PHIL3375 Philosophy of Social Science
Spring Semester 2020
Mon/Wed/Fri 10:45-11:35am CTIH 459

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Course Description
Catalog Description: Explanation, prediction and methodology in the social and behavioral sciences; the role of values in the social and behavioral sciences; the social policy implications of the social and behavioral sciences. (3 credit hours; satisfies area II requirement for Philosophy Major.)

Our Course:

Anthropology Archaeology Economics Geography
Political Science Psychology Sociology

Do all humans share a common nature?
Are there economic laws?
Are there psychological universals?
Can we reliably predict human behavior?
Does evolution have a place in explaining human behavior?
In PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (PHIL 3375-001) we confront the above questions and many more. Together we assess the strengths (and weaknesses) of various attempts by social scientists to explain human affairs. We will have plenty of examples of interesting human affairs to talk about as this class takes place after a Presidential impeachment hearing, which is an uncommon event in US political affairs.

**Required Materials**
Risjord, M. Philosophy of Social Science: A Contemporary Introduction (MR).
Cartwright, N. and Montuschi, E. Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction (NC&EM)
Plus other reading materials available on Canvas and on Marriott Reserve.

**Course Outcomes**
By the end of this course, you will be able to:
Identify positions in recent philosophy of social science.
Apply various philosophical methods to cases in contemporary philosophy of science and in the history of social science.
Use elementary versions of some technical methods in philosophy including deductive logic, probability theory, decision theory and game theory.

These outcomes will be assessed via short essay assignments, online quizzes, in class exams and contributions to in-class and online discussion.