



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Philosophy of Social Science

2021-2-E4001N095

Learning objectives

Introducing:

- a) a minimal set of basic logical-epistemological tools;
- b) The basic notions involved in counterfactual causal analysis.

Contents

Part one of the course presents the basic tools to be employed in epistemological and methodological analysis: mainly, the basic logical notions and the basic rules of inductive and deductive reasoning.

The second part applies these tools to the philosophical analysis of the counterfactual theory of causality as presented by David Lewis in his main essays on the topic.

Detailed program

Part one: what is a deductive inference; formal rules of inference; connectives (and, or, if-then, etc.); quantification and quantifiers; Inductive and abductive reasoning; order theory (sketch).

Part two: regularity vs counterfactual theory of causation; truth of a counterfactual; counterfactual dependence of sentences; causal dependence of events; causal dependence and causality; backward counterfactual and backward causation; trumping, ecc.; counterfactual influence.

Prerequisites

None

Teaching methods

Theoretical lessons

During Covid-19 alert period pre-recorded lessons will be available online. Some videoconferences will make possible interaction with teacher.

Assessment methods

Written test with close and/or open ended questions . Oral test on demand for positive written test exclusively (both in English).

During Covid-19 alert period written exam will take place remotely using "Respondus" tool and oral test using WebEx platform. Public link will be available online for those who wish to witness the exam.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

1) All powerpoints and other files available online at the end of the course.

2) Lewis, D., "Causation", The journal of Philosophy, Vol. 70, No. 17, Seventieth Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division (Oct. 11, 1973), pp. 556-567.

3) Lewis, D., "Causation as influence", *Journal of philosophy* vol. 97 (4):182-197 (2000)

Suggested readings:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/causation-counterfactual/>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/david-lewis/> (only 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.2).
