

Phil 125: Philosophy of Science- Contemporary

UCLA, Fall 2015

MW 10-11:50

Dodd 175

Instructor Information

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Required Text

- (i) Assigned readings are available on our course website:
<https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/15F-PHILOS125-1>

Evaluation

Midterm and Final: Your midterm and final will both consist of closed-note essay exams that you will complete during class. Prior to each exam, you'll be given a list of possible essay questions as a study guide. Each exam will be worth **45%** of your grade.

Quiz: In order to encourage attendance and reading, I'll give a short quiz once a week at the start of class. (10 times over the quarter.) The quiz will be designed so as to check for very basic comprehension of the day's assigned reading. Your grades on those quizzes will determine **10%** of your final grade.

Conduct Code: In accord with the UCLA Student Conduct Code (available in full at http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Code_choice.php), take care to submit only work that is your own.

Reading Schedule

While I will do my best to keep us on the following reading schedule, it is **subject to change** (with the following exceptions: exam dates will never be *earlier* than the schedule indicates). Full citation information is provided on our course website.

Confirmation and Theory Choice

Monday, October 28th:

Course Introduction

Wednesday, October 30th:

“On Induction” by Bertrand Russell

“Science: Conjectures and Refutations” by Karl Popper

Monday, October 5th:

“The Grue Paradox” by Peter Achinstein

Wednesday, October 7th:

“Seeing and Seeing As” by N. Russell Hanson

Monday, October 12th:

“Two Dogmas of Empiricism” by W.V. Quine

Wednesday, October 14th:

“Let’s Razor Ockham’s Razor” by Elliott Sober

Monday, October 19th:

“Objectivity, Value Judgment, and Theory Choice” by Thomas Kuhn

Realism and Anti-Realism

Wednesday, October 21st:

“The Theoretician’s Dilemma” by Carl Hempel

Monday, October 26th:

“The Cognitive Structure of Theories” by Ernest Nagel

Wednesday, October 28th:

❖ MIDTERM

Monday, November 2nd:

“A Confutation of Convergent Realism” by Larry Laudan

Wednesday, November 4th:

“Scientific Realism versus Constructive Empiricism: A Dialogue”

Monday, November 9th:

“A Case for Scientific Realism” by Ernan McMullin

Scientific Explanation and the Laws of Nature

Monday, November 16th:

“Two Models of Scientific Explanation” by Carl Hempel

Wednesday, November 18th:

“Explanatory Unification and the Causal Structure of the World” by Philip Kitcher

Monday, November 23rd:

“Scientific Explanation: Causation *and* Unification” by Wesley Salmon

Wednesday, November 25th:

“A Neo-Humean Perspective: Laws as Regularities” by Norman Swartz

“The Laws of Nature” and “Humean Supervenience Debugged” by David Lewis

Monday, November 30th:

“Laws of Nature” by John Carroll

Wednesday, December 2nd:

Wrap up and final review

Friday, December 11th:

❖ FINAL EXAM: 11:30 AM- 2:30 PM