

Essay

Introduction to Philosophy of Physics

Due: 25 June 2018 or 17 September 2018

Write an essay of no more than 5,000 words on one of the following topics. Your essay must be clearly structured, precisely worded, validly argued, and diligently spell-checked. Be as concise as possible without compromising clarity. All sources of ideas and text must be properly cited.

The deadlines for the essay are as follows:

- Summer session deadline: 25 June 2018
- Fall session deadline: 17 September 2018

Topics

1. Special and general relativity, and contemporary spacetime physics beyond relativity, describe time (and space) as being significantly different from what we might intuitively have thought. What implications do these findings have for the metaphysics of time? What if anything can we learn from this debate over the metaphysics of time concerning the proper role of empirical sciences in philosophical theorizing?
2. Bell's results and their empirical confirmation suggest that our world is 'non-local'. What implications does this have on a Humean metaphysics, in particular on the thesis of Humean supervenience? What if anything can we learn from this debate over Humean metaphysics concerning the proper role of empirical sciences in philosophical theorizing?
3. Choose your own paper topic. This should appropriately reflect (parts of) the material of this course. If you would like to pursue this option, send me a brief description of your paper project by 31 May 2018 for approval.

Grading rubric

The maximum score for this essay is 50 points, i.e., it counts for 50% of the final grade for this course. The points are broken down as follows:

- Writing and organization: 10 points
- Exposition of material and literature: 10 points
- Effectiveness of analysis and arguments: 15 points
- Originality of analysis and arguments: 15 points