

**Philosophy of Natural and Social Sciences****NUR 991 Special Topics (3 credits)****Tuesdays, 12:40-3:30 pm****Room 500 West Fee Hall****Fall 2009**

**Catalog Course Description:** Special topics which supplement regularly-offered courses.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate ability to read science for the underlying beliefs about the nature of truth, evidence and the values contained in the method of discovery.
2. Identify the values, beliefs and issues in selected original natural and social sciences.
3. Compare and contrast the values, beliefs and issues in scientific methods with reference to contemporary scientific questions and concerns.
4. Develop a personal philosophy that will guide research practice.

**Prerequisites:**

Open to masters and doctoral students in health related disciplines or approval of college.

**Professional Standards & Guidelines:** The curriculum is guided by the following documents:

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2001). AACN Position Paper: *Indicators of quality in doctoral programs in nursing*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

**Course Faculty:**

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Note: Times can be arranged to accommodate student schedules.

**Instruction:**

- a. Methodology: This interactive course will meet three class hours weekly. The course incorporates seminar, class discussion, debate, hand-on practice in philosophical analysis, and student lead presentations.

- b. Required Texts:

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Washington, DC: Author.

Leon, J.C. 1999. *Science and philosophy in the west*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Martin, M. & McIntyre, L.C. (Eds). 1994. *Readings in the philosophy of social science*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Zucker, A. 1996. *Introduction to the philosophy of science*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

c. Required Resources, References, Supplies:

ANGEL Help Line

1.800.500.1554 (24 hrs, 7 days/week)

517.355.2345 (24 hrs, 7 days/week)

[www.angel.msu.edu](http://www.angel.msu.edu) (ANGEL Help link in upper right corner)

Always check with the ANGEL Help Line first!

d. Required learning activities

- a. **Preparation for class.** Students will present an admission ticket each week for class that contains one question from the reading that they still cannot understand from the reading for the week. These will be in the form of a 3 X 5 note card, and will contain their name, the date and topic of the class, and the specific reading to which their question refers. Admission tickets are due for weeks 2-11 and 13 and are worth 1 point each (10% of total grade).
- b. **Two page analysis (one for each of the two segments of the foundations, including the ancient underpinnings, the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century).** Students will analyze an aspect of the scientific beliefs, values or philosophies held by one of the early philosophers/scientists. Students will articulate the argument in their own words, using at least one scholarly resource outside of class. Then the student will trace the permutation of that line of reasoning in modern times. This permutation might be how this remains the method or belief of the modern times, or how this has been altered. (Two reports due, each worth 10% of the final grade).
- c. **Presentation about the perspective on a modern philosopher of science.** Students will use scholarly materials to present a 15 minute description of the major philosophical views of one of the philosophers. Summary handouts must be provided to the class. (20% of final grade).
- d. **Debate.** Students will engage in a lottery-assigned side of a debate concerning the nature of evidence and the most appropriate scientific methodology. Students will be evaluated by their peers and the faculty related to their preparation for and knowledge of their side of the debate. (Worth 20% of final grade).
- e. **Personal Philosophy of science.** Students will develop their own philosophy of science based on the material in the class. Students will present major concepts in class (10% of final grade) and write up a 5 page philosophical statement (20% of final grade).

e. Writing Requirements

The College of Nursing requires that students refer to a style manual when writing required papers and bibliographies. The reference format adopted by the College of Nursing is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (most recent edition).

### Course Grading Scale

The Michigan State University 4.0 grading system will be used to calculate final course grades.

%	GRADE
100-94%	4.0
93-89%	3.5
84-88%	3.0 (Minimum passing grade)
83-79%	2.5
79%>	Fail

Points will be rounded to the nearest whole numbers using the “0.5 rule.” Points at the  $\geq 0.5$  will be rounded up while those  $\leq 0.5$  will be rounded down to the nearest whole number.

### Class activities and Evaluation:

Week	Topic	Readings and Due dates
1:	Introduction Case Studies	Z: Ch 1
2-3:	Ancient underpinnings	L: Ch 1-2
4-5:	17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> Century	L: Ch 3-4
6-7	Modern Scientific Paradigms: Darwin, Durkheim, Freud, Einstein, Weber, Marx, Skinner	L: 5-6 and selected reading and web resources Students present
8-9:	The Scientific Method Empiricism, positivism, reductionism, causation, falsification	M and McI: Ch 32 Z: Ch 2,3 and 5
10-11:	The Nature of Evidence: Relativism, the mind, social facts, interpretation	M and McI: Ch 4, 12, 13, 16 and 27
12:	The Great Debate	Class Debate
13:	Culture, Gender, Power and Evidence	M and McI: Ch 36, 38, 38, 39 Z: Ch 43
14:	Personal Philosophies	Class Presentations
15:	Wrap-up	

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### Additional Course Content

**Additional Course Description:** This course examines the philosophical roots of western scientific paradigms, and focuses on the issues, debates and practical implications of them for research practice. We will use case studies, personal reflection, discussion, debate and personal philosophical development as methods to explore the philosophies about the nature of truth, evidence and the appropriate scientific methods of discovery. Issues of power have always been central in the maintenance of dominant scientific paradigms; therefore, the relationship between dominant and marginalized voices will be examined throughout.

