Essay Two

Requirements
You are to submit one 5-7 page research paper on Monday 13 December, addressing one and only one of the questions listed below. A hard copy of the paper must be submitted in class.

Guidelines
An excellent resource to read before starting your essay is James Pryor’s “Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper”. You might also find his “Philosophical Terms and Methods” and “How To Read a Philosophy Paper” useful.

Questions

*Note: I will accept papers on other topics we have covered, provided you have submitted a paper outline and have received permission to write the associated paper.*

- Explain and evaluate the Lewis view 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 the arguments involving thought-experiments purporting to show that the laws could vary independently of the pattern of individual events (Beebee 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


