

Welcome to KULT8850/1

Theories of Science

Fall/Winter 2023

thomas.berker@ntnu.no

KULT

Plan

- Today until 11.00: Intro (about the course and getting to know each other)
- A simple lunch is served at 12.00
- from 11.15 to 15.45: Jonathan on Philosophy of Science

About the course

- Why?
- What?
- How?

Mandatory for HF but why?

1. Faculty of Humanities (and guests): No research without **critical reflection** of the **philosophical** and **socio-cultural** context of research and how it affects research process and outcomes
2. Encourage **collaboration and exchange** (in its broadest sense) across different projects and disciplines within the humanities and across faculties
3. Help PhD students to **navigate** their PhD projects



**What do we do to achieve
these goals?**



1. Guided reflection

in lectures and group work covering

1. Philosophy and research ethics (days 1+2)
2. Socio-cultural context of scientific knowledge production (days 3+4)
3. Critical perspectives (days 5+6)

2. Collaboration and exchange



in multi-, inter, transdisciplinary discussions

1. comparing respective approaches to philosophical issues of objectivity, truth, and research ethics (days 1+2)
2. across different traditions and socio-cultural contexts of research (days 3+4)
3. incorporating different approaches to critique (days 5+6)



3. Navigational support

1. Through teaching generally accepted ways to deal with issues surrounding objectivity, truth, and ethics (days 1+2)
2. By painting a map of the socio-cultural and institutional landscape (days 3+4)
3. Helping you to redraw the map in a better way (days 5+6)

Plus: By giving you an assignment which allows you to practice "being a scholar"

How?

- 3x2 course days + 1 conference day
 - Mandatory attendance important to achieve the "why's" but I have made some exceptions for people that must take this course and have earlier not been able to do so
 - Moreover: life happens, just keep me updated
- The **conference** will be prepared collaboratively on course days (day 3+4), in addition you are expected to present at the conference (physical or online), deliver an extended abstract (7.5 ECTS) or a short conference paper (10 ECTS) by 31st of January 2024

More how

- The course is organised by KULT: Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture
 - Centre for Gender Research: Research on diversity and gender - days 5+6
 - Centre for Technology and Society: Science and Technology Studies (STS) - days 3+4
- We get a lot of help from other departments at the Faculty of Humanities, above all from Philosophy on days 1+2

Even more how? Questions,
needs, demands?

Your PhD project in two minutes

- Finally! Time to do in-depth work! So much to explore, so much to learn!
- But usually, we are forced to present our PhD in a very compressed form - already at the very beginning of the PhD work!
- And it gets even worse after handing in the thesis: What have you found out (in three sentences)?

Some related questions

- Days 1+2: Philosophy
 - What do we know **before** we do our research?
 - How do we know that our research is **concluded**?
- Days 3+4: Socio-cultural context
 - What are the institutional, cultural, societal **expectations** and where do they come from?
 - What is important with our research? For whom? Who decides?
- Days 5+6: Critique
 - How does "how" and "with whom" we do our research affect the outcome?
 - What does our research actually "do"? Does it "do" anything at all?

**Group work:
Getting to know
each other through
"what if"-questions**

Choose one question...

...according to what interests you most:

philosophy of science, the **socio-cultural context** of science or the **critique** of science?

1. **Philosophy:** Given unlimited resources: How would you change your project to improve your results? What difference would it make?
2. **Socio-cultural context:** Which country would you like to do your PhD in if it weren't Norway? And why?
3. **Critique:** Given the power to do so: What would you change with academic research? And why?

Group work

- Choose one of the questions and find an answer (5 min)
- Walk into "your" corner and find one person to talk with about your answer: 2x5 min
- This person then presents your answer to the whole group