

Dynamics of Expertise

Block Seminar (08.04.2022; 06.-07.05.2022; 03.-04.06.2022)
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Overview

While sociologists resist consensus over a definition of expertise, many would agree that it is currently going through a phase of substantial change. New technologies, ecological crises and postfactual sentiments all seem to contribute to a “crisis” or even the “death” of expertise. This seminar is not concerned with the question whether such assessments are accurate or not. Rather, this seminar takes such accounts as a springboard to ask the more fundamental question: How did we come to understand expertise as a dynamic topic of inquiry? To address this question, we engage in an in-depth reading of Andrew Abbott’s text *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*. Abbott’s book was published in 1988 and describes how groups of experts—professions—jockey for position with one another by making jurisdictional claims over particular task areas. In 1991 the text was awarded the American Sociological Association’s Distinguish Scholarly book award and has since then become a key reference for research on expertise as a matter of contestation and conflict.

This seminar is divided in one virtual kickoff session and two in person blocks. There are no mandatory readings for the kickoff session. However, as we work through the book there is a fair amount of mandatory readings in preparation for each of the two in person blocks. There is plenty of time between the sessions to read, but I recommend that you plan ahead your reading. A digital copy of the book and any additional mandatory readings will be made available via *Lernraum*.

	Date	Topic	Time	Place
1	Friday, 08.04.2022	Kick-off	12:00-14:00	Online via Zoom
2	Friday, 06.05.2022	Session I	12:00-19:00	see eKVV
3	Saturday, 07.05.2022	Session II	10:00-18:00	see eKVV
4	Friday, 03.06.2022	Session III	12:00-19:00	see eKVV
5	Saturday, 04.06.2022	Session IV	10:00-18:00	see eKVV

Certificate of participation (*Studienleistung*)

To get a certificate of participation for this seminar, you are required to regularly attend the seminar, actively participate in the discussions and to submit two literature protocols (upper limit: 1 Din A4 page, ½ page summary and ½ page open questions, criticism, remarks). Choose one mandatory reading (book chapter or journal article) from each block. Please upload the literature protocols to *Lernraum* until 11pm on Thursday 05.05. and Thursday 02.06. respectively.

Certificate of examination (*Prüfungsleistung*)

To get a certificate of examination for this seminar, you are required to write a term paper (*Hausarbeit*) related to the topic of this seminar (upper limit: 6000 words). Condition for the acceptance of the term paper is a prior agreement of the topic and the question with the lecturer. Please send the term paper as a PDF document to maximilian.heimstaedt@uni-bielefeld.de. There is no specific submission date, but I advise a submission no later than 31.09.2022.

Detailed plan of the sessions

Friday, 08.04., 12:00-14:00 (Online, via Zoom)

We use this first session for a round of introductions and to familiarize ourselves with the topic, goals, and procedures of the seminar. In particular we use this first session to enter the field of expertise studies. There are no mandatory readings for this session.

Friday, 06.05., 12:00-19:00, (Room: see eKVV)

We use this first in person session of the seminar to discuss the chapters 1-3 of the book.

Mandatory readings:

Slot 1 (12:00-13:30)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. Introduction

Slot 2 (14:00-15:30)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. Professional work

Slot 3 (16:00-17:30)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. The claim of jurisdiction

Saturday, 07.05., 10:00-18:00 (Room: see eKVV)

We use the second in person session of the seminar to discuss chapters 4-7 of the book.

Mandatory readings:

Slot 1 (10:00-11:30)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. The system of professions

Slot 2 (12:30-14:00)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. Internal differentiation and the problem of power

Slot 3 (14:30-16:00)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. The social environment of professional development

Slot 4 (16:30-18:00)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. The cultural environment of professional development

Friday, 03.06., 12:00-19:00 (Room: see eKVV)

We use the third in person session of the seminar to discuss chapters 8-11 of the book.

Mandatory readings:

Slot 1 (12:00-13:30)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. The information profession

Slot 2 (14:00-15:30)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. Lawyers and their competitors

Slot 3 (16:00-17:30)

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions*. The construction of the personal problems jurisdiction + CONCLUSION

Saturday, 04.06., 10:00-18:00 (Room: see eKVV)

We use the fourth in person session of the seminar to discuss contemporary readings that directly draw from, build upon, or argue against the book.

Mandatory readings:

Slot 1 (10:00-11:30)

Eyal, G. (2013). For a sociology of expertise: The social origins of the autism epidemic. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(4), 863-907.

Slot 2 (12:30-14:00)

Craciun, M. (2018). Emotions and knowledge in expert work: A comparison of two psychotherapies. *American Journal of Sociology*, 123(4), 959-1003.

Slot 3 (14:30-16:00)

Bechky, B. A. (2020). Evaluative spillovers from technological change: The effects of “DNA envy” on occupational practices in forensic science. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 65(3), 606-643.

Slot 4 (16:30-18:00)

Summary and conclusion