

# Scientific governance: excellence and impact



Robert Braun

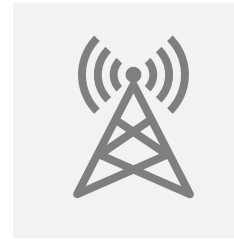
**Towards a  
sociology of  
excellence:  
constructing and  
deconstructing  
scientific impact**  
2<sup>nd</sup> - 26 March, 2021

@Masaryk University 2021



# Completion

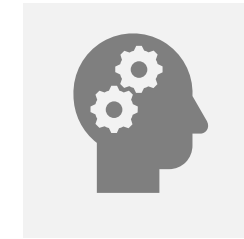
What you need to do?



Participate

---

seminar  
(online)



One academic  
blog post

---

The academic blog  
should reflect some  
current  
sociotechnical  
challenge,  
addressed via  
learnings acquired  
in the course (250-  
500 words)

Specific  
assignment(s)

+

---

TBD



Final paper

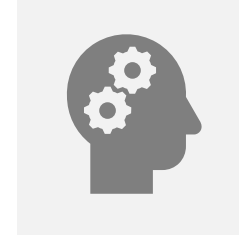
---

the final paper will  
address a specific  
question within the  
realm of STS and  
analyze it according  
to general academic  
practice, (2500-  
3000 words)



# What will happen?

The course



## Science & society: the beginnings

### ✓ What is science?

- The politics of science
- The beginnings of science policy

## Science & society: Creating the idea of excellence

- What is science policy?
- The Republic of Science
- Measuring excellence
- The European Research Council

## Science & society: Critique of excellence

- Responsible research and innovation
- “Destitute excellence”:  
decolonizing science
- The future of “excellence”



## “Towards a sociology of excellence: constructing and deconstructing scientific impact”

Science

Knowledge

Power

The science of science = reflecting on the politics of being?



“Scientification”

“Critical science”

The science of science

Nature-culture divide

How to measure impact?

The ontopolitics of science

Questioning the nature-culture divide

Anticipation/multiverse

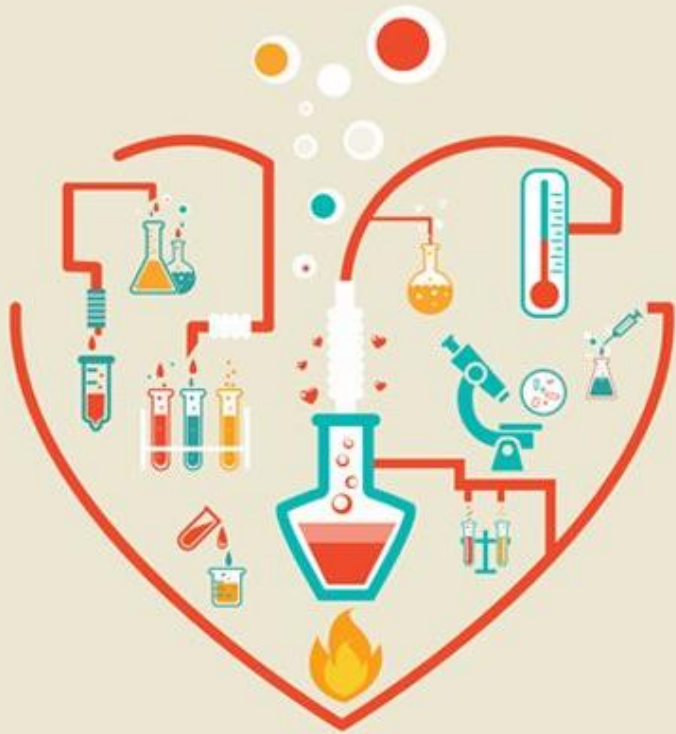


Institutionalization

Decolonization

## Recap

What is what?



