



Subject card

Subject name and code	Magic in Science: Where Conspiracy Theories and Pseudoscience Come From, PG_00071044						
Field of study	Mathematics						
Date of commencement of studies	October 2025	Academic year of realisation of subject				2025/2026	
Education level	second-cycle studies	Subject group					
Mode of study	Full-time studies	Mode of delivery				e-learning	
Year of study	1	Language of instruction				Polish	
Semester of study	2	ECTS credits				2.0	
Learning profile	general academic profile	Assessment form				assessment	
Conducting unit	Department of Philosophy and Science Methodology -> Faculty of Management and Economics -> Faculties of Gdańsk University of Technology						
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor		dr hab. Przemysław Parszutowicz				
	Teachers		dr hab. Przemysław Parszutowicz				
Lesson types	Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
	Number of study hours	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30
	E-learning hours included: 30.0						
	eNauczanie source addresses: Moodle ID: 4315 Mity i magia 2026 https://enauczanie.pg.edu.pl/2025/course/view.php?id=4315						
Learning activity and number of study hours	Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan	Participation in consultation hours	Self-study	SUM		
	Number of study hours	30	2.0	18.0	50		
Subject objectives	The aim of the course is to present the main mechanisms of mythical and magical thinking, which is one of the main forces driving conspiracy and pseudo-scientific theories. Participants will be introduced to basic critical thinking techniques to identify logical fallacies leading to pseudoscientific narratives. They will also become familiar with examples and some of the reasons for the presence of mythical and magical thinking in contemporary science.						
Learning outcomes	Course outcome	Subject outcome			Method of verification		
	[K7_U71] is able to apply knowledge from humanistic, social, economic or legal sciences in order to solve problems	Students will be able to argue for the validity of scientific concepts effectively, pointing out key features constituting their universal validity and certainty. He/she is able to recognise elements of magical and mythical thinking in so-called alternative and pseudo-scientific explanations.			[SU3] Assessment of ability to use knowledge gained from the subject [SU2] Assessment of ability to analyse information		
	[K7_W71] has general knowledge in humanistic, social, economic or legal sciences, including their fundamentals and applications	Student is able to recognise basic methodological errors in scientific research. He/she is able to identify and name the processes leading to conspiracy and pseudo-scientific theories.			[SW1] Assessment of factual knowledge		
	[K7_K71] is able to explain the need to apply knowledge from humanistic, social, economic or legal sciences in order to function in a social environment	Student is familiar with the basic mechanisms of the development of scientific concepts and theories, as well as with the basic categories of mythical thinking. He/she knows the principles of critical thinking and of identifying cognitive errors. Is able to apply these principles in his/her own research work and recognise them in existing research results.			[SK5] Assessment of ability to solve problems that arise in practice		

Subject contents	Course content – lecture Magic, myth, religion, metaphysics, science; anecdotal evidence; sympathetic and contagious magic; cargo cult as an example of mythical thinking; Weber and the disenchantment of the world; truth and relativity in science; from substance to function; basic principles of critical philosophy; basic categories of mythical thinking; metabasis eis allo genos and pars pro toto; science and pseudoscience - ways of demarcation; Popper's falsificationism; Feyerabend's methodological anarchism; an overview of popular conspiracy theories; mythical thinking in the exact sciences; the myth of scientism; political myth techniques.		
Prerequisites and co-requisites			
Assessment methods and criteria	Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
	final test	50.0%	100.0%
Recommended reading	Basic literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E. Cassirer, <i>Mit państwa</i>, przeł. A. Staniewska, Warszawa 2006. • A. Chalmers, <i>Czym jest to, co zwiemy nauką?: Rozważania o naturze, statusie i metodach nauki: Wprowadzenie do współczesnej filozofii nauki</i>, przeł. A. Chmielewski, Wrocław 1997. • M. Gardner, <i>Pseudonauka i pseudouczni</i>, przeł. B. Krzyżanowski i W. Zon, Warszawa 1966. • <i>Pogranicza nauki. Protonauka Paranauka Pseudonauka</i>, red. J. Zon, Lublin 2009. • A. K. Wróblewski, <i>Prawda i mity w fizyce</i>, Warszawa 1987. • I. Lakatos, <i>Nauka a pseudonauka</i>, 1974, przeł. W. Sady (www.sady.up.krakow.pl/filnauk.lakatos.naukapseudonauka.htm). • S. Ritthie, <i>Science fiction. Oszutwa, uprzedzenia, zaniedbania i szum informacyjny w nauce</i>, przeł F. Tryl, Warszawa 2024. 	
	Supplementary literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Bricmont, A. Sokal, <i>Modne bzdury. O nadużyciach nauki popełnianych przez postmodernistycznych intelektualistów</i>, przeł. P. Amsterdamski, Warszawa 2004. • M. Grabowski, <i>Istotne i nieistotne w nauce : szkice z aksjologii nauki</i>, Toruń 1998. • P. Parszutowicz, <i>Ernst Cassirer i deontologizacja nauki</i>, [w:] <i>Archai</i>, t. 1 Filozofia a nauka, red. M. Czarnocka, Warszawa 2011. • P. Parszutowicz, <i>Fenomenologia form symbolicznych</i>, Warszawa 2013. • M. Rotkiewicz, <i>Kto i dlaczego wierzy w pseudonaukowe bzdury</i>, w: www.polityka.pl/niezbednik/1773196,1,kto-i-dlaczego-wierzy-w-pseudonaukowe-bzdury.read • A. Stanisławska, P. Stanisławski, <i>Fakt, nie mit</i>, Wydawnictwo W.A.B 2019. • www.crazynauka.pl • www.mitologiawspolczesna.pl 	
	eResources addresses		
Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed	<p>What are the main mechanisms of mythical thinking? What is the fallacy of metabasis eis allo genos? What is falsificationism? What is the difference between the understanding of causality in mythical and scientific thinking? What is anecdotal evidence? What is methodological anarchism? What is cargo cult and voodoo?</p>		
Practical activities within the subject	Not applicable		

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