

Philosophy 3330 Spring 2021
Reading questions #3
Due Tue, Feb 9

Read Chapter 3 of Ladyman's *Understanding Philosophy of Science*. