# Philosophy of Social Science

**Instructor:** Anna Réz

**Short description:** the course offers a general introduction to some of the main contemporary issues discussed within the philosophy of social science. Topics include:

* rational choice explanations and game theory
* explanation and prediction in social sciences
* reductionism, individualism, holism
* values and objectivity
* feminist philosophy of science

This is an advanced seminar, where previous knowledge in philosophy and/or social sciences is highly recommended.

**Requirements:**

* 5 response papers, handed in before classes (35%)
* regular attendance and active class participation (30%)
* end of term exam (35%)

OR

* end of term exam (35%)
* research paper (appr. 2000 words, for doctoral students 4000 words) (65%)

**Readings (preliminary list):**

Elster, Jon. *Explaining social behavior: More nuts and bolts for the social sciences*. Cambridge University Press, 2015: 7-32.

Haslanger, Sally. "Gender and race:(What) are they?(What) do we want them to be?" *Noûs* 34.1 (2000): 31-55.

Little, D. „Microfoundations of Marxism”. In: M. Martin - L. C. McIntyre (eds.): *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press 1994.

Machlup, F. “Are the Social Sciences Really Inferior?”, reprinted in M. Martin and L.C. McIntyre, eds. *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1994.

MacIntyre, A. „The Character of Generalisations in Social Science and their Lack of Predictive Power.” *Curriculum Studies: Curriculum knowledge*, *1*, 282.

Putnam, H. "Beyond the Fact/Value Dichotomy", in H. Putnam, *Realism With a Human Face*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Sen, A. "Rational Fools", Philosophy and Public Affairs, 6, pp. 317−44., 1976, reprinted in M. Martin and L.C. McIntyre, eds. *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1994.

Taylor, C. "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man", Review of Metaphysics, 25, pp. 3−51., 1971; reprinted in M. Martin and L.C. McIntyre, eds. Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science, Cambridge MA: MIT Pr mess, 1994. (excerpts)

Watkins, J. W. N. „Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences”. In: M. Martin - L. C. McIntyre (eds.): *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press 1994.

Weisstein, N. “Psychology Constructs the Female”. In: M. Martin - L. C. McIntyre (eds.): Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science, Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press 1994.