

## Epistemology II (A001235)

**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 2023-2024

B (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

independent work

### Lecturers in academic year 2023-2024

Van Dyck, Maarten

LW01

lecturer-in-charge

Beck, Pieter

LW01

co-lecturer

### Offered in the following programmes in 2023-2024

[Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy](#)

**crdts**

**offering**

5

B

### Teaching languages

Dutch

### Keywords

Rationality, science, objectivity, expertise, Kuhn

### Position of the course

In this course we build on a critical lecture of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to analyse different views concerning the rationality of scientific practices.

### Contents

We start from Kuhn's attempt to trace the rationality of scientific practices to the nature of their historical development processes. This analysis contains a number of innovative epistemological ideas, but has also been often criticized for its relativistic or anti-objectivist implications. We will investigate both a number of these critiques and the possible fruitfulness of these ideas. We also pay explicit attention to their implications for the place of science in society.

This investigation takes place in two ways: by relating Kuhn's ideas to philosophical tradition (Kantian views on objectivity, pragmatist anti-representationalism, logical-positivist analyses of science, Wittgenstein ...); and by discussing a number of case studies from the history of science.

Themes: underdetermination of theory by empirical evidence, theory-ladenness of observation, distinction between analytic and synthetic statements, science as social practice, the nature of expertise ....

### Initial competences

### Final competences

- 1 Being able to correctly use crucial concepts used in the debates concerning the rationality of science (paradigm, incommensurability, theory-ladenness, ...).
- 2 Understanding the implications of underdetermination and theory-ladenness for scientific rationality.
- 3 Being able to put the debates concerning the rationality of science in a wider philosophical context.
- 4 Being able to assess the relevance of the debates concerning the rationality of science for the place of science in our society.
- 5 Being able to develop the outlines of a position on the rationality of science.

### Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

#### **Conditions for exam contract**

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

#### **Teaching methods**

Lecture, Independent work

#### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

In preparation for each of the lectures, the students read assigned texts dealing with topics treated in the lecture.

#### **Learning materials and price**

- Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.
- Further texts are made available through Ufora.

#### **References**

#### **Course content-related study coaching**

By the lecturer, on appointment.

#### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Oral assessment, Presentation

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

Oral assessment, Presentation

#### **Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Assignment

#### **Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is possible

#### **Calculation of the examination mark**

#### **Facilities for Working Students**

Facilities:

- 1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during and after office hours

Extra information:

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy