

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

NURSING 705

Lecture 01

**Faculty of Nursing
University of Calgary**

**Fall 2010
Tuesday 4:00 – 7:00 pm
Sept 14 – Dec 7 2009
Room: PF 2253**

N705 Course Professor:

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PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE IN NURSING: **Philosophical Traditions and Knowledge Production**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Exploration of major philosophical positions and their contributions to the generation and evaluation of knowledge. Examination of the development and evolution of nursing knowledge.

COURSE INTRODUCTION:

Nursing knowledge production is explored from diverse philosophical traditions.

Three important questions are addressed:

1. *What, if anything, is distinct about nursing knowledge production & where is the overlap with other disciplines?*
2. *Which philosophical traditions provide guidance, and how, for proposed doctoral research?*
3. *How do you position as nurse researcher-scholar and why? What specific assumptions and what methodological values in comparison with other research methodologies?*

This course introduces the relation of philosophy, nursing knowledge production and nursing research methodology through critical and comparative analysis of contemporary debates about nursing knowledge(s) and practice(s). Relevant philosophical traditions and debates (primarily Western) are analyzed to understand the evolution of a science culture in nursing, and the complexity of nursing as a professional practice discipline. How basic assumptions and philosophical premises from diverse philosophical traditions guide contemporary nursing knowledge production will be examined. Comparative critiques of nursing science and nursing knowledge production are emphasized. ‘Scientific’ nursing practices are explored for historical, social, cultural and political investments. Interdisciplinary perspectives including health, human and social sciences are explored in relation to proposed doctoral research and nursing research. Selected readings, assignments, and weekly seminars offer opportunities to critically and comparatively analyze, discuss, synthesize and write reflections on:

- Knowledge traditions in nursing and specifically, scientific knowledge production in nursing
 - Philosophical differences in understanding health, wellness, and disease and the effect for understanding the diversities and complexities of nursing inquiry, nursing research, and nursing practice.
 - Diverse points of view and philosophical-conceptual-theoretical perspectives in nursing
- Course content will be aligned as closely as possible with participants’ interests and doctoral research intentions.*

COURSE INTENTS AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Critically and comparatively analyze selected philosophical works related to the historical and contemporary evolution of knowledge production, and of nursing knowledge in particular.
2. Identify, explore and articulate how particular philosophies inform nursing knowledge production and advance the discipline, the profession and the practices of nursing.
3. Actively engage with colleagues in scholarly debate, dialogue, and the sharing of the written word wherein preferred positions are articulated, critiqued and extended within an atmosphere of value and respect for all views.
4. Generate questions to further inquiry relevant to research methods, philosophical ideas, and nursing theories and conceptualizations.

5. Develop critical understandings and logical arguments on selected topics and questions of interest to nursing.
6. Demonstrate scholarship in oral and written practices.

DOCTORAL SEMINAR PARTICIPATION:

Consistent and active participation in weekly seminars where assigned readings and participants’ scholarly writings are discussed and analyzed is imperative given the engaged, interactive, experiential and scholarly format. To engage in substantive and scholarly discussion and debate, it is important that each participant-scholar complete and reflect on weekly required readings. Initially, questions to guide philosophic analysis (see course bibliography for example) will be provided. *It is expected that each participant-scholar engage in in-depth discussion of the readings, generate questions and share observations and written reflections including demonstrate interest across diverse points of view and questions. Respect for self, others and for a range of perspectives and positions is expected even necessary to engage in and further scholarship and learning.*

The second half of the course will focus directly on the relationship between scholarship and writing. Every week one participant-scholar will present and discuss their writing. A fellow scholar will prepare a written commentary on the paper to be presented, to assist in directing the discussion and to provide feedback on conceptualization and argumentation. The written papers regarded as *works in progress* must be presented to the professors and fellow scholars in advance of the presentation. Preferably this will be done on the Blackboard site.

TUTORIAL

The course professor will be available for group, or individual, consultation upon request.

