

PHIL 160 Sections 80 & 81, “Philosophy of Science”
Fully Online/Asynchronous
Fall 2026, Aug 22nd to Dec 11th
Instructor: Trevor Gullion
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Description:

Scientific methodology, explanation and verification; science and society. Varying topics from physical, biological and social sciences.

Since the early 20th century, democratic societies have become dependent upon the unquestionable (epistemic) authority of the scientific community. Following the pandemic and the resurgence of the “anti-vaxx” movement, however, contemporary philosophers ponder the social “crisis” of science in which non-scientific masses no longer respect the epistemic authority of science. Is this crisis real? Like Frankenstein’s Monster, did the philosophy of science help create this monster set on destroying science itself? If so, what should they do about it? Such questions are tied to a long list of other questions: Where does science come from? What does science do? Why does science do it (and not philosophy)? How does science do it? How do we distinguish science from pseudo-science? What is the relationship between science, fact, truth, nature, reality, language? What is the relationship between science and society? And what ought this relationship look like? These are some of the traditional questions associated with the philosophy of science that will be pondered in this course.

Satisfies SJSU Studies R: Earth & Environment.