Causation (mostly singular): Activities, Tendencies, and Processes

A seminar in metaphysics and  in philosophy of science

Led by Nancy Cartwright, Winter 2023, Tuesdays 1:00-3:50, RWAC 0474

Many of the readings are in a shared Dropbox. Please write Nicola Craigs ([n.j.craigs@durham.ac.k](mailto:n.j.craigs@durham.ac.k)) or me for an invitation

Jan. 10. Setting up the seminar presentations

NC.  Singular causation: hunting a theory of singular causation thick enough to show how to evidence it

Jan. 17.  Counterfactuals and INUS conditions

1. LA Paul, *Causation and Counterfactuals*
2. JL Mackie, *The Cement of the Universe*

Jan. 24. Acting and determining

1. Elizabeth Anscombe, “Causality and Determination”
2. Peter Machamer, “Activities and Causation”

Jan. 31. Mechanisms

1. Derek Beach, “It’s all about mechanisms – what process-tracing case studies should be tracing”; James Tabery, “Synthesizing Activities & Interactions”
2. Lucas  Mathews & James Tabery, “Mechanisms and the Metaphysics of Causation”

Feb. 7  Tendency principles and Elster mechanisms

1. JS Mill, “On the Definition of Political Economy”; “On the Logic of the Moral Sciences”
2. Jan Elster, “A Plea for Mechnaisms”; “Mechanisms” in *Nuts and Bolts*

Feb. 14 Tendency principles and generics

1. Michael Fara, “Dispositions & Conditionals”
2. Daniel Wodak, Sarah-Jane Leslie, & Marjorie Rhodes, “What a Loaded Generalization: Generics and Social Cognition”

Feb. 21  Processes

1. Wesley Salmon, *Scientific Explanation and the Causal Structure of the World*; Phil Dowe, “Causal Process Theories”, The Oxford Handbook of Causation; Nancy Cartwright, “Theory 3. Activities and the Process/Interaction Theory”, Lullius Lectures (p 294)
2. Peter Menzies, 2004, “Causal Models, Token Causation, and Processes”, Philosophy of Science, 71(5): 820–832. doi:10.1086/425057.

Feb. 28. Guest seminar by Bas van Fraassen: causal modalities

a. Wilfrid Sellars, “Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities”

March 7. Guest seminar by John Pemberton: the metaphysics of change

1. John Pemberton, “Powers – the no-successor problem”, Journal of the APA, 2021 (<https://www.academia.edu/42982382/Powers_the_no_successor_problem> )
2. John Pemberton, “Aristotle’s solution to Zeno’s arrow paradox and its implications”*,*Ancient philosophy today, 2022(https://www.academia.edu/69113343/Aristotles\_solution\_to\_Zenos\_arrow\_paradox\_and\_its\_implications)

March 14 Student suggested topics