BLACKBOARD

Blackboard will be used for sharing scholarly writing and reflection during the week.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

	<u>Percentage of Grade</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
ASSIGNMENT 1	15-20%	(TBA) Scholarly Position Paper– Seminar Leadership: The participant-scholar will lead an early seminar by developing and providing a draft paper focused on the assigned readings related to methodology. This paper will be developed and posted in advance of the class for distribution to participant-scholars and course professors for their review and response (ideally one week before the class). After class, the paper will be revised and reworked based on seminar discussion. <i>The revised draft paper is then submitted one week later to the course professors for evaluation.</i> Draft Paper Length: maximum 5 pages
ASSIGNMENT 2	30%	(TBA)

Scholarly Commentary/Peer Review-

This short paper will be offered as a scholarly commentary on a participant-scholar's draft paper and presentation.

This commentary paper will be due at the time of the seminar presentation.

Length: 2-3 pages

ASSIGNMENT 3

50-55%

(TBA)

Scholarly Paper- This paper will be the *final edition* of the paper submitted by the participant-scholar for discussion and critique when they are the assigned leader of one of the seminars in the second half of the course. The focus of this paper will be reflection and analysis related to the candidates intended research topic and methodology. (See below for further details on this assignment).

Final Scholarly Paper Length: 15 pages

Assignment 1- (15-20%):

This initial assignment will demonstrate an in-depth analysis of some aspect raised by the set readings, topics discussed in class, and questions generated following further reflection. Special emphasis will be placed on identifying the methodology apparent in the required reading. The scholar will show identify the arguments presented in the articles, comparatively critique the ideas presented, demonstrate sound understanding of relevant reading, and argue to an explicit conclusion to explicate one's own position (and substantiation) vis a vis the literature reviewed.

The first draft of assignment one is due approximately one week before the seminar the scholar will be leading. The final revised draft will be due one week after the seminar and is meant to incorporate suggestions offered through seminar discussion.

Length: Maximum 5 pages (excluding title page and references)

Assignment 2 (30%):

This second assignment will be a written scholarly/peer review commentary of a fellow scholar's draft paper (written during the second half of the course). *The peer review commentary must be submitted in writing to the lead scholar at the time of the seminar.* A Commentary is a short paper, no longer than three pages, which *identifies the strengths and areas for further refinement of argumentation* in the student scholar's draft paper.

What is the main argument, basic assumptions, and the related claims advanced in the paper?

How well are the argument and the supporting claims substantiated?

How persuasive is the argument?

How readable, engaging, and scholarly is the paper and where in particular?

Where are the areas for improvement?

Assignment 3 – Final Scholarly Paper (50-55%)

This *final scholarly paper* will be *written in the format of an article for publication* in a refereed journal of the student's choice. It must demonstrate an *in-depth analysis* of a significant aspect of the readings chosen by the student scholar related to their area of study in the doctoral

program. Special emphasis will be placed on demonstrating an understanding of research methodology in relation to the arguments defended in the readings/discussion. The scholar will show clarity in developing ideas presented, demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the literature and reflection on the chosen material, state a position, argue to a defensible conclusion, and explicitly state relevant considerations for the proposed doctoral research. Argumentation in this paper must take explicit account of the commentary written by a fellow scholar, either by stating compelling reasons for disregarding the commentary, or by assimilating and expanding on the theme of the commentary.

The purpose of the assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate that you understand and can synthesize the arguments and perspectives of the (selected) authors, that you are open to alternative conceptualizations, and that you can state implications for your intended area of research. ***Keep in mind that the goal of this paper is to demonstrate how a philosophical understanding of nursing knowledge informs your proposed research.*** Use one or more of the readings undertaken for the course to guide your approach to a *nursing research topic* of your choice. Generate questions for the final paper.

The *first draft* of this paper is due one week before the assigned student scholar led presentation (submitted to the entire class as part of the focus of discussion during the seminar). The draft paper will be circulated by posting it on Blackboard. The *revised paper* will be due one week after the seminar presentation. Scholars are encouraged to provide feedback to one another in the form of support, and critique that goes beyond the requirements of formal assignments in the course. Blackboard has been selected as the medium to facilitate this process.

