SYLLABUS — PHIL. 427

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I WILL ALSO EMAIL PAPERS ON COMIC BOOKS AS SOCIAL SCIENCE

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
FIFTY YEARS AGO, PHILOSOPHERS OF SCIENCE BEGAN TO ADDRESS ISSUES THAT AROSE FROM SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE ITSELF, FOCUSING PRIMARILY ON PHYSICS AND BIOLOGY, RATHER THAN RESTRICTING PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE TO A STUDY OF THE LOGIC OF SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATIONS. OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS, PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE HAS GROWN RAPIDLY, AS IT ADDRESSED ISSUES INTRINSIC TO SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE. THIS COURSE WILL ADDRESS SOME OF THE CUTTING EDGE SOCIAL SCIENCE ISSUES, INCLUDING THEORIES OF WELL-BEING, EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY, SOCIAL ONTOLOGY (ARE THE BASIC UNITS OF SOCIAL EXPLANATIONS INDIVIDUALS OR POPULATIONS), OBJECTIVITY, FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY, SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY IN PRACTICE, RESEARCH METHODS, LEGAL EPISTEMOLOGY, SOCIAL CAUSATION, AND THE DEBATE ABOUT THE ROLES OF SITUATIONS AND CHARACTER TRAITS IN EXPLAINING HUMAN BEHAVIOR. THERE WILL BE AT LEAST ONE GUEST WHO IS AN ANTHROPOLOGIST OR SOCIOLOGIST, AND POSSIBLY ONE GUEST WHO IS A COMIC BOOK ARTIST. MY OWN GRADUATE WORK IN ANTHROPOLOGY HAS HAD A POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON MY PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS ABOUT SCIENCE AND EPISTEMOLOGY. PAUL FEYERABEND ONCE URGED PHILOSOPHERS TO STUDY ANTHROPOLOGY, BECAUSE THE CULTURAL SPECIFICITY OF KNOWLEDGE MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN OUR EPISTEMOLOGIES, AND CARTWRIGHT HAS ARGUED THAT SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATORY STRATEGIES MUST REFLECT THE “DAPPLED WORLD” IN WHICH WE LIVE.

GRADE REQUIREMENTS: THREE 8-10-PAGE PAPERS, EACH OF WHICH WILL BE WORTH UP TO 25 POINTS; GROUP PROJECT WORTH UP TO 15 POINTS; 10 WEEKLY 1-2-PAGE SUMMARIES OF EACH WEEK’S READINGS: TOGETHER WORTH 10 POINTS.

PLAGIARISM IS PROHIBITED. DEFINITION: IN AN INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING, PLAGIARISM OCCURS WHEN A WRITER DELIBERATELY USES SOMEONE ELSE’S LANGUAGE, IDEAS, OR OTHER ORIGINAL (NOT COMMON-KNOWLEDGE) MATERIAL WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING ITS SOURCE. THIS DEFINITION APPLIES TO TEXTS PUBLISHED IN PRINT OR ON-LINE, TO MANUSCRIPTS, AND TO THE WORK OF OTHER STUDENT WRITERS. IF YOU PLAGIARIZE ANY OF YOUR WORK, IT WILL BE REPORTED TO YOUR DEAN AND THE UNIVERSITY HAS A PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH IT. AT THAT POINT, YOUR GRADE WILL BE OUT OF MY HANDS.

ABSENCES MUST BE REPORTED THROUGH THE STUDENT SELF-REPORTING ABSENCES SYSTEM.
ASSIGNMENTS

9/12  WHAT IS SOCIAL SCIENCE, WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE?

9/19  VALUES IN SOCIAL SCIENCE: CM: 162-184; READING

HOW SOCIAL SCIENCE FRAMES PUBLIC PROBLEMS:

9/26  WELL-BEING CM: PP. 9-30
10/3  CLIMATE CHANGE CM: PP. 31-47
10/10 EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY CM: PP. 48-67
FIRST PAPER DUE (10/10)

10/17  SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL REALITY CM: PP. 85-101
10/24  OBJECTIVITY: WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A BAT? CM: PP. 123-161
10/31  FORMAL MODELS CM: PP. 185-207

11/7  WORK ON GROUP PROJECTS — NO CLASS

11/14  INTERDISCIPLINARITY; COMIC BOOKS AS SOCIAL SCIENCE GUEST
SECOND PAPER DUE (11/14)
PROSPECTUS OF GROUP PROJECT DUE (11/14)

11/21  SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY CM: PP. 249-264

11/26-11/29: THANKSGIVING RECESS

RESEARCH METHODS:

12/5  MEASUREMENT/CAUSAL INFERENCE CM: PP 265-326

12/11-14  READING DAYS

12/19  FINAL PAPER DUE — GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO MODIFY THIS SYLLABUS AS CIRCUMSTANCES DEMAND.