

Choose one of the questions below and write an essay (typed, double-spaced) of approximately 2,000 words. The essay should be handed in to the department.

Deadline: **09/12/05**

Essay Questions:

- (1) 'But when I look through a microscope, all I see is a patch of color which creeps through the field like a shadow over a wall. And a shadow, though real, is certainly not a physical thing'. Discuss and critically assess this and other views regarding the nature and significance of observation.
- (2) Can we justifiably distinguish between accidental and natural groupings?
- (3) What is a projectible predicate?
- (4) Are the concept of law and the concept of universal truth different? What is Dretske's stance on this issue? Would Ayer agree with him? Do you think either philosopher is correct? Explain.
- (5) How do we decide which are the ultimate demands an account of natural laws must satisfy?
- (6) If being a regularity is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for being a law, what other conditions, if any, can be added to reach sufficiency?
- (7) Is the regularity condition necessary?
- (8) Is there a symmetry between prediction and explanation?
- (9) What is the inductive-statistical model of explanation?
- (10) The plausibility of IBE seems to depend on how we unpack the notion of explanation. Can we make sense of explanation without appeal to such hard-to-pin-down notions as simplicity and unification?
- (11) '*Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*' (entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity). Discuss and critically assess this and other views of the notion of simplicity.
- (12) Does abductive reasoning introduce subjective elements to science? Explain.
- (13) 'The normal-scientific tradition that emerges from a scientific revolution is not only incompatible but often actually incommensurable with that which has gone before'. Is there, according to Kuhn, any rational ground upon which to judge between rival paradigms? What is Feyerabend's take on this? In what respects do the two philosophers' accounts differ?
- (14) Does anything survive scientific revolutions? If so, what does this signify.
- (15) What is the Pessimistic Meta-Induction argument meant to show? How have the scientific realists reacted to it? Is their line of argument warranted?