

# California State University Sacramento

## Phil 105 – Fall 2022

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*Gender pronouns:* they, them, theirs

Class meeting times: Mon-Wed 9-9:50

Mendocino Hall 3009

Office hours: Mon-Wed 10:00-11:30 & by appointment.

## Catalog Description

Examination of the values implicit in a scientific culture and the problems that arise as a commitment to the development of scientific knowledge and technology. These problems include: distinguishing good scientific practice from bad; the intrinsic value of scientific knowledge independent of its benefits in application; the proper and improper applications of scientific knowledge.

## Course Description

This course examines the relationship between science and values. According to a common view, science is supposed to be value-free. If we want to keep science objective, the reasoning goes, values need to be out of the scientific picture. We will discuss this ideal of value-free science and scrutinize its problems. Throughout examples and historical cases, we will be able to spot different stages in scientific research where values might play a role.

These are some of the issues we will cover:

- the (only) apparent conflict between (good) science and values

- when morally problematic social values (e.g. sexist, racist, heteronormative, ableist) shape the direction of scientific investigation and its results

- the responsibility of scientists, science writers, policy makers, and the public

- the problems of having a simplistic view of science

- the tricks of pseudoscience

- science and the meaning of life

- science, technology and the future of humanity.

The main goal of this course is to invite students to develop a more nuanced and accurate idea of what science is and how it works. Units: 3.0.

## GE Area and Prerequisites

This course satisfies GE area D (see the outcomes below). It is a writing intensive class, which requires students to write a minimum of 5,000 words of structured prose.

You must have GWAR certification before Fall 2009; or WPJ score of 80 or above; or 3-unit placement in ENGL 109M/W; or 4-unit placement in ENGL 109M/W + co-enrollment in ENGL 109X; or WPJ score 70/71 + co-enrollment in ENGL 109X.

## Course objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to

1. Express the complexity of the relationship between science and values.

2. Identify cases in which values are guiding (for good or for bad) scientific research.

3. Contrast your own view of science with the view of different philosophers of science.

4. Develop a critical attitude towards science. *Critical* does not mean negative or necessarily skeptical. It means having a complex understanding of how science works, so that one has good reasons to accept or reject particular scientific results, and is capable of offering arguments to support an opinion on what the advantages and disadvantages of certain scientific projects are.

## Course outcomes

As per the GE area D and writing intensive requirements, students will be able to:

1. Describe and evaluate ethical and social values in their historical and cultural contexts.

2. Explain and apply the principles and methods of academic disciplines to the study of social and individual behavior.

3. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of human diversity in human society, for example, race, ethnicity, class, age, ability/disability, sexual identity, gender and gender expression.

4. Explain and critically examine social dynamics and issues in their historical and cultural contexts.

Here is a link to the GE requirement checklist:

<https://www.csus.edu/undergraduate-studies/_internal/_documents/ge_worksheet_spring2019-sac-state-final.pdf> and to area D learning outcomes: <https://www.csus.edu/undergraduate-studies/general-education/_internal/_documents/area-d-learning-outcomes.pdf>

## Required Materials

Douglas, Heather E. 2009. *Science, Policy, and the Value-Free Ideal*. University of Pittsburg Press.

Fine, Cordelia. 2017. *Testosterone Rex: Myths of Sex, Science, and Society*. Norton.

You can access Douglas’ ebook online. Here is the permalink via OneSearch:

<https://csus-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/tu2a5d/01CALS_ALMA51439390640002901>

 And here is a direct link to the systemwide platform via proxy server for remote access

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/csus/detail.action?docID=2038867>

(you should be prompted for your SacLink credentials).

For now the library doesn’t have Fine’s book as an ebook. Other required materials (e.g. texts, videos) will be made available on the Canvas site.

