

Recap on Scepticism Unit 1

- 1) What is the difference between Philosophical Scepticism and Ordinary Scepticism?
- 2) What is the point of PS?
- 3) What is the Closed belief system argument?
- 4) What were the 5 sceptical arguments in the lecture?
- 5) How do they proceed?

Problem of Induction

- Science appears certain because generalising from thousands of observations does seem intuitively justified.
- Why? Because we think that the future always resembles the past, i.e. the Uniformity Principle.
- For example:
P1: All the metals that we have observed so far expand when heated
C1: All metals will expand when heated (P1)
- This is inductive and not a valid argument. To make it valid, we can add in:
P2: The future will resemble the past (Uniformity Principle)
- Now, the argument is valid BUT P2 only appears to be true because it is based on past observations of how, in the past, the future had indeed resembled the past.
- In other words, the UP is the result of a generalisation, i.e. an inductive inference. This looks like:
P3: In the past, the future resembled the past
P4: The future will resemble the past
C2/P2: The future will resemble the past (P3-4)
- But then the argument is circular since the conclusion is itself one of the premises.
- Hence, the attempt to make induction certain is doomed to failure.