Philosophy Preliminary Exam Syllabus

Philosophy of Science with Realism

This syllabus covers four topics of central importance to the epistemology of science. You ask what makes something a scientific explanation, what is required for observations to support (confirm) scientific theories, whether successful prediction is a better indicator of truth than post hoc accommodation, and whether the success of a scientific theory in predicting observations is a reason to believe its claims about unobservables are true.

Background


Scientific Explanation


Confirmation and Disconfirmation


Kendall, ‘Designing a Research Project,’ online

**Consilience, Prediction, Accommodation**


Hitchcock and Sober, ‘Prediction vs. Accommodation,’ online

Barnes, ‘Predictivism for Pluralists,’ online

**Realism**


Worrall, ‘Miracles and Models: Why reports of the death of Structural Realism may be exaggerated’ online


**Locations of online readings:**


Barnes, ‘Predictivism for Pluralists,’ The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science 56 (2005), 421–450.