

## Syllabus

### Course description

<b>Course title</b>	Philosophy of Science
<b>Course code</b>	29019
<b>Scientific sector</b>	M-FIL/03
<b>Degree</b>	PhD
<b>Semester and academic year</b>	a. y. 2020-21
<b>Year</b>	1
<b>Credits</b>	3
<b>Modular</b>	n/a

<b>Total lecture hours</b>	12
<b>Total lab hours</b>	n/a
<b>Total exercise hours</b>	n/a
<b>Attendance</b>	recommended
<b>Prerequisites</b>	none
<b>Course page</b>	n/a

<b>Specific educational objectives</b>	The course focuses on the acquisition of analytical abilities and the development of critical thinking with regard to basic epistemological problems. It combines various theoretical and methodological approaches in view of fostering the students' awareness and capacity for autonomous judgement in methodological and ethical questions related to scientific research.
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<b>Lecturer</b>	Ivo De Gennaro, office E3.04, Ivo.DeGennaro@unibz.it, tel. 0471 013481, <a href="http://www.unibz.it/en/economics/people/StaffDetails.html?personid=5188&amp;hstf=5188">http://www.unibz.it/en/economics/people/StaffDetails.html?personid=5188&amp;hstf=5188</a>
<b>Scientific sector of the lecturer</b>	M-FIL/03
<b>Teaching language</b>	English
<b>Office hours</b>	please refer to the lecturer's web page
<b>Lecturing assistant</b>	n/a
<b>Teaching assistant</b>	n/a
<b>Office hours</b>	n/a
<b>List of topics covered</b>	The module introduces to a fundamental reflection on scientific explanatory models and, more generally, on hypothetical thinking. Taking as a starting point Keynes's article "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren", the following questions will be asked with respect to economic theory: What is a hypothesis or basic assumption? What is an operative concept? What is the scope and what are the implications of a

	<p>scientific definition? To what kind of temptation is model building exposed? What role does experience play in this? The introduction to these questions is meant, not least, to raise an awareness with regard to the scientist's responsibility in society.</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- welfare- and scarcity-based definitions of economics</li> <li>- the structure of hypothetical knowledge</li> <li>- explicit and implicit assumptions</li> <li>- model building and experienced reality</li> <li>- motivations for model building</li> <li>- operative ends and ends in themselves</li> <li>- operative concepts of needs, the human being, time</li> <li>- scientific responsibility</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching format</b>	The course will be taught in a seminar style. Students will be provided with readings and asked to prepare these readings in view of class discussion.

<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<p><u>Knowledge and understanding:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. knowledge and understanding of the scope and task of scientific research;</li> <li>2. knowledge of the structure of hypothetical knowledge;</li> <li>3. knowledge of basic ethical issues of scientific research.</li> </ol> <p><u>Applying knowledge and understanding:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. development of the capacity for distinguishing between scientific performance and scientific truth;</li> <li>2. development of the ability to discern between relations of cause and effect and the truth of a phenomenon;</li> <li>3. development of the capacity for critically assessing the formulation and implementation of a research endeavour.</li> </ol> <p><u>Making judgments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. learning what a scientific judgment consists in;</li> <li>2. learning and applying the difference between making a judgment and evaluating;</li> <li>3. learning and applying the difference between making a judgment and expressing an opinion.</li> </ol> <p><u>Learning skills:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. autonomous reasoning;</li> <li>2. interpretive abilities exercised on economic texts;</li> <li>3. oral and written expression of autonomous thinking.</li> </ol>
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<b>Assessment</b>	Short essay based on course readings and/or class discussion.
<b>Assessment language</b>	English
<b>Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks</b>	The short essay should consist in an exercise of autonomous reflection on one of the course topics. It will

	be assessed based on the capacity of interrogating seemingly obvious assumptions
<b>Required readings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- M. Mazzucato, <i>The Value of Everything</i> (Chapter "What is Value"?)</li> <li>- J. M. Keynes, "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren"</li> <li>- E. Esposito, "Open Future"</li> </ul> <p>All texts, as well as further readings and lecture notes, will be made available through the digital course repository.</p>
<b>Supplementary readings</b>	Will be indicated upon request.