Aims and objectives
This course module aims at increasing the understanding of different perspectives in philosophy of science, with relevance for psychology. The first phase of the course provides an overview of how contemporary academic psychology has grown from philosophical thinking since antiquity and developed successively along the progress in natural sciences and social sciences. The second phase of the course focuses on different views and ideals of how research can be conducted in psychology: Positivism (knowledge is derived from observed behavior), Hermeneutic (understanding is gained via interpretations of behavior) and Phenomenology (understanding is derived from subjective experience).

Learning outcomes
• By assimilating an overall view of history of philosophy the student should, after the completed course, be able to identify and reason around different kinds of psychological research paradigms.
• The student should be capable to analyze how different phases and events in science and society have shaped the development of psychology as an academic discipline.
• The student should show an ability to reason how a research problem in psychology can be defined and evaluated from different views in scientific theory.
• The student should be able to identify and analyze differences and contradictions between psychological paradigms and clarify how they are linked to different positions in philosophy of science.
• The student should show independence in identifying a limited problem within the area of the course and reason and reflect around it based on relevant literature.

Teaching
The course consists of 8 lectures and 2 discussion seminars. The seminars comprise a group discussion based on the suggested literature of ‘Body/mind’ and presentations/discussion of individual ‘papers’ (Examination 2).

Examination
Examination of the course bases on two home assignments in writing:
Part 1. A number of essay-questions, reflecting the four first learning outcomes (about 1500 words in total). The essay questions will be made available in the beginning of the course.

Part 2. An essay, ‘paper’ around a problem or question relevant for the area of the course, reflecting the last learning outcome (about 2500 words). The problem that will be argued around and discussed in the paper is chosen by the student. However, some inspiration might be provided by following titles: ‘Is dualism a passed paradigm in psychological thinking?’, ‘Is research on parapsychology science or pseudoscience?’ Problems with measuring intelligence’ (more detailed instructions will be provided in Course material)
The ‘papers’ will be presented and discussed at group seminars in the end of the course.

Grading
The total examination, consisting of two parts, will be graded on a seven-point ECT-scale (A, B, C, D, E Fx, F). The evaluation is based on following criterions:

Examination part 1: Essay-questions.
Relevance for the actual question.
Link to the course-literature or other relevant literature.
Clarity and ‘main thread’ in the reasoning
Quality and maturity of the reflection and reasoning.

Examination part 2: ‘Paper’. As in essay-questions but a more weight is put on structure, reflection, argumentation and presentation in the seminar.

Course evaluation
An opportunity is offered for evaluation of the course module in the end of the course.

Course literature

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory for the introduction lecture and for the two seminars

Instructors
Course leader and teachers
MJ Maarit Johnson, mtjn@psychology.su.se
HM Henry Montgomery