Evaluation Criteria:

1. Selects a *relevant question/issue* in the realm of the philosophy of science in nursing and *identify different perspectives/positions* taken regarding the selected question/issue.
2. Describes the *central notions and assumptions of each perspective and comparatively critique/analyze*.
3. As author-scholar, your argument/position and analysis/supporting claims must be clearly articulated and adequately supported with relevant references, including class readings.
4. The analysis must be presented in a scholarly format: organized, logical, clear and succinct with substantive support citing assigned and other relevant readings.
5. A well-argued conclusion stating relevant considerations for proposed doctoral research project is essential.
6. Length: maximum 15 pages (excluding title page and references)

Example Questions for Final Paper:

- How are constructivist perspectives relevant to the understanding of your proposed topic ie chronic illness, nursing education?
- Is nursing to be conceived as a socially constructed reality or as a set of objective facts? (Sarvimäki, 1999, p.9).
- Is there a nursing ethic different from biomedical ethics and, if so, how is nursing ethics relevant to advanced practice nursing and research?
- How possible and relevant is interprofessional collaborative practice within contemporary health care service and which philosophy is relevant to quality ethical interprofessional practice?
- Why and how are different notions of pain relevant to critical care nursing?
- How does politics manifest itself in nursing? To whose benefit?
- What are the philosophical assumptions underlying the idea of patient autonomy/agency? Can they be operationalized? How possible is autonomous choice?

- Pols (2003) [see bibliography] compares two different modes of doing good in mental health care. How would you investigate other modes of doing good in a different area of practice?
- How, if at all, could you convince a skeptic of the *value and relevancy* of conceptualizations of nursing knowledge? Assume that the skeptic is a practicing nurse, a nurse researcher or a nurse educator.

Format of Papers:

All papers will be presented in a scholarly format ready for journal submission (APA format). In the event that there is substantial contribution by the course professors towards developing or reworking the paper, co-authorship will be discussed. Please refer to the University Policy on Intellectual Property for further information on this process. The issue of authorship will be determined on an individual basis, with the right to appeal.

Faculty of Nursing Graduate Program Grading System

If the grade on your assignment is:	The percentage will be taken from:	If the total for all assignments is:	Your final grade will be:	And the GPA for the course will be:
A+	4.0	3.95 - 4.00	A+	4.0 - Outstanding
A	4.0	3.85 - 3.94	A	4.0 - Excellent - superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.7	3.50 - 3.84	A-	3.7 - Very good performance
B+	3.3	3.15 - 3.49	B+	3.3 - Good performance
B	3.0	2.85 - 3.14	B	3.0 - Satisfactory performance (Note: The grade point value (3.0) associated with this grade is the minimum acceptable average that a graduate student must maintain throughout the program as computed at the end of each year of the program)
B-	2.7	2.50 - 2.84	B-	2.7 - Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies (Note: Students who accumulate two grades of B- or lower may be required to withdraw from program by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, regardless of their grade point average)
C+	2.3	2.15 - 2.49	C+	2.3 - Unsatisfactory (Note: All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be

				counted toward Faculty of graduate studies course requirements)
C	2.0	1.85 – 2.14	C	2.0
C-	1.7	1.50 – 1.84	C-	1.7
D+	1.3	1.15 – 1.49	D+	1.3
D	1.0	0.50 – 1.14	D	1.0
F	0	0.00 – 0.49	F	0

INTRODUCTORY CLASS
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

How does each author position philosophically and what is the main argument of each article? How do you as nurse scholar and nurse researcher position in relation to each and how is this position substantiated?

How have nursing scholars contributed to the generation of knowledge and what forms of knowledge production?

Has nursing scholarship contributed to conceptualizing and better(ing) health? How so?

What relationships did nurses build with science (and academia)?

Is it indeed so that nurse researchers “have to make their discoveries relevant to nurses’ everyday practice – or it’s all for naught?” (Canadian Nurse, August 2003, no. 7, p.16).

What counts as a (nursing) discovery anyway?

How have the philosophy, history, and sociology of science influenced nurses’ conceptualizing of nursing practice(s), scholarship, education and research?

Where do I position as nurse scholar-researcher-practitioner? How do I substantiate these positions and how are they related to Nursing as a discipline?