## Grading policy and criteria

There is a maximum of 100 points you can get in this course. Your total number of points is calculated by adding the points earned on the following assessment items:

| **Assessment** | **Details** | **Points** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Quizzes (x6) | See below. | Quiz #0: 4 points. Quizzes #1-#5, 10 points each, a total of 54 points. |
| Reading quiz | See below + see instructions in Unit 0 (“How to complete the reading quiz”). | 5 |
| Book report | See “Book report- instructions” under “Welcome” on the course site. | 12 |
| Video reports (x3) | 300-500 words, 3 points each. | 9 |
| Discussion forums (x10) | Two contributions per unit. See details below. | 20 |

## Description of assessment items

Quizzes: Quizzes might contain multiple-choice, and true/false. There are six quizzes, starting with quiz #0, which is worth four points. The rest of the quizzes (#1-#5) are worth 10 points. The total number of full points from the quizzes is 54. Each quiz will be available on Canvas during a limited time, ending by midnight on the due date. Once you start doing the quiz, you will also have a limited time to do it (15 minutes for quizzes #1-#5, 10 minutes for quiz #0). Important: you cannot repeat a quiz. You will be able to see the correct answers to the questions 24 hours after the due date.

Reading quiz: This is the first assignment you need to submit. In order to complete this assignment, please follow the following steps:

* Read the excerpt from Elizabeth Anderson (under “Unit 0” module)
* Take notes (write down the most important ideas, and how those ideas are related).
* Go over the handout on Anderson’s excerpt (under “Unit 0” module).
* Compare the handout provided with your own notes. Did you miss any important ideas in your notes? Did you misinterpret Anderson? Did you write down ideas that are missing in the handout?
* Get ready to take “Reading quiz – on Anderson”.
* Submit your quiz.

This quiz is to test your reading comprehension, which will help you get an idea of how much you have to work when reading a text in order to understand what it says.

You have 60 minutes to complete the quiz. There are 5 essay questions. Length: 50-200 words each answer. I will only grade one of the questions. I will randomly pick which one to grade. But note that you need to submit ALL five answers. If you miss one of the questions, you earn no points at all. After you submit your answers, you will be able to read a correct answer to each of the questions. Once you see all correct answers, compare them to your original answers and decide how much of the text you understood, and whether you will need to work harder on upcoming assigned readings. The goal of this exercise is to test your reading comprehension. If you get most questions wrong, and your notes are very different from the handout, then you need to work hard to improve your reading comprehension.

Book report: You are expected to write a report on the book by Cordelia Fine *Testosterone Rex*. Check “Book report instructions” (Home, under “Welcome”). There are questions for each chapter that you need to answer. Your report needs to contain: i) answers to all questions (answers can vary in length, from 100 to 200 words) + ii) a 200-words summary of the book + iii) a critical response to it (200-400 words).

Video Reports: You will watch a video and answer a few questions. There are three video reports, you can find them in “Assignments”. Video reports are available throughout the semester. Each video report has a different deadline. Make sure you do not miss them!

Discussion forums: You are required to contribute to the forums. There will be a prompt posed by the instructor for every unit (a total of 10), and you need to address the prompt *and* respond to/comment on at least one classmate’s response. That is, you need to make two contributions per unit. Your contributions are due on the Friday of the week the corresponding unit ends. Participation in discussion forums will be evaluated on two parameters: relevance and quality. Your response to the prompt needs to address the prompt. In your comment to a classmate’s post you need to engage with your classmate’s response in a relevant way e.g. do not comment on a general or secondary observation made by your classmate, do not just write “I agree with you”, do not just praise your classmate for their post (praising is welcome, but it needs to be accompanied by much more). For more specific instructions on how to do well on discussions please check “How to do well in discussions and assignments” page under “Welcome” module. Please check “Community Norms” under “Welcome” for guidelines on how to conduct yourself in discussions.

## General evaluation criteria for all assignments

Knowledge: your work needs to demonstrate correct interpretations of class material, distinguish among the different perspectives we discuss, and identify relevant notions.

Critical thinking: your work needs to demonstrate an ability to articulate and evaluate ideas, whether or not you agree with them.

Communication: your work needs to demonstrate the ability to transmit ideas in a way that is sensitive to your expected audience.

