

Discussion Seminar 3, Philosophy of Science

Instructions

To prepare for the seminar, read the following article.

1. Ingthorsson, R. D. 2013. "The Natural vs. the Human Sciences: Myth, Methodology, and Ontology", *Discusiones Filosóficas* 22(1): 13–29, available online:
https://www.academia.edu/3553833/The_Natural_vs._The_Human_Sciences_Myth_Methodology_and_Ontology

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 some of the questions below to discuss and to prepare a brief statement to present the conclusion of your discussion.

1. What marks the distinction between the Natural Sciences and the Human Sciences, according to Ingthorsson? Can you think of sciences/disciplines that seem to be on both sides? (mainly pp. 25–28)
2. What are 'meaningful phenomena'? Give a general characterisation but also find examples (mainly pp. 28–29 + 30–31)
3. In what way are the Natural vs Human sciences working under different conditions, e.g. with respect to laws and regularities in nature? (mainly pp. 30–33)
4. How can a human being be studied on the one hand from a Natural Science perspective and on the other a Human Science perspective? Do the two perspectives relate to one another? (mainly pp. 26–28)
5. In what way can the Human Sciences increase the quality of life, even if it difficult to evaluate that increase in terms of utility or economy? (mainly p. 29)
6. Why is it easier to generalise from a small sample when you study salt as compared to persons? (mainly pp. 32–33)
7. What does Ingthorsson think is wrong with trying to define 'objective reality' in terms of 'independent of minds'? (mainly pp. 34–36)
8. Why is it important to distinguish carefully between 'objective reality' and 'objective knowledge'? (mainly pp. 37–38)
9. What kind of social constructions are there, and why should we think of them as objectively real even if they are in many ways subjective? (mainly pp. 37–38)
10. What is so difficult with the study of human history? (mainly pp. 39–40)

11. What is the problem with studying how society *should* be, in contrast to how it actually is? (mainly pp. 40)
12. Why would one want to argue that knowledge about human behaviour should not take the form of natural laws that allows us to accurately predict behaviour? (mainly pp. 40–41)
13. Why should the Human Sciences not simply copy methods from the Natural Sciences? (p. 41)
14. Even if the Natural Sciences and the Human Sciences are in some ways different, in what way are they still alike?