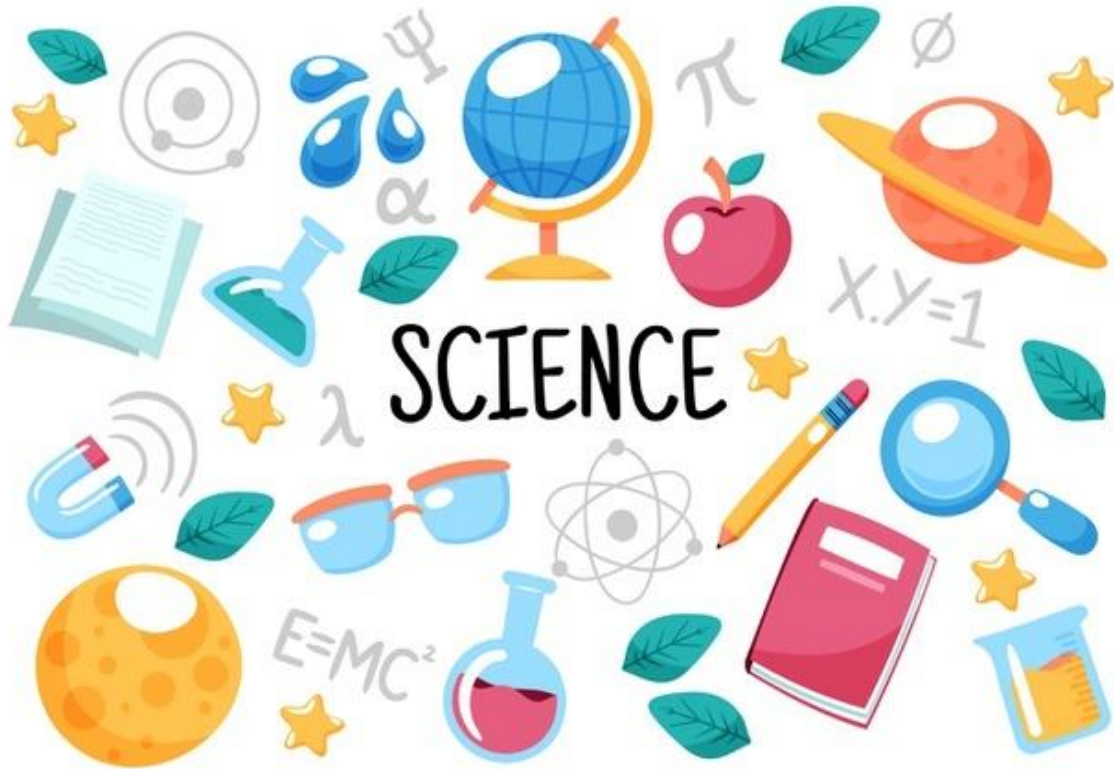
# What is science?

Your version

## What is science?



One sentence summary of Rommetveit et al



# What is science?

Kjetil Rommetveit, Roger Strand, Ragnar Fjelland & Silvio Funtowicz (2013). „What can history teach us about the prospects of a European Research Area?“ Ispra: JRC