Etiquette: Respectful and constructive discussion is a critical part to learning and becoming a good thinker.

Engagement according to academic parameters: your work needs to demonstrate that the subject matter has been adequately researched and correctly cited.

Creativity: your work needs to demonstrate innovative approaches to the subject matter being discussed or presented. This can be done by connecting the subject matter to domains and questions you are familiar with.

Your final grade is determined by how many points you earn out of 100.

## Grading Scale

| **Proficient (A)** | **Competent (B)** | **Satisfactory (C)** | **Poor (D)** | **Unacceptable (F)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A (95-100) | B+ (87-89) | C+ (77-79) | D+ (67-69) | F (59-0) |
| A- (90-94) | B (84-86) | C (74-76) | D (64-66) |  |
|  | B- (80-83) | C- (70-73) | D- (60-63) |  |

## Respect For Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of different dimensions of identity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, national identity, immigration status, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

## Other Important Information

I am here to help:Remember that I am here to help you learn as best as I can. Please contact me if you have problems understanding the material, or require feedback and guidance on course-related issues. We can meet (online for now) as many times as necessary during the semester.

Classroom and Online Forums behavior: The (physical or online) classroom should be a safe space to discuss any topic, no matter how controversial (and we’ll be discussing controversial matters!). We all have to build and maintain that safety by discussing respectfully, avoiding personal attacks, offensive epithets, and exclusive language. If you feel uncomfortable in class and/or online discussion forums please get in contact with me. Please check “community norms” under “Welcome” for guidelines on how to conduct yourself in discussions.

Writing: Writing is a critical part of your education, and it is especially important in philosophy. For free, one-on-one help with writing in any class, please visit the University Reading and Writing Center in Calaveras 128. The Writing Center can help you at any stage of your reading/writing processes: coming up with a topic, developing, or organizing a draft, understanding difficult texts, or developing strategies to become a better editor. To make an appointment visit the Reading and Writing Center in CLV 128. For current Writing Center hours and more information, visit the website at [www.csus.edu/writingcenter](http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter)

Gender neutral writing:In philosophy, gender-neutral writing is the accepted practice recommended by the American Philosophical Association. Example of gender neutral language: humankind (instead of mankind). See the American Philosophical Association guidelines [www.apaonlinecsw.org/apa-guidelines-for-non-sexist-use-of-language](http://www.apaonlinecsw.org/apa-guidelines-for-non-sexist-use-of-language).

Plagiarism: Plagiarizing someone else’s work is a serious academic offence, and it is bad for many reasons. Always use quotation marks and a footnote citation to indicate sentences or passages you borrow from another author. Assignments in which plagiarism is found will at the least be graded at 0 (not just an F). All incidents of plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs for possible further administrative sanction. You are responsible for reading and understanding the details of the University's plagiarism policy. All papers will be put through plagiarism software. See the current student handbook for further information on student rights and responsibilities. Here is a link to the university's honesty policy: <http://www.csus.edu/umanual/student/stu-0100.htm> Come talk to me if you are not sure about what constitutes plagiarism.

Etiquette/Netiquette: All of us involved in this course should conduct ourselves in ways consistent with the [Hornet Honor Code](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/_internal/_documents/hornet-honor-code.pdf).

Disability access statement:If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e.: Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange accommodations. It is your responsibility to provide documentation of disability to SSWD and meet with a SSWD counselor to request special accommodation before classes start. SSWD is located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice); (916) 278-7239 (TDD only); or via email at sswd@csus.edu. More information available here: <http://www.csus.edu/sswd/index.html>

Email policy:I commit to respond to your emails within 2 business days. Please take into account that I don’t carry a smart phone with internet access, and I don’t check my email unless I’m working on my computer. If you haven’t heard from me after two business days, please send me a follow-up email. Before emailing me with a question about the course, check the syllabus in case your question is already answered there. To facilitate communication, include your name and last name in the body of your email, and include the title of the course you are taking and the section in your email’s subject. Please follow the Philosophy Department’s guide on how to correspond with your professor: https://www.csus.edu/college/arts-letters/philosophy/\_internal/g6-how-to-correspond-with-your-professor.pdf

Feedback:I read discussion boards regularly and occasionally comment on your contributions. I’ll return graded assignments within 3 days and 2 weeks after due date.