#### Professionalism

All graduate students at Michigan State University should be fully familiar with the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities Articles (published by the Graduate School; available at <http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/gradrights.htm>); University guidelines for ethical research (published by the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects [UCRIHS]; available at <http://www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs/>); The MSU Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities, <http://grad.msu.edu/all/ris04activities.pdf> and specific principles for informal conflict management, in the Graduate Student Resource Guide (published by the Graduate School; available at <http://grad.msu.edu/conflict.htm>).

The Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) Articles address professional standards for graduate students as follows: *“Each department/ school and college shall communicate to graduate students, at the time of their first enrollment in a degree program or course in the unit, any specific codes of professional and academic standards covering the conduct expected of them.”* (Article 2.4.7). *“The graduate student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards”* (Article 2.3.8).

In addition to meeting academic standards included in the Academic Progression Guidelines, students and faculty in the Doctoral Program in Nursing have shared responsibility for adherence to the professional standards referred to in the Doctoral Student Handbook of the CON

Professional expectations are rooted in the maintenance of high quality working relationships with faculty, peers, research participants, staff, and all others with whom the graduate student interacts. Aspects of high quality working relationships that are addressed in the GSSR as shared faculty-student responsibilities include: *mutual respect, understanding, and dedication to the education process* (2.1.2); *maintenance of a collegial atmosphere* (2.3.7); and, *mutual trust and civility* (2.3.1.2).

Communication. Faculty can be reached through email or phone. Faculty response to email may take up to 3 days.

Late work: Students need prior approval to turn in assignments late. Late work without prior approval is subject to 2% per day.

## Policies

**Academic Integrity:** Article 2.3.3 of the [Academic Freedom Report](#) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the College of Nursing adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See [Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide](#) and/or the MSU Web site: [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu).) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) Web site to complete any course work in NUR 901. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including--but not limited to--a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>).

Students engaged in scholarly activities (e.g. dissertation, scholarly projects) should follow the guidelines of scholarly writing as outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (most recent edition). Ethical principles ensure the accuracy of scientific and scholarly knowledge and protect intellectual rights. Principles include reporting of results, plagiarism, publication credit, sharing data, and copyright.

Research Misconduct and Questionable Research Practices within the college are defined consistently with the Interim University Document on Intellectual Integrity approved by the President of Michigan State University on August 5, 1994, and revised June 29, 1995. Refer to the CON Doctoral Student Handbook.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a disability specialist, call 353-9642 (voice), 355-1293 (TTY), or visit [MyProfile.rcpd.msu.edu](http://MyProfile.rcpd.msu.edu).

**Disruptive Behavior:** Article 2.3.5 of the [Academic Freedom Report](#) (AFR) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.3.10 of the AFR states that "The student has a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." [General Student Regulation 5.02](#) states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Faculty Judiciary process.

**Attendance:** Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

(Attendance policy, if different from the [University attendance policy](#) and especially when the attendance policy affects students' grades. For details, see [Attendance Policy, Excused Absences and Make-up Work](#) on the Ombudsman's Web site. This site includes discussion of student observance of major religious holidays, student-athlete participation in athletic competition, student participation in university-approved field trips, medical excuses and a dean's drop for students who fail to attend class sessions at the beginning of the semester).

College of Nursing policies regarding Professional Development Guidelines [found in CON Student Handbooks at CON website]. Students are responsible for the information found in the CON Doctoral Student Handbook

Effective conflict management/negotiation skills are essential for navigating the graduate school experience and maintaining high quality working relationships. Specific principles for conflict management/negotiation are addressed in the Graduate Student Resource Guide. Doctoral students are responsible for making concerted good faith efforts to resolve conflicts with others in a constructive and informal fashion, prior to proceeding to formal conflict resolution options, as consistent with the GSRR statement on informal conflict resolution (Article 5.3.2). Doctoral students who have specific questions or concerns about professional standards or conflict resolution issues should consult with their Major Professor, the Associate Dean for Research and Doctoral Programs, and/or the University Ombudsman for guidance, as appropriate.