## The received view

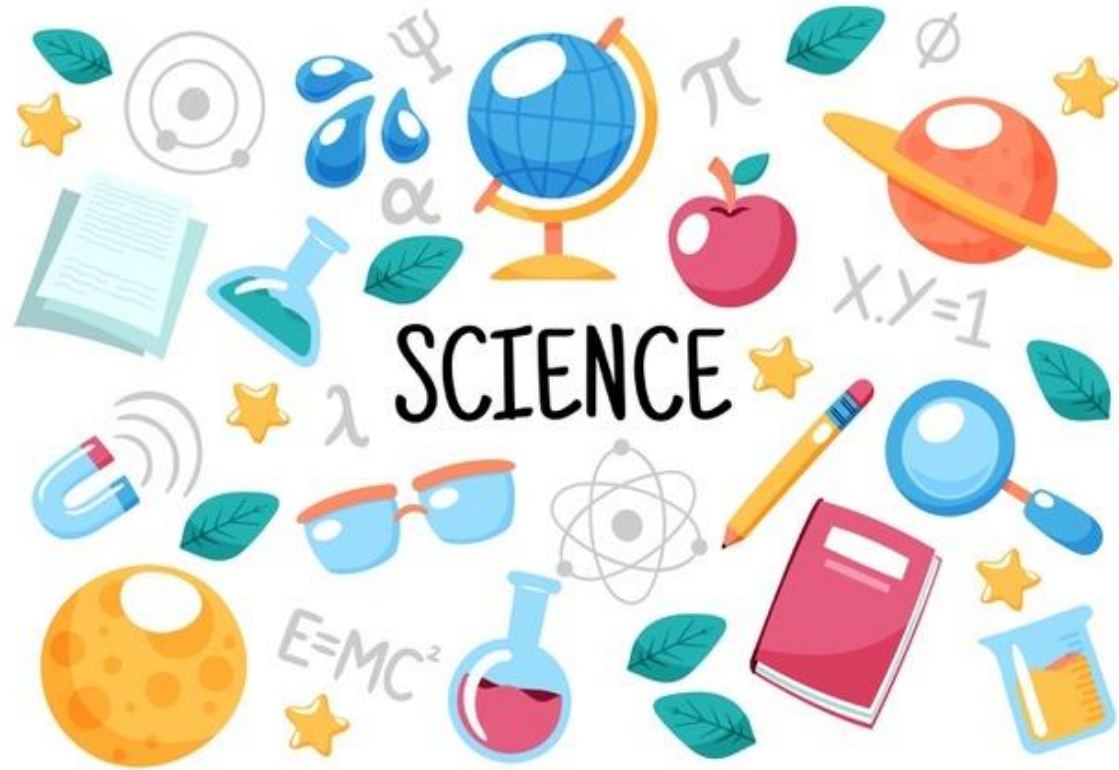
“Scientists have described and understood their work as **being fundamentally different from other professions in society**. Science has been understood as being outside and above of society” (p. 12)

“The external world – or “Nature” – has an **objective existence independent of man** and Science and is able by the incremental accumulation of facts and theories to provide **a complete and true** (or almost complete and approximately true) description of this reality. Reality is knowable and accordingly controllable. [...] This makes scientific knowledge **objective and fully transparent.**” (p. 12)

“To sum up, the received view is a mixture of empirical description, metaphysical beliefs, norms of practice and ideals to navigate by, and this mixture comprises a relatively coherent narrative that according to its own logic does not allow for empirical or theoretical refutation.” (p. 13)

**The received view is an ideology.**





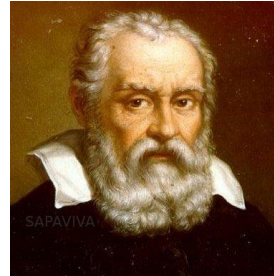
# The scientific revolution

Kjetil Rommetveit, Roger Strand, Ragnar Fjelland & Silvio Funtowicz (2013). „What can history teach us about the prospects of a European Research Area?“ Ispra: JRC

## The political view of the scientific revolution



“Philosophy is written in this grand book, the universe, which stands continually open to our gaze. [...] It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters [...] without these, one wanders about in a dark labyrinth.”



“...never to accept anything as true that I did not know to be evidently so: [...] avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to include in my judgements nothing more than what presented itself so clearly and so distinctly to my mind that I might have no occasion to place it in doubt. [..D]ivide each of the difficulties into as many parts as might be possible.”



“No arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short [...] Covenants, without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all.”