### Late submissions:

No late assignments will be accepted. Exception: If you anticipate you might miss the deadline of an assignment (because of an emergency situation, including a situation related to COVID-19), get in contact with me as soon as possible, and always before the deadline. In these cases, we will discuss the possibility of an extension.

Changes in policies:If due to traveling or any other reason, I change any of the above conditions, I will inform of the change in both an announcement on the main page of the course, and an email to each participant. Please make sure the email address you provided for this course is the one you regularly check.

Technology requirements: Students must have a reliable way of accessing internet, Canvas and their Sac State-registered email. Technical problems must be directed to the ITC Help Line @ 278-7337 or [servicedesk@csus.edu](mailto:servicedesk@csus.edu)

### Tech Requirements:

* Access to internet.
* Sac State-registered email.
* Canvas: Most versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari, support the use of Canvas. To view specific Operating System and Browser compatibility with Canvas, please refer to: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10720>.
* Zoom: You can download Zoom and find more information about using Zoom here:

https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/zoom/student-resources.html

* PowerPoint: If you do not have access to PowerPoint, you can download it for free here (scroll down to PowerPoint and click on “Access Online or Download from Office365”):

https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/software-catalog/#business-productivity

If you experience difficulties with your computer or connecting to the campus networks please contact the Information Resource Technology (IRT) Service Desk by e-mail: servicedesk@csus.edu or phone (916) 278-7337. For information about their complete services visit: <http://www.csus.edu/irt/ServiceDesk/>.

Tech Support:If you need technical assistance, including with devices or WiFi access, here are some helpful links for the Information Resources and Technology office:

* During the Covid-19 campus closure, laptops can be checked out for long-term, remote use, as specified here: <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/teaching-learning/laptop-checkout.html>
* Other assistance, such as information on WiFi Access, can be found here:
* <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/remote-learning/>

Covid-19 Instructions and Support:If you are sick, stay home and do not attend class. Notify your instructor. If you are experiencing any COVID- like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, loss of smell or taste, nausea, diarrhea, or headache) or have had exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID contact **Student Health & Counseling Services (SHCS) at 916-278-6461** to receive guidance and/or medical care. You are asked to report any possible COVID related illnesses/exposures to SHCS via this link [COVID-19 Illness/Exposure Report Form](https://sacstateshcs.wufoo.com/forms/covid19-illnessexposure-report/). Expect a call from SHCS within 24 hours.

Student Health & Counseling Services:Student Health and Counseling Services staff are available for virtual and in-person services. During this public health crisis and extended period of limited physical or social interaction, if you need counseling or other physical or mental health services, you should not hesitate to reach out to the Student Health and Counseling center. For helpful information and access to their services visit their website at: <https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling/>.

Basic Needs Support:If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away! The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student. Email the CARES office at [cares@csus.edu](mailto:cares@csus.edu) to speak with a case manager about the resources available to you. Check out the [CARES website](https://bit.ly/3fhQ1kY).

### Other resources:

Student Health & Counseling Services: [https://shcssacstate.org](https://shcssacstate.org/)

Dreamer Resource Center: <http://www.csus.edu/saseep/drc/>

University Writing Center: <http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/>

Pride Center: <http://www.csus.edu/pride/>

Academic Advising: <http://www.csus.edu/acad/>

Multi-Cultural Center: <http://www.csus.edu/mcc/>

Women’s Resource Center: <http://www.csus.edu/wrc/>

Information Resources & Technology: <http://www.csus.edu/irt/>

ASI Food Pantry: <http://www.asi.csus.edu/programs/food-pantry/>

Basic Needs (Food, Housing, Financial Security): <http://csus.edu/basicneeds/index.html>