Course: Philosophical Foundations of Research in the Social Science

2 credits, mandatory, BA level

Prof. Aviad E. Raz

Taught: 2007-8, 2009-10

Course description
The course provides a philosophical and paradigmatic background for quantitative and qualitative research methods in the social sciences. It first introduces positivism and its methodological requirements, then the criticism on positivism, the emergence of the interpretive paradigm in the social sciences, and its methodological requirements. The course concludes by discussing the positivistic-interpretive debate and considering the possibility of mixed methods.

Course requirements
2 assignments and a test

Course contents and readings
Background: the logic of arguments, refutation and verification, induction and deduction.

Classical positivism
Hempel, K. (1977). "Objectivity, empiricism, and scientific hypotheses," from the Philosophy of Science Reader, the Open University (in Hebrew)


Reliability, validity, operationalization


Criticizing Positivism
Adorno, T. (1977). "Epistemology and Science". from the Philosophy of Science Reader, the Open University, 82-92 (in Hebrew)


The Interpretive Paradigm

Mixed Methods