

# Discussion Seminar 2, Philosophy of Science

## Instructions

To prepare for the seminar, access the following articles through the University Library.

- Simons, D. & D. Levin (1998). "Failure to detect changes to people during a real-world interaction", *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, 5:4, 644-649.
- A Hurlbert & Y. Ling (2007). "Biological components of sex differences in color preference", *Current Biology* vol. 17:16, R623-625.

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

At the seminar each group discusses the articles to try and form an answer to the discussion questions. Each group is to write a short rapport, paraphrasing the results of your discussion (2-3 pages), just so you remember what conclusions you reached when we meet again to discuss them.

Each group is also supposed to identify 3 questions or themes that you thought were particularly difficult to get to grips with and which you would like the lecturer to clarify better (can also be on something from the lectures).

| Discussion questions   | To think about when reading the paper  |
|--|--|
| 1. What are the researchers studying?  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do the studied phenomena belong to the domain of the natural or the human sciences?</li><li>• Are they objectively measurable/subjectively evaluated?</li><li>• Are the methods used well suited to study the phenomena they are interested in ?</li></ul>                       |
| 2. Do you find that the articles reveal any particular view about what science is all about? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quantitative/qualitative,</li><li>• Empirical/theoretical</li><li>• Testing of hypotheses/descriptive/exploratory</li><li>• Positivistic/falsificationist/hermeneutic</li><li>• Theory-dependent/independent</li><li>• Objective measurement/subjective interpretation</li></ul> |

3. Do the articles reveal the authors' views about knowledge?

- Data = fact
- Insight
- True justified belief / practically useful ideas/beliefs that are neither true or false

4. Are the authors self-critical to their arguments/hypotheses/conclusions?

- Discuss sources of bias/confounders?
- Discuss alternative explanations?
- Are conclusions justified by their results?

5. Discuss whether the authors' preunderstanding is reflected in the text, or do we have to speculate about it

- Do they refer to earlier research
- Do they refer to research that contradict them?
- Do they introduce relevant theories?
- Do they justify the validity of the method?