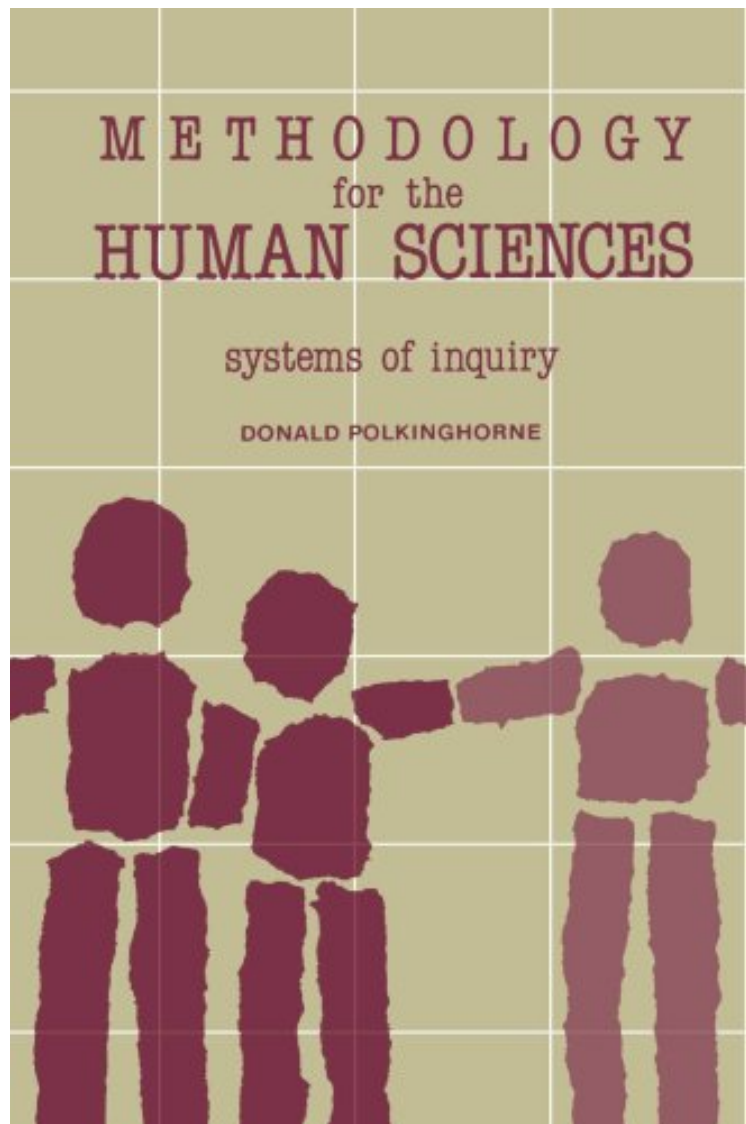


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Methodology for the Human Sciences Systems of Inquiry (SUNY Series in Transpersonal and Humanistic Psychology)

Donald Polkinghorne

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Donald Polkinghorne : Methodology for the Human Sciences Systems of Inquiry (SUNY Series in Transpersonal and Humanistic Psychology) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Methodology for the Human Sciences Systems of Inquiry (SUNY Series in Transpersonal and Humanistic Psychology):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Solid, informative, and what you want in a good textbook
By Jerry in Japan
The aim of this book is to provide the reader with a comprehensive textbook that surveys the emerging body of research literature, and clearly describes procedures and methods for carrying out new research. (From the back cover)
This book does that and more. While most historical overviews will cover the major personages and movements, Polkinghorne does so with easy-to-understand and adequate descriptions so you get a good idea how of the field of science, and its methods have shifted through the years. His work served me like a tour guide, and filled in the gaps in my thinking about the historical unfolding drama in science, and their seminal figures. What I got out of the book was the courage and freedom to explore new areas of qualitative research, and not worry about conforming my research to some illusionary image of what I thought science what to be about all about. The book is a dense read, but will serve as a good foundational text in and out of the classroom for those who want to understand research in the human sciences.
5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Broad Reader
By Another Reader
This book presents "emerging" approaches to research. Yes, during the mid-1970's back when Nixon was president. It completely misses massive changes in the past half century from post-structuralism, deconstruction, boarderlands theory, neuro-mapping, structural equation modeling, evolutionary psychology, post-positivism, as well as many other theoretical developments. Forty years of journals cannot be ignored without consequences. It also predates massive changes in social life including the ubiquitous spread of cable television (which was only beginning to gain penetration in the late 70's), as well as cellular telephones, home video players, the PC, statistical and qualitative software packages, and the Internet. When this book came out people were still using punch cards, mainframe computers, and rotary dial landline telephones. It also misses several advances in statistical and qualitative appoahes to social science research. Given this context, that is addressing the question of whether one should purchase this book today, I would give it a zero. Even in its time, like all textbooks, it skims entire schools of thought, over-simplifying and distorting sub-fields. But one would know this only if the reader has read the primary texts in the various sub-fields. In this sense, it may have once been okay to introduce some areas to undergraduates but certainly not a book for doctoral level reading. One might read it as a way to see historically how social science has changed over the decades. Any other use would be a great disservice, especially for advanced undergrads who should not be reading such summaries. Interestingly Polkinghorne's second book when he was a more mature thinker that came about a decade after this one and which focuses on qualitiative methods was better. The one thing this older book does adequately, if compared to introductory level undergraduate textbooks in sociology or psychology, is present a cursory view of the now long faded structural-functionalism made famous by Talcott Parsons. Otherwise it presents a very sketchy version of the philosophy of science made popular by the Vienna Circle prior to World War II. I would recommend reading primary sources written since then (in the last half century).

Methodology for the Human Sciences addresses the growing need for a comprehensive textbook that surveys the emerging body of literature on human science research and clearly describes procedures and methods for carrying out new research strategies. It provides an overview of developing methods, describes their commonalities and variations, and contains practical information on how to implement strategies in the field. In it, Donald Polkinghorne calls for a renewal of debate over which methods are appropriate for the study of human beings, proposing that the results of the extensive changes in the philosophy of science since 1960 call for a reexamination of the original issues of this debate. The book traces the history of the deliberations from Mill and Dilthey to Hempel and logical positivism, examines recently developed systems of inquiry and their importance for the human sciences, and relates these systems to the practical problems of doing research on topics related to human experience. It discusses historical realism, systems and structures, phenomenology and hermeneutics, action theory, and the implications recent systems have for a revised human science methodology.

About the Author
Donald E. Polkinghorne is Emeritus Professor and Chair of Counseling Psychology at the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. He is the author of *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences and Practice* and *The Human Sciences: The Case for a Judgment-Based Practice of Care*, both also published by SUNY Press.