The Philosophy of Social Science Training Course

Professional Development Training Course Outline

Category	Political Science and International Relations	**Duration**	5 Days
Base Fee	$1,500 USD	**Delivery Mode**	Online / On-site Hybrid

Course Introduction

The Philosophy of Social Science Training Course provides a **foundational understanding** of the **philosophical underpinnings** of social science research. Participants will critically engage with core concepts like **ontology** (what is the nature of social reality?) and **epistemology** (what can we know and how do we know it?). The training goes beyond mere methodological instruction, enabling a deeper, more **reflective practice** and **ethical research** by exploring the assumptions that shape how we study society. You'll learn to question conventional wisdom, understand the **value-laden nature of inquiry**, and navigate the complexities of research design from a **philosophical standpoint**.

The program is meticulously designed to equip both aspiring and seasoned researchers with the **critical thinking skills** necessary for a rapidly evolving academic and professional landscape. It emphasizes the practical application of philosophical concepts to real-world research problems, fostering a cohort of **thought leaders** and **innovative problem-solvers**. Through a combination of interactive sessions and hands-on exercises, this course will empower you to not only conduct rigorous research but also to defend its theoretical and ethical integrity, positioning you at the forefront of **academic excellence** and **social impact**.

Programme Curriculum

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Course Objectives

1. Analyze the core ontological and epistemological assumptions behind major social science paradigms.
2. Understand and apply diverse qualitative and quantitative research methodologies from a philosophical perspective.
3. Critically assess different approaches to causality and explanation in social phenomena.
4. Develop a robust framework for navigating complex ethical dilemmas in human subjects research.
5. Analyze the challenges and opportunities of integrating knowledge from multiple social science disciplines.
6. Explore the concepts of objectivity, subjectivity, and reflexivity in the research process.
7. Recognize and analyze the role of power, politics, and social structures in shaping research questions and outcomes.
8. Learn to construct theoretically informed and methodologically sound research questions.
9. Utilize diverse philosophical theories (e.g., realism, interpretivism, positivism) to strengthen your research design.
10. Evaluate how knowledge is produced, validated, and disseminated within different social science communities.
11. Uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and ethical conduct throughout the research lifecycle.
12. Translate intricate philosophical arguments into clear, compelling, and accessible academic writing.
13. Develop the habit of critically examining your own biases and assumptions as a researcher.

Organizational Benefits

- Staff will produce more rigorous, defensible, and methodologically sound research, leading to more reliable insights and evidence-based decision-making.
- A deep understanding of research ethics will reduce the likelihood of misconduct, protect the organization's reputation, and ensure compliance with regulatory standards.
- The training fosters a culture of critical inquiry, encouraging employees to challenge assumptions and develop creative solutions to complex social and business problems.
- Participants learn to appreciate and integrate diverse disciplinary perspectives, leading to more effective interdisciplinary teams and holistic project outcomes.
- By deconstructing problems from a philosophical standpoint, employees will gain a deeper understanding of root causes and develop more strategic, long-term solutions.
- The course positions the organization and its employees as leaders in their field, capable of contributing to and shaping academic and policy discourse.

Target Audiences

1. Doctoral Candidates & PhD Students.
2. Early-Career Researchers.
3. Academic & Research Professionals.
4. Public Policy Analysts.
5. Market Research & Data Analysts.
6. Non-profit & NGO Professionals.
7. Government & Civil Service Employees.
8. Project Managers.

Course Outline

Module 1: Foundations of Philosophical Inquiry

- Introduction to Philosophy of Science: Differentiating natural vs. social science.
- Epistemology & Ontology: Exploring what we can know (knowledge) and what exists (reality).
- Paradigm Wars: Positivism, Interpretivism, and Critical Realism in social research.
- The Problem of Causality: Different approaches to establishing cause-and-effect in social phenomena.
- Values & Objectivity: The role of the researcher's values and the quest for objectivity.
- **Case Study:** The rise and fall of **behaviorism** in psychology. How did its philosophical assumptions shape its research methods and what were the ethical implications of its focus on observable behavior?

Module 2: The Logic of Qualitative Research

- Interpretivism & Phenomenology: Understanding meaning and lived experience.
- Hermeneutics: The art and science of interpretation in social inquiry.
- Case Study Research: From single-case deep dives to comparative analysis.
- Ethnography & Participant Observation: Exploring social worlds from within.
- Grounded Theory: Building theoretical frameworks from qualitative data.
- **Case Study:** Analyzing the **Zimbardo Prison Experiment** (Stanford Prison Experiment) not as a failed study, but as a case study in interpretivist inquiry and the ethical limits of observation.

Module 3: The Logic of Quantitative Research

- Positivism & Empiricism: The tradition of scientific measurement and observation.
- Statistical Inference: Understanding probability, significance, and the limits of generalization.
- Survey Design & Validity: Ensuring that your questions accurately measure what you intend them to.
- Experimental & Quasi-Experimental Design: The challenges of controlling variables in social settings.
- Big Data & Computational Social Science: Philosophical questions about new data sources.
- **Case Study:** A critical review of a **large-scale government health survey**. We will analyze its methodological design from a positivist perspective, identifying its ontological assumptions and limitations in capturing the social reality of health.

