

Discussion Seminar 1, Philosophy of Science

Instructions

To prepare for the seminar, read the following article.

1. Hansson, SvenOve, "Science and Pseudoscience", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pseudo-science>

Make sure you have read the article in advance of the seminar, and tried to form an initial idea of how to answer the list of questions below.

At the seminar you will be randomly assigned to a group and each group will be given two of the questions below to discuss and to prepare a brief statement to present the conclusion of your discussion.

1. What is the purpose of making a clear distinction between science and pseudo-science? Does it have any consequences for society? (sections 1 and 2)
2. What is the difference between "unscientific" and "non-scientific" disciplines according to Hansson? (sections 3.1 – 3.3 in particular).
3. Why cannot science be "timeless" according to Hansson, and if it cannot be timeless does that mean that something judged to be pseudo-science can change to become science? (section 3.6.)
4. How did the logical positivists distinguish science from pseudo-science and how was that different from the way falsificationism draws that distinction? (sections 4.1 and 4.2)
5. What did Kuhn think was the main distinction between science and pseudo-science and how did Popper criticise that suggestion? (section 4.3)
6. What is the multi-criterial approach to the demarcation problem? Does it contradict other ideas about it? (section 4.6)
7. What is "science denialism" and how can creationism appear to be at one and the same time appealing to science for support and still be interpreted as engaging in science denialism? (section 5.1)
8. How can we understand both creationists, climate sceptics, and other proponents of pseudo-sciences as "fact resistant"? (section 5.1 – 5.3)