

PSYC 622 Psychology and Science
Dr. Tom Pierce
Spring 2005

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The goal of this course is to introduce students to the advantages, assumptions, and limitations of the scientific method as a tool for addressing questions in psychology. Students will be encouraged to critically examine the fit between the goals of psychology and the ability of a scientific approach to help psychology to meet these goals. The course will examine the current status of psychology as a scientific discipline and its future as a viable field of study.

Books

1. Harry Collins and Trevor Pinch. The Golem: What everyone should know about science (2nd Ed)
2. Thomas Kuhn. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (3rd Ed)
3. Edward O. Wilson. Conscilience

Other readings will be placed on reserve at the library as needed. Many reserve materials will be available electronically as .pdf files from the library's web site, then downloaded and printed.

Grading

1. Class Participation and Preparation: 20%

The class will be conducted in a seminar format. Students will be required to read thoroughly an assigned amount of material and to discuss that material in class. Students will also be expected to present summaries of short segments of this material to the class. Written feedback about class participation performance will be provided twice during the semester.

2. Two exams: 30% each

Each exam will consist of a series of essay questions to be completed in one week. The exams are open-book and open-note.

3. Term Paper: 20%

Students will select a topic to explore in depth that is related to the content of the course. Papers should be 10-15 pages long and be written in APA format.

Topics

Part I. Science and Scientists

1. The scope of psychology
2. Science as a human activity: The Golem
3. Scientific paradigms and revolutions: The Structure of Scientific Revolutions

Midterm Exam: Due week 8

II. Psychology Past, Present and Future

4. Psychology's place in science: Conscience
5. Has psychology made any progress in 120 years?
6. One Psychology or many?
7. The status of theory in psychology
8. Metaphors in psychological theory
9. Professional conduct and ethics

Final Exam

Students are expected and required to act in accordance with Radford University's Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code will be handled according to the policies and procedures outlined in Radford University's Student Handbook.

Disabilities Statement

If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the Disability Resource Office (DRO). The DO is located in Room 32, Tyler Hall. The phone number is 831-6350. To receive accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper DRO forms and meet with me at the beginning of the semester.