

HUMAS6AD HISTORY PHILOSOPHY SCIENCES

HUMAS6AD	Duration : 20 hours	ECTS Credits : 2	Semester : S6	
History and Philosophy of Sciences				
Person in charge :				
Laurent Rollet, associate professor, laurent.rollet@univ-lorraine.fr				
Keywords : Science, History, Philosophy				
Prerequisites :				
None				
Objective:				
Understand the strong links between science and philosophy				
Program and content :				
Teaching goals:				
The aim of this course is to raise awareness about the philosophical and historical issues in science: through diverse examples, we will try to present a reflection process on the philosophy, history and ethics of science and technology. Participating in this course does not require any prior knowledge in philosophy. Through various case studies (the Dreyfus affair, the history of eugenics, the theories of knowledge, the birth of science, etc.), we will provide food for thought on the historical evolution of science, on contemporary epistemology or on the engineering profession.				
Content:				
"Philosophy: A route of many roads leading from nowhere to nothing." Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary (1906)				
The present era holds science in very high esteem. As the work of specialists, science is part of our daily lives. This situation gives rise to a strong cultural demand, coming both from the designers and from the end-users. The "ordinary" citizen wants to understand the stakes and the prospects of scientific and technological development. The "specialist", technician or engineer, can also feel the need for a more global understanding of this development where his participation is rather "piecemeal". For both, it is about situating contemporary scientific evolution and where they stand in relation to it. With the explosion of popularization literature dealing with science, history and philosophy of sciences, there is a strong need not to be left behind. The contemporary questions in regards to this are diverse and often hit the headlines of magazines: What is science? What is a scientific method? What is scientific progress? Does science allow us to know everything? Is science ethical? What future do scientists and technicians have in store for us? Has science discredited religion? Is it ideologically neutral? Is it objective? Does it explain all phenomena? All these legitimate queries put the current role of science in society into question. Thinking of the recent scientific developments forces us to ask ourselves about the basis and the issues surrounding the current talk about science. In a society keen on science and technology, the limits of science are not easily revealed. They exist, however, and fall under several domains (history, philosophy, ethics, sociology, economy, etc.). The quote from Bierce highlighted above revisits, in a humorous way, a criticism that is often directed at philosophical discourse: its obtuse nature and its supposed absence of practical use. However, the evolution of the philosophical practice in the 20th century proves him wrong: the development of contemporary philosophical sciences mostly took place in the scientific field, and a large number of areas of scientific research call in philosophers (cognitive sciences, artificial intelligence, without even counting fields like bioethics or sustainable development). Recent history has shown that there is not a clear separation between philosophy and science.				
Assessment : Students will produce a personal written report (about 10 pages) dealing with an issue linked to the course topics.				
Evaluation :				
<input type="checkbox"/> Written test	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuous assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written report