

# Philosophy of Science: Essay Two

## Requirements

You are to submit one 8–10 page research paper on Monday 17 December, addressing one and only one of the questions listed below. An electronic copy of the paper must be submitted by email to [bradley.weslake@rochester.edu](mailto:bradley.weslake@rochester.edu).

## Guidelines

Essay guidelines are available here: <http://goo.gl/jrx25>

## Questions

- Explain and evaluate the Mill-Ramsey-Lewis account of laws of nature, addressing the following questions (Psillos 2002):
  - How does the Lewis view improve on the basic regularity view of laws?
  - How does the Lewis view allow for uninstantiated laws?
- Explain and evaluate Carroll’s argument for the claim that the laws are not determined by the actual pattern of events in a world (Beebe 2000; Carroll 1990).
- Explain and evaluate Fodor’s argument against reductivism and explain his non-reductivist physicalism, addressing at least two of the following questions (Fodor 1974):
  - Why does Fodor think it obvious that there will not always be bridge principles of the kind required by reductivism? Illustrate by way of an example.
  - Explain and evaluate Fodor’s argument that reductivism has a problem with special science laws that have exceptions.
  - Explain and evaluate Fodor’s argument that neither bridge laws nor proper laws involving disjunctions of physical kinds are themselves laws.
  - Explain and evaluate Loewer’s argument against Fodor that a world metaphysically lacking special science kinds and laws would lack nothing scientifically important (Loewer 2009).

## References

- Mark A. Bedau and Paul Humphreys. 2008. *Emergence: Contemporary Readings in Philosophy And Science*, edited by Mark A. Bedau and Paul Humphreys. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Helen Beebe. 2000. "The Non-Governing Conception of Laws of Nature", in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 61, No. 3, Nov. 2000, pp. 571–594. Reprinted in Carroll (2004, pp. 250–276). URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2653613>.
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- John W. Carroll. 1990. "The Humean Tradition", in *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 2, Apr. 1990, pp. 185–219. URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2185489>.
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- Barry Loewer. 2009. "Why is There Anything Except Physics?", in *Synthese*, Vol. 170, No. 2, Sept. 2009, pp. 217–233. URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11229-009-9580-2>.
- Paul K. Moser and J. D. Trout. 1995. *Contemporary Materialism: A Reader*, edited by Paul K. Moser and J. D. Trout. London: Routledge.
- Stathis Psillos. 2002. "The Regularity View of Laws", in *Causation and Explanation*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, pp. 137–158.