

Course guide | Integrity and Responsibility in Research and Advice

Lecturers

- Dr. Marcel Becker (Centre for Ethics, Radboud University Nijmegen)
- Dr. Hester van de Bovenkamp (Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam)
- Prof. dr. Sarah de Lange (Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam)
- Dr. Ringo Ossewaarde (Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences, University of Twente)
- Dr. Patrick Overeem (Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
- Dr. Berry Tholen (Department of Public Administration, Radboud University Nijmegen)

Date and Location

15-18 June 2020, Utrecht

Aims and structure of this course

Can an investigator of political phenomena be politically neutral? Are the measures a researcher applies to evaluate policies objective? Is a study of phenomena that are politically or morally controversial inevitably controversial itself? If scientific research on politics and administration involves value-choices, should such choices in a society like ours be made (or at least controlled) democratically? When, exactly, is the integrity of a researcher at stake? Are there rules for proper conduct among researchers?

As different as these questions may be, they do have something in common. They all are questions that empirical researchers face (indeed, have to face) but that cannot be answered by reference to the body of theories and methodology in their field. The reason, of course, is that these questions are of a normative kind.

Research, as any more or less complex social activity, is a practice that contains its own typical values and ethical concerns. In fact two sorts of issues might be distinguished: internal and external ones. *Internal* issues concern integrity and ethics in doing research. For example: is one obliged to share one's data with other scientists? What is the difference between being pragmatic about research design choices and doing sloppy research? *External* issues concern the scientist's societal responsibility. For instance: Is research and scientific advice on policy and politics better to the extent that is more value-free? Do social scientists have a special responsibility for 'speaking truth to power'? (A further question arises: are these two types of issues related? Does our answers to the former have implications for our answer to the latter?)

This course does not deal with empirical theories or methodology of Political Science and Public Administration – nor with philosophy of science and epistemology – but with the values of the practice of research.

After this course, the PhD-student

- Is familiar with the most important theoretical positions on the fact-value distinction in (social) research and those on the scientific autonomy and responsibility of the scientist
- Is able to recognize the (implicit) value choices in existing research and advice and to discuss and evaluate these choices
- Is able to reflect on the normative issues at stake in his/her own research project
- Is familiar with existing codes of conduct and current debates on scientific integrity and responsibility.

Course Program

The course consists of four morning sessions and four afternoon sessions. As a starting point, we take Max Weber’s classical position on the honorable, value-neutral scientist. In his speech *Wissenschaft als Beruf* (Science as a vocation, 1917) Weber presented what he saw as the basic values for scientists with consequences for both the internal and external side of his profession. In the first meeting we will try to come to grips with Weber’s stance and gather questions and problems that Weber’s position entails. These issues will be dealt with in the rest of this course. In the next two morning sessions we will discuss several ideal-typical positions of the social scientist’s responsibility that deviate from Weber’s, namely the value-aware and the (critically) involved social scientist. We will look into the arguments provided for these alternative proposals and see whether they can stand critical scrutiny.

In the afternoon sessions our approach is more thematic and practical. Guided by renowned researchers in our fields, we will identify the typical dilemmas (and ways to deal with them) in political and administrative research.

Throughout the course, we will pay special attention to questions of scientific integrity. This subject (which is much-debated in the Netherlands since the Stapel-affair) is an important element in each of the ideal-types of scientific responsibility discussed in the morning sessions and also in the specific research field discussed in the afternoons. In the morning sessions the meaning of integrity as a basic scientific value will be addressed. In addition we devote the fourth morning session to the more practical aspects of integrity, addressing the recent new Code of Conduct by the Dutch association of universities VSNU.

The items in overview:

Ideal-Types of Scientific Integrity & Responsibility	Values and Dilemmas in Practice
A. The honorable value-free social scientist*	I. Research in a contested area
B. The value-aware social scientist*	II. Being researcher and practitioner
C. The (critically) involved social scientist*	III. Social research as social activism
	IV. Integrity in scientific practice *
	V. Values in the research on integrity And corruption

* = morning sessions

In all sessions, the PhD-students are actively challenged to relate their own research to the issues and approaches at hand.

Course coordinators

Course coordinators of this program are Patrick Overeem (VU University Amsterdam, p.overeem@vu.nl) and Berry Tholen (Radboud University Nijmegen b.tholen@fm.ru.nl). They will also be the lecturers in

the more theoretical morning sessions. The thematic sessions will be conducted by experts in the particular types of research to be discussed. (See the program above)

Assignments

Participating PhD-students are expected to read all literature in advance and participate actively in the discussions. For the morning-sessions you also have to prepare answers to particular (reading) questions.

After the set of lectures each participant writes a paper in which (s)he critically analyzes the value position or value choices in a (classical) study in Public Administration or Political Science of her or his choice. The paper should reflect that the candidate is able to use the approaches discussed in this course reflectively. Turn in your paper by email (send it to both p.overeem@vu.nl and b.tholen@fm.ru.nl) before Thursday July 2, 2020. (Word count approx. 2000, excluding references.) Active participation during the lectures and at least a 'sufficient' for the essay are precondition for finalizing this course.

Literature (in alphabetic order; provisional)

- Dijstelbloem H., et al (2013) *Why science does not work as it should and what to do about it*. Science in Transition position paper.
- <http://www.scienceintransition.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Science-in-Transition-Position-Paper-final.pdf>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2001) *Making Social Science Matter*. Cambridge University Press.: Ch 1, 5, 6, 9, 10 & 11.
- Honneth, A. (2012), Brutalization of the social conflict: struggles for recognition in the early 21st century, *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory*, 13(1): 5-19.
- MacIntyre, A. (1985) *After Virtue*. Duckworth ch 14.
- Marcelo, G. (January 2013) Recognition and Critical Theory Today: An Interview with Axel Honneth, in: *Philosophy and Social Criticism*: 1-13.
- Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity 2018 (VSNU), [PDF-file](#)
- Taylor, C. (1985) Neutrality in Political Science, in: *Philosophical Papers Volume II. Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge University Press: 58-90.
- Thompson, D. (1983) Ascribing Responsibility to Advisors in Government, in: *Ethics* 93/april: 546-560
- Van de Bovenkamp, H.M., Zuiderent- Jerak T. (2015)
- [An empirical study of patient participation in guideline development: exploring the potential for articulating patient knowledge in evidence-based epistemic settings](#), *Health Expectations*, 18.: 942-955.
- Weber, M.; *Science as a Vocation* (any (on-line) edition).