2): Hermeneutics and social work</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alternatives (3): Critical realism and social work</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Practice wisdom, embodiment and social work</td> </tr> </table> 	Brief introduction: Knowledge, science, theory and the practice of social work	Empiricism and social work	Empiricism and Its Fall: Some Notes on Post-Empiricism	Some general ideas about postmodernism and social work	Alternatives (1): Postmodernism and social work	Alternatives (2): Hermeneutics and social work	Alternatives (3): Critical realism and social work	Practice wisdom, embodiment and social work
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Teaching/Learning Methodology	<p>The works and ideas of important philosophers in epistemology will be made accessible and personally relevant to students new to the discipline. The teachers will offer succinct exposition of the major themes of the selected issues in epistemology. The teacher will also lead class discussions of the selected issues, utilizing and expanding on the insights of the philosophers from the diverse perspectives of epistemology.</p> <p>Students will be expected to read extensively, to discuss and debate with the classmates and teachers. They need to read the important works, apply the insights to the issues and share ideas in discussions. Students are also expected to prepare for, attend and participate in all seminars.</p>								
Assessment									

Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed			
			a	b	c	d
	1. Review Essay	20%	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2. Class Participation	10%	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3. Seminar Presentation	20%	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4. Term Paper	50%	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Total	100%				
<p>Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:</p> <p>Review Essay Please review a social work journal article on social work knowledge published after 2014. Write a report of not more than 2000 words and discuss the epistemological framework of the author(s).</p> <p>Class Participation Students will need to critically appraise the assigned readings and present to other class members for discussion. Students also need to participate actively in seminar discussion.</p> <p>Seminar Presentation Students will choose a topic from the syllabus and present in the seminar group. Students will be judged on the quality of the literature review, organization and originality of arguments, and the ability to analyze.</p> <p>Term Paper Based on the presentation, an essay (3500 words) has to be submitted at the end of the semester. Students need to well articulate their views of the topic and present a well-organized analysis after critical examination of epistemology and its relationship to knowledge building in social work.</p>						
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:					
	▪ Lecture		27 Hrs.			
	▪ Seminar		12 Hrs.			
	Other student study effort:					
	▪ Self-study (3 hrs x 13 weeks)		39 Hrs.			
	▪ Preparation for Seminar Presentation		15 Hrs.			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation for Term Paper and Review Essay 	24 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	117 Hrs.
Reading List and References	<p><u>Essential</u></p> <p>Alvesson, M. (2002). <i>Postmodernism and social research</i> (Understanding social research). Buckingham [England]; Philadelphia: Open University Press.</p> <p>Archer, Margaret Scotford. (1998). <i>Critical realism: Essential readings</i> (1st ed., Critical realism--interventions). London; New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Flyvbjerg, B., Landman, T., & Schram, S. (2012). <i>Real social science applied phronesis</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Chu, W., & Tsui, M. (2008). The nature of practice wisdom in social work revisited. <i>International Social Work</i>, 51(1), 47-54.</p> <p>Hacking, I. (2002). <i>Historical ontology</i>. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.</p> <p>Hardy, M. (2016). "I know what I like and I like what I know": Epistemology in practice and theory and practice again. <i>Qualitative Social Work: QSW: Research and Practice</i>, 15(5-6), 762-778.</p> <p>Ho, Yuk-Ying & Yuen, Sun-pong (eds.) (2010). <i>Reconstitution of social work: Towards a moral conception of social work practice</i>. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company.</p> <p>Kirk, S. & Reid, D. (2001). <i>Science and social work: A critical approach</i>. New York: Columbia University Press.</p> <p>Kjørstad, M., & Solem, M. (2018). <i>Critical realism for welfare professions</i> (Routledge advances in social work). Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.</p> <p>Packer, M. (2018). <i>The science of qualitative research</i> (Second ed.). Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Phillips, D. C. (Denis C., & Burbules, N. C. (2000). <i>Postpositivism and educational research</i>. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.</p> <p>Reamer, F. G. (2022). <i>The philosophical foundations of social work</i> (Second edition.). Columbia University Press.</p> <p>Richardson, F., Fowers, B., & Guignon, C. (1999). <i>Re-envisioning psychology: Moral dimensions of theory and practice</i> (1st ed.). San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass.</p> <p>Sayer, R. (2000). <i>Realism and social science</i>. London: SAGE.</p>	

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- Steup, Matthias (2005). Epistemology
(plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/#MRE)
- Taylor, Charles (1985). *Philosophy and the human sciences*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- 賀玉英, 阮新邦 編 (2004). 《詮釋取向的社會工作實踐》. 新加坡: 八方文化創作室.
- Supplementary**
- Caputo, Richard, Epstein, William, Stoesz, David & Thyer, Bruce. (2015). Postmodernism: A Dead End in Social Work Epistemology, *Journal of Social Work Education*, 51:4, 638-647, DOI: 0.1080/10437797.2015.1076260
- Caputo, Richard, Epstein, William, Stoesz, David & Thyer, Bruce. (2017) Letter to the Editor: Respect Multiple Research Methods, Not Nonsensical Epistemologies, *Journal of Social Work Education*, 53:2, 365-367, DOI: 10.1080/10437797.2017.1283273
- Dreyfus, H., & Dreyfus, Stuart E. (1986). *Mind over machine: The power of human intuition and expertise in the era of the computer*. New York: Free Press.
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- Garrow, E., & Hasenfeld, Y. (2017). The Epistemological Challenges of Social Work Intervention Research. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 27(4), 494-502.
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- Samson, Patricia L. (2015). Practice wisdom: the art and science of social work, *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 29:2, 119-131, DOI: 10.1080/02650533.2014.922058
- Schon, Donald A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. USA: Basic Books.
- Shane R. Brady, Monica Leisey, D. Crystal Coles, Nathan H. Perkins, Justin Lee, Carmen Monico, Angie Mann-Williams, Karen Smith Rotabi & Jimmy A. Young (2017) Letter to the Editor: Respecting Multiple Epistemologies in Social Work, *Journal of Social Work Education*, 53:2, 361-364, DOI: 10.1080/10437797.2017.1283272
- Taylor, C. (1995). *Philosophical arguments*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

	Witkin, L. Stanley (ed.) (2012). <i>Social Construction and Social Work Practice: Interpretation and Innovations</i> . NY: Columbia University Press