The labour of his body and the work of his hands [...] is properly his. Whatsoever [...] he removes out of [...] nature [and] hath mixed his labour with it [...] thereby makes it his property [...] by this labour something annexed to it that excludes the common right of other men”





## Thirty Years' war 1618-1648



Religious  
conflicts



Disorder &  
superstition

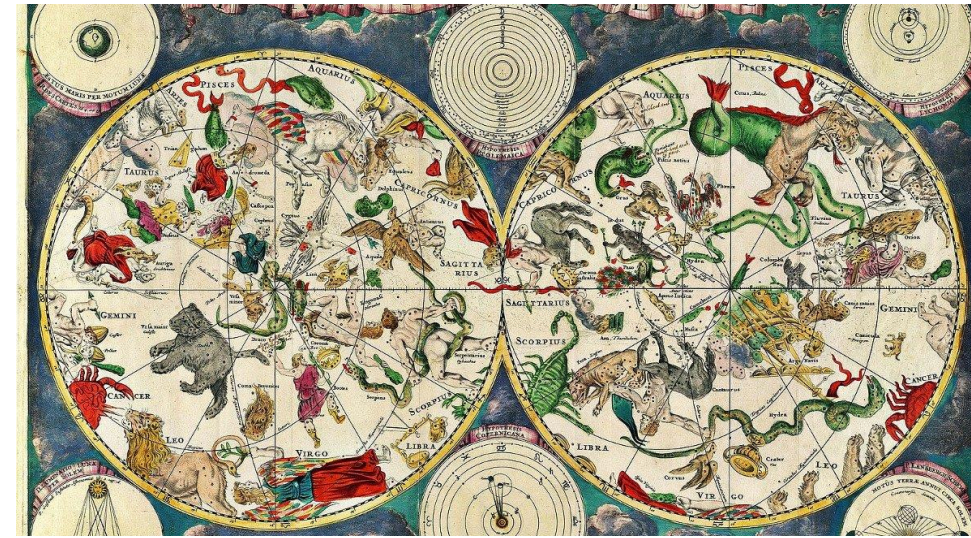


# When “is” science?

Kjetil Rommetveit, Roger Strand, Ragnar Fjelland & Silvio Funtowicz (2013). „What can history teach us about the prospects of a European Research Area?” Ispra: JRC



Science or  
technoscience?

