**PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**MT 2012**

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1. **General information**

You will receive 4 weekly tutorials – in my room at Lincoln College (staircase 5, room 3.) For each tutorial you will write an essay, c. 2000 words, which you will present at the start of the tutorial (15mns presentation maximum). You should also email me the essay in advance of the tutorial as I will go through it anyway to check on your writing style, exposition, etc.

In order to be well prepared for Finals, you need to have in-depth knowledge of three topics for that part of the overall paper. Recycling your tutorial essays for Finals will not do, which is why it is important to do the readings without focusing solely on the essay question. Read widely, keep a list of questions which have come up in recent years on the weekly topic, and make notes of how could use your readings and own thoughts to answer this and that question.

**2.Essay topics.**

**Tutorial 1: Individualism**

Essay question: 'There is no other way toward an understanding of social phenomena but through our understanding of individual actions directed toward other people and guided by their expected behaviour.' (HAYEK). Discuss

**Tutorial 2: Functional Explanation**

Essay question: Can one give a genuine explanation of a social phenomenon in functional terms?

**Tutorial 3: Historical Explanation**

Essay question: 'We learn from history that we never learn anything from history.' (HEGEL) Discuss.

**Tutorial 4: Interpretation**

Essay question**:** 'Social phenomena can be understood by unravelling the meanings that constitute them' (Discuss.)

**3.Readings**

**See the Faculty reading list. You will find the introductory texts, central texts and compilations particularly useful.**