GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2026-2027

Philosophy of Science: Capita Selecta (A001844)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2027-2028

A (semester 1)	Dutch	Gent	seminar
			independent work
			lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2027-2028

Weber, Erik	LW01	lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2027-2028	**crdts**	**offering**
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject Philosophy)	5	A
Master of Arts in Philosophy	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Context of pursuit, development of scientfic theories, rationality.

Position of the course

This advanced course deepens the insight of students into the philosophy of science literature on "pursuitworthiness" (see explanation below). It stimulates independent reflection on several topics that emerge in this literature.

Contents

Hans Reichenbach (1938) introduced the distinction between context of discovery and context of jusitfication in the philosophy of science.
Larry Laudan (1977) pointed out the importance of the context of pursuit, which lies in between. The crucial question in this phase is: which (imperfect) theories are worth further development?
We pay attention to philosophical views on this issue, but we also discuss a number of cases from the history of science. We also pay attention to the impact of generative AI on this problem.
Schedule:
1 Introduction & overview.
2 Discussion of philosophical texts and txts about cases (read in advance by the students)
3 Independent study of a subtopic (chosen together with the teachers).
4 Oral presentation on the results of 3.

Initial competences

Credit for Philosophy of Science I and II, or equivalent.

Final competences

1 Understand complex debates in contemporary philosophy of science (their aims and methods, the positions taken) and defend your own position.
2 Grasp the positions in the philosophical literature on pursuitworthiness, and be able to apply them to specific cases.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Week 1: introduction (lecture).
Week 2-6: study of texts (seminar).
Week 7-10: develop personal views (guided self-study).
Week 11-12: presentation and discussion (seminar).

No lecture recordings will be provided.

Study material

Type: Reader

Name: Pursuithworthiness
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Available on Ufora : Yes
Online Available : No
Available in the Library : No
Available through Student Association : No

References

Reichenbach, H. (1938). *Experience and prediction: An analysis of the foundations and the structure of knowledge.* The University of Chicago Press.
Laudan, L (1997). *Progress and its Problems.* The University of California Press.

Course content-related study coaching

Persoonlijk: op elektronische afspraak.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Skills test, Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

See below.

Calculation of the examination mark

70% periodical evaluation (oral exam).
30% presentation + participation.

Facilities for Working Students

Te bespreken met de lesgevers.