

Department of Sociology & Anthropology, BGU

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)

Popper, K. (1977). "Science, Pseudo-science, and the principle of refutation" from the Philosophy of Science Reader, the Open University (in Hebrew)

Reliability, validity, operationalization

Rubinstein, G. (2002). "Authoritarianism among Jewish students in Israel" Megamot 4: 574-557

Criticizing Positivism

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

Kuhn, T. (1970). Chapter 6 in his the structure of scientific revolutions. Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, Tel-Aviv University (Hebrew).

The Interpretive Paradigm

Ben-Yehoshua, N (1995). "The characteristics of qualitative interpretation". Pp. 21-31 in her book The Qualitative Research. Masada (Hebrew)

Becker, H. "The Marihuana Smoker," in Rot-Heler, D. "The Individual and the Social Order" (Hebrew).

Mixed Methods

Newman, I. & C. Benz. (1998). "Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods: an Interactive Continuum," pp. 13-26 in their *Qualitative-Quantitative Research Methodology*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.