

# INVITATION

## BEING TRUE TO YOUR COMMITMENTS: ONTOLOGIES, EPISTEMOLOGIES AND METHODOLOGIES

18-20 September 2023  
PhD Course, 3 ECTS  
Aalborg University Business School, Denmark

### FACILITATORS

- Ann Cunliffe, Professor of Organization Studies at FGV-EAESP, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- Jenny Helin, Associate Professor of Organization in Department of Business Studies, Uppsala University, Gotland, Sweden
- Mette Vinther Larsen, Professor (wsr) of Leading, Strategizing and Reflexivity in Aalborg University Business School, Denmark

### PRESENTATION OF THE PHD WORKSHOP

A Ph.D. journey is one of discovery, confusion, frustration, and learning – about our topic and the craft of research and writing. Along the way, we are also figuring out what we are passionate about and what our academic identity might be. Whatever our discipline or topic, we begin with a blank canvas that we can paint in many ways: in monochrome or with multiple colours. But what are our choices? What excites us? What paths might we follow? These are the questions we'll be exploring in the workshop, which will offer time to reflect and explore ways in which we might address these issues.

The aim of this doctoral course is to bring doctoral scholars at every stage of their PhD process and facilitators together to exchange and share experiences and questions related to different aspects of ontology, epistemology, and research methods.

- Day 1 will support you in finding your ontological and epistemological stance.
- Day 2 will strengthen your reflexivity regarding your methodological choices.
- Day 3 will be focused on supporting you in finding your academic voice in writing.

The workshop is intended to be a creative space where we engage in questions such as: What ontology speaks to us and why? How do different ontologies enable me to develop my research and my way of going about fieldwork? How can I understand the relationships between quality, ontology and research practice? How can I become reflexively aware of the philosophical underpinning that guide my research? How can I paint my canvas in ways that resonate with others? Questions that often spur heated discussions about what forms of knowledge are scientific; is critical realism better than phenomenology? In this workshop we leave the normative search for the ultimate ontology behind, to address the possibilities different ontologies hold for our research.

By discussing these questions, we become more reflexive about how we theorize and become sensitive to the process of researching and writing: a sensitivity that also helps us to craft our academic voice and embrace the richness and variety of doing research.



In short, we envision this course to be a safe space that simultaneously will open up and anchor our different ways of being in research. Through dialogue with each other, the literature, and our on-going research projects, we hope for new connections that can make us feel at home in the research we are engaged with.

## YOUR KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE PHD WORKSHOP

Independent of whether you are at an early, late stage or in the middle of your PhD process, you will be able to gain new perspectives and knowledge from the PhD workshop, related to:

- A deeper insight into how your ontological and epistemological choices shape the research studies you embark on.
- A more profound understanding of the different methodological possibilities you have for studying organizational life.
- Finding your voice in writing
- Acknowledge and embrace that being reflexive as you explore the dilemmas, questions and curiosities that are embedded in your data is a natural aspect of crafting research.
- Start building your academic identity by being true to your ontological, epistemological and methodological commitments.
- Become part of a research community where questions, curiosities and puzzles can be explored and discussed in a safe setting.

## PREPARATION PRIOR TO THE PHD WORKSHOP

Prior to the PhD workshop, we will ask each of you to send a 3-5 pages description of the research practices you are engaging with, or plan to work with, in your PhD. project. The description should entail your research question, a short description of your theoretical field, the empirical setting, and 2-3 methodological or ontological questions you are struggling with at the moment.

During the PhD workshop you will get feedback on your description from fellow participants and from the facilitators. Furthermore, you will have time to further develop your own research practices.

## PRACTICALITIES

- 3 ECTS
- Minimum 10 and maximum 18 participants
- It is free to participate in the PhD workshop, travel, dinner and accommodation is self-financed.

## SIGN-UP FOR THE PHD COURSE

For questions about the content, structure etc. of the workshop, please contact **Mette Vinther Larsen**: [mvl@business.aau.dk](mailto:mvl@business.aau.dk)

For administrative questions and signing up for the PhD workshop, please contact **Dorte Baymler**: [db@business.aau.dk](mailto:db@business.aau.dk) Please also contact Dorte if you have any food allergies, are a vegetarian or have any other special request.



## FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS AT PREVIOUS PHD WORKSHOPS

*"The workshop helped clarify different research perspectives and helped me understand their differences and potentials and how I currently use/apply them. It started a whole new level of discussion and understanding of my work."*(PhD student, 2019)

*"First of all, it was REALLY good. I think it is one thing to master a field of research enough to be able to teach it, but it requires a whole other level of understanding in order to do what the facilitators did on this seminar. Because you didn't just teach. You were able to take in to account the different statements and challenges that the participants were experiencing and used that to design and shape the seminar in order to increase our learning and understanding of reflexivity. This - in my opinion - doesn't only require a deep knowledge of the presented theory but also a deep understanding and empathy for others, and that is what the failitators displayed doing this seminar."*(PhD student, 2019)

*"It made me very reflexive about my own work. It made me realise that i have been very inconsistent in the way I think and write. This has been a perfect opportunity for me to start asking myself very important questions that I need to consider before I start writing, and it has made me realise how my ontological and epistemological position will affect my way of writing and overall methodology when doing research."*(PhD student, 2019)

## A SHORT PRESENTATION OF THE FACILITATORS

**Ann Cunliffe** is Professor of Organization Studies at FGV-EAESP in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she teaches courses on epistemology and qualitative interviewing. She writes about what she finds interesting (currently embodied knowing, living experiences of work), and organizes the Qualitative Research in Management and Organization Conference in New Mexico, USA.

**Jenny Helin** is Associate Professor of Organization in Department of Business Studies, Uppsala University, Gotland, Sweden. She is currently working with the research project "Organizing generosity". Jenny holds a long-term interest in collaborative research methods and explores academic writing that goes beyond the traditional academic language, logic and culture. She is the director of GRASS, Uppsala University Graduate Studies in Sustainability Studies.

**Mette Vinther Larsen** is Professor (wsr) of Leading, Strategizing and Reflexivity in Aalborg University Business School, Denmark. In her research, Mette is interested in exploring how strategic processes can be led and become a part of organizational life in meaningful and sustainable ways – for society, the organization and the individual.