Module 4: Mixed Methods & Pluralism

- Triangulation: Combining different methodologies to strengthen findings.
- Mixed-Methods Design: The "how" and "why" of integrating qualitative and quantitative data.
- Pragmatism: The philosophical justification for a pluralistic, problem-oriented approach.
- Convergent & Explanatory Designs: Using one method to inform the other.

- Ethical Considerations in Mixed Methods: Navigating data integration and informed consent across different research stages.
- **Case Study:** The use of **mixed methods in a public health study** on vaccine hesitancy, combining large-scale survey data with in-depth interviews to understand both the prevalence and the reasons behind the phenomenon.

Module 5: Power, Politics, and Ethics

- Foucault & Knowledge/Power: How is knowledge created and used to exert control?
- Feminist & Postcolonial Epistemologies: Challenging dominant knowledge systems.
- Research Ethics in Practice: Navigating informed consent, anonymity, and data protection.
- The Politics of Funding: How funding shapes research questions and outcomes.
- Research as Social Action: The role of the researcher in social change.
- **Case Study:** The **Tuskegee Syphilis Study** as a foundational example of ethical failure, illustrating the profound harm that can result when research is conducted without regard for the participants' humanity and agency.

Module 6: Contemporary Debates & Future Directions

- Critical Realism: Seeking an alternative to positivism and interpretivism.
- Post-structuralism & Deconstruction: Unpacking the language and assumptions of social science.
- Network Theory & Complexity Science: New philosophical questions about interconnected systems.
- Digital Ethnography: The unique ethical and methodological challenges of studying online communities.
- The AI Revolution: What does AI mean for the future of social science research?
- **Case Study:** The rise of **online hate speech**. We will examine how different philosophical approaches (e.g., critical realism vs. post-structuralism) would frame the research question, data collection, and analysis of this complex social issue.

Module 7: Research Design and Grant Proposal Writing

- From Philosophy to Practice: Translating abstract ideas into a concrete research plan.
- Literature Review: Constructing a review that is both comprehensive and theoretically grounded.
- Crafting a Grant Proposal: How to write a compelling proposal that highlights the philosophical rigor of your project.
- Peer Review: The philosophy behind academic gatekeeping.
- The Art of Rejection: Learning from failure and improving your research.
- **Case Study:** A mock grant proposal on **food security and social inequality**. Participants will draft a proposal, justifying their chosen methodology and theoretical framework based on the course principles.

Module 8: Professional Development & Dissemination

- Writing for Publication: Structuring academic papers for different audiences.
- Presenting at Conferences: Communicating your research effectively.
- Impact & Public Engagement: Making your research relevant beyond the academy.
- Career Paths: Applying philosophical skills in diverse professional settings.
- Building Your Academic Brand: Establishing yourself as a thought leader.
- **Case Study:** An analysis of a **viral social science study** (e.g., a study on happiness or a behavioral economics finding) to deconstruct how its findings were communicated to the public, and what ethical considerations were at play in its popularization.

Training Methodology

Our training methodology is designed to be highly interactive and application-oriented, ensuring a deep and lasting understanding of complex concepts. The program combines:

- **Interactive Lectures & Seminars:** Expert-led sessions that introduce key theories and frameworks.
- **Case Study Analysis:** In-depth, group-based discussions of real-world research scenarios.
- **Socratic Dialogue:** Facilitated discussions that encourage critical questioning and collaborative learning.
- **Practical Workshops:** Hands-on exercises in research design, ethics review, and proposal writing.
- **Peer-to-Peer Feedback:** Collaborative sessions where participants critique and improve each other's work.
- **Reflective Journaling:** A structured process for participants to document their learning and self-assess their own philosophical biases.

Register as a group from 3 participants for a Discount

Send us an email: info@fineskilltrainingcenter.org or call *+254769199797*

Certification

Upon successful completion of this training, participants will be issued with a globally- recognized certificate.

Tailor-Made Course

We also offer tailor-made courses based on your needs.

Key Notes

a. The participant must be conversant with English.

b. Upon completion of training the participant will be issued with an Authorized Training Certificate

c. Course duration is flexible and the contents can be modified to fit any number of days.

d. The course fee includes facilitation training materials, 2 coffee breaks, buffet lunch and A Certificate upon successful completion of Training.

e. One-year post-training support Consultation and Coaching provided after the course.

f. Payment should be done at least a week before commence of the training, to Fineskill Training Center account, as indicated in the invoice so as to enable us prepare better for you.

Upcoming Scheduled Sessions

Start Date	End Date	Location	Price
23 Nov 2026	27 Nov 2026	Online	$1,000
23 Nov 2026	27 Nov 2026	Physical	$1,500

Start Date	End Date	Location	Price
23 Nov 2026	27 Nov 2026	Physical	$3,000
23 Nov 2026	27 Nov 2026	Physical	$3,000
23 Nov 2026	27 Nov 2026	Physical	$6,000
23 Nov 2026	27 Nov 2026	Physical	$4,500
23 Nov 2026	27 Nov 2026	Physical	$6,000
23 Nov 2026	27 Nov 2026	Physical	$6,000

Ready to enroll or request a customized program? Book online or contact us:

Register Online Now

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