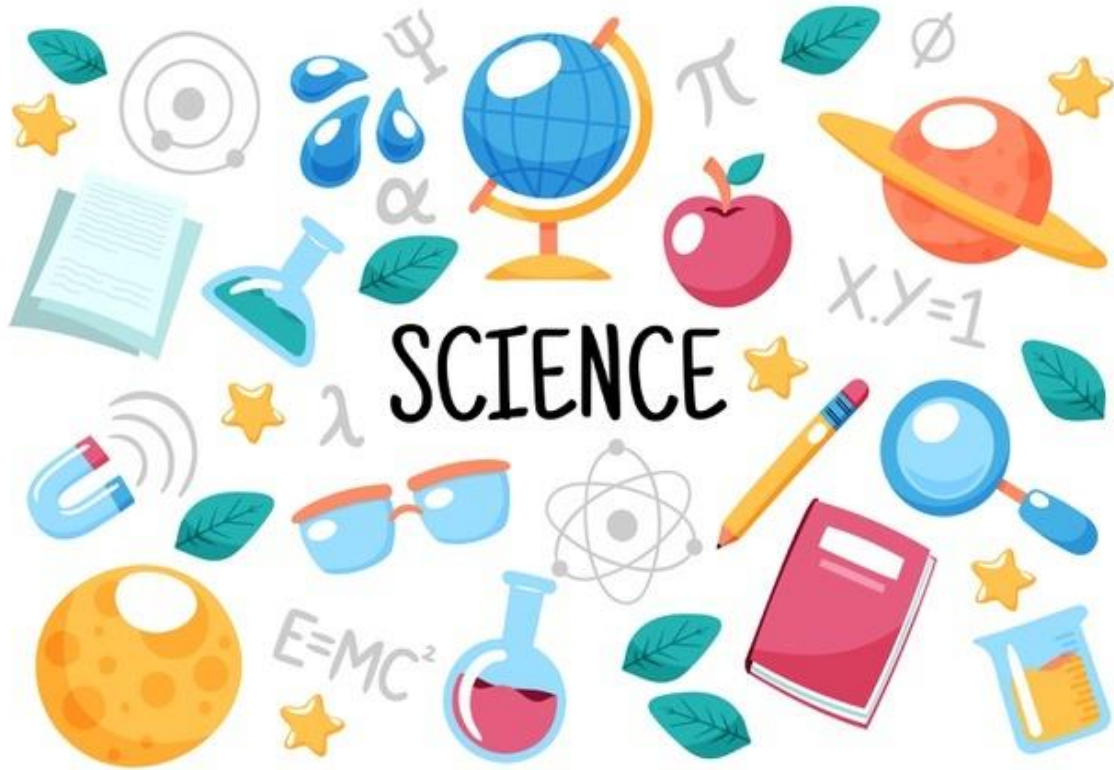


Representing vs.  
producing space?



# What is science made of?

Kjetil Rommetveit, Roger Strand, Ragnar Fjelland & Silvio Funtowicz (2013). „What can history teach us about the prospects of a European Research Area?“ Ispra: JRC



## The received view

- ✓ Scientists are seen as spokesmen of Truth and not of particular interests.
- ✓ Scientific knowledge [...] is open for impartial inspection, criticism and falsification
- ✓ In other words, it is by its own criteria an unscientific belief in science."

**The received view is a political hierarchy.**

# Who is a scientist?

Kjetil Rommetveit, Roger Strand, Ragnar Fjelland & Silvio Funtowicz (2013). „What can history teach us about the prospects of a European Research Area?“ Ispra: JRC

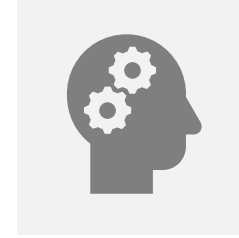


- **Who is looking?**
- **From where is one looking?**
- **Who creates the map?**
- **What to omit and what to include?**



# What will happen next?

The course



## Science & society: the beginnings

- **What is science?**
- ✓ The politics of science
- +
- ✓ The beginnings of science policy

## Science & society: Creating the idea of excellence

- What is science policy?
- The Republic of Science
- Measuring excellence
- The European Research Council

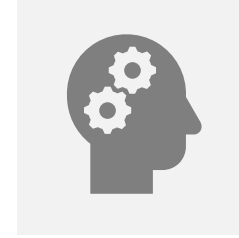
## Science & society: Critique of excellence

- Responsible research and innovation
- “Destitute excellence”:  
decolonizing science
- The future of “excellence”



# What to read next?

The course



## Science & society: the beginnings

- ✓ The politics of science
- +
- ✓ The beginnings of science policy



- Roger Pielke: Basic Research as a Political Symbol
- Vannevar Bush: Science the Endless Frontier, Introduction

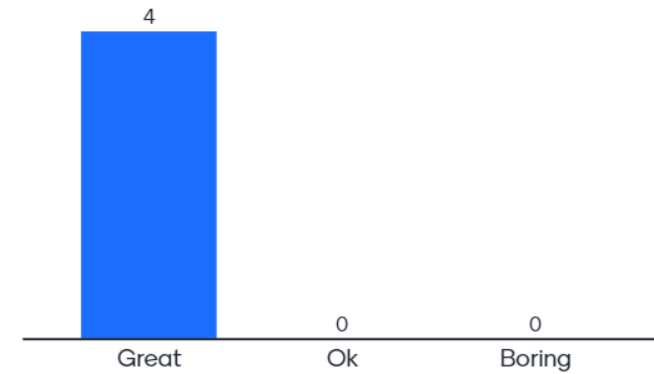


# What to read next?

The course

How was it?

Mentimeter







# Questions


---

Thank you

 Robert Braun

 +43159991134

 braun@ihs.ac.at

 <http://www.ihs.ac.at/>