

Undergraduate Study

Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method

LSE



Outline

- Why study philosophy at the LSE?
- ‘Taster Lecture’: Free will in a deterministic universe?
- Our BSc programs
- ♣ Question time
- ♣ 2.45pm: afternoon tea

Why study philosophy at LSE?

We are highly ranked, internationally (top 5):

Philosophy of the Social Sciences

Philosophy of Science

Rational Choice and Game Theory

Other strengths:

Moral and Political Philosophy

Philosophy of Public Policy (unique program)



A growing department...

Permanent staff:

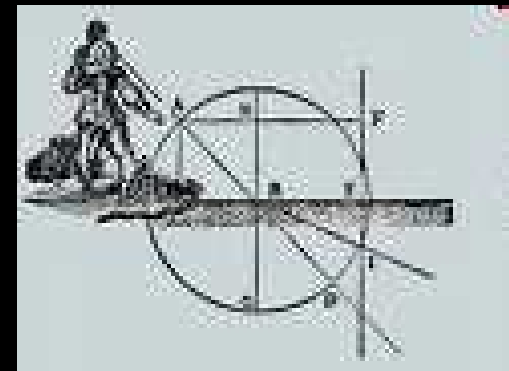
- Professor John Worrall
- Professor Luc Bovens
- Professor Richard Bradley
- Professor Christian List
- Professor Jason Alexander
- Professor Miklós Rédei
- Professor Roman Frigg
- Professor Mike Otsuka
- Dr. Alex Voorhoeve
- Dr. Katie Steele
- Dr. Gabriel Wollner
- Dr. Bryan Roberts
- Dr. Anna Mahtani
- Dr. Jonathan Birch

Associates:

Professor David Makinson
Professor Wulf Gaertner
Professor Wlodek Rabinowicz
Dr. Marie Milofsky
Dr. Andrew Khoury
Dr. Joe Mazar
Dr. Casey Helgeson

There is a shared vision and approach to philosophy within the department:

- We believe that philosophy can be, and should be, viewed as an intellectual activity continuous with science.
- We believe that issues of the natural and social sciences *as well as* moral philosophy and public policy, benefit from this approach.



Lots happening...

Weekly seminars:

Choice Group seminars (on Wednesdays)

Philosophy of Science seminars (on Mondays)

Also:

Departmental 'Popper' seminars

Number of special workshops

Especially for students:

Rerum Causae student conference

'Reason, Knowledge & Values' symposium



LSE Philosophy graduate prospects?

I think, therefore I earn

Philosophy graduates are suddenly all the rage with employers. What can they possibly have to offer?

Recent Guardian good university guide:

LSE scores highest for career prospects across the board, and philosophy is no exception:

Score of 93 (cf. Oxford 79)



‘Taster Lecture’: Free will in a deterministic universe?



Free will in a deterministic universe?

1. What is free will?
2. Why should we care?
3. What is the threat from modern science?

Question time

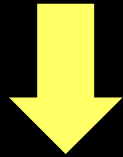
1. What is free will?

the ability to freely choose our own actions



1. What is free will?

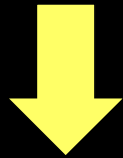
the ability to freely choose our own actions



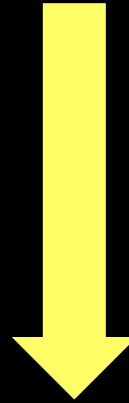
You could have acted otherwise

1. What is free will?

the ability to freely choose our own actions



You could have acted otherwise



The action is an intentional action

The action is caused by the agent

2. Why should we care?

important for our sense of self

important for making sense of decision making

important for attributions of moral responsibility

3. What is the threat from modern science?



3. What is the threat from modern science?

Here is the crux argument:

Premise 1:

An act is chosen freely only if one could have done otherwise.

Premise 2:

If determinism is true, one could not have done otherwise.

Conclusion:

INCOMPATIBILISM – determinism is not compatible with free will.

3. What is the threat from modern science?



Premise 2

If determinism is true, one could not have done otherwise.

3. What is the threat from modern science?

Conclusion:

INCOMPATIBILISM – determinism is not compatible with free will.

3. What is the threat from modern science?

Premise 1:

An act is chosen freely only if one could have done otherwise [*if one wanted to*].

Premise 2:

If determinism is true, one could ~~not have done otherwise~~ [*still have done otherwise if one had wanted to*].

→ COMPATIBILISM !!



3. What is the threat from modern science?

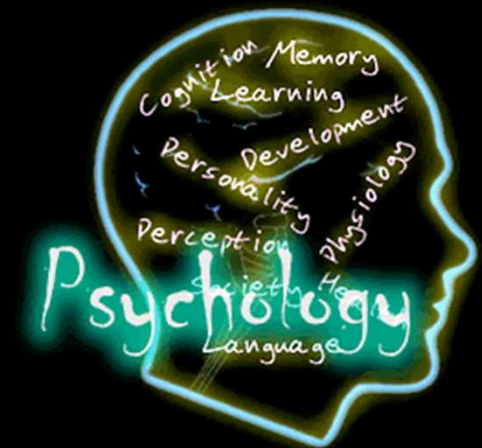
Premise 1:

An act is chosen freely only if one could have done otherwise [*at the psychological level*].

Premise 2:

If determinism is true, one could ~~not have done otherwise~~ [*still have done otherwise at the psychological level*].

→ COMPATIBILISM !!



Further issues:

Is there not any promise for **incompatibilism**? → what if mental events are not part of the physical universe?

What is the best version of **compatibilism**?

Does **compatibilism** allow us to make all the distinctions regarding **moral responsibility** that we want to make?

Questions?

Further listening:

- * 'Free Will' episode of 'In our Time' with Melvyn Bragg, BBC podcast
- * 'Free Will' episodes of 'Philosophy Bites' podcasts with Edmunds and Warburton
- * 'Free Will in a Deterministic Universe?' LSE public lecture by Prof Christian List, available as a podcast

Our BSc programs



BSc Philosophy and Economics

BSc Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method

BSc Politics and Philosophy (with Govt Dept)

All programs: 3 years, 4 courses per year.



London School of Economics and Political Science
Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method

Philosophy Selection List

Morality and Values

Philosophy of Science

Philosophy of the Social Sciences

[* = half-unit option]

Philosophy of Economics

Scientific Method and Policy

Scientific Revolutions: Philosophical and Historical Issues

Problems in Analytic Philosophy

Set Theory and Further Logic

Philosophy of Biology and Cognitive Science

Philosophy and Public Policy

Business and Organisational Ethics*

Extended Essay

Genes, Brains, and Society: Philosophical Issues in the Biomedical Sciences*

Emotion, Cognition and Behaviour: Science and Policy*

Global Justice*



Any questions?

Remember:

afternoon tea

2.45-3.30pm

Mezzanine floor, Kinta Alley

