General content. Winter 2018 we did general philosophy and history of science. This year will be primarily social science, with a special orientation. Last year students complained that we read nothing by me. Well, this term I have to revise my recent Lullius lectures for publication, so am asking students to work through them with me, plus much material by others on the related topics. The topic, middle-level theory, is a big one in social science and in policy evaluation but not yet enough discussed in philosophy. I hope you will find it interesting.

Here is an abstract of the lectures...

Lullius Lectures 2018
Mid-level theory: Without it what could anyone do?
Nancy Cartwright, Durham University & UCSD

Philosophy of science used to be criticized for excessive focus on fundamental theory. Now we do better. We study experimenting, modelling, representing, and a host of other practices as well as the role of values in science. What we don’t much study is non-fundamental theory – theory at the mid-level, which is where the heavy lifting is done. These lectures take us there.

Measurement practices are an example of mid-level theory par excellence. Mechanisms too are a big tool at mid-level. During the course of the lectures we will look at both, including mechanisms of 3 different kinds: structural mechanisms (like the ones familiar in philosophy of biology), ‘theories of change’ of the kind now widely required in policy planning and Jon Elster-type mechanisms, like priming and cognitive dissonance. The theory of the democratic peace, that democracies do not go to war with democracies, will serve as a running example.

Lecture 1: Markers, mechanisms and measures
Lecture 2: Causal-chain models and theories of change
Lecture 3: Mechanisms and mid-level laws

Here is a proposed syllabus

Week 1: Middle level theorizing and the theory of the democratic peace
Background reading: Cartwright, N. Middle-range theory. Lecture 1: Markers, mechanisms & measures
Presenters: Cartwright & Thresher

Week 2 & 3: Instrumentalism

**Week 2**


**Week 3**


**Weeks 4 & 5: Causal Processes and casual chains**

**Week 4**


**Week 5**

- Crasnow, S. (2017.) ‘Process tracing in political science: What’s the story?’, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*

**Week 6**


**Weeks 7, 8, & 9 Mechanisms, maxims & middle-level theory**

**Week 7**


**Week 8**

- Pawson, R. (2001). ‘Middle-range realism’, *European Journal of Sociology*
• Puddifort, K. (2017). ‘Stereotyping: The Multifactorial View’, *Philosophical Topics*

**Week 9**


**Week 10** Middle level theory: Evidence in archaeology


• Wylie, A. (2002). *Thinking from Things*. ‘Introduction: Philosophy from the ground up’

ALTERNATIVE. If people are really interested in archaeology and other historical sciences, we could read Adrian Currie’s new book *Rock, Bone, and Ruin: An Optimist’s Guide to the Historical Sciences* for week 10, dropping the Pawson in week 8. So

**Week 8**


**Week 9**


• Wylie, A. (2002). *Thinking from Things*. ‘Introduction: Philosophy from the ground up’

**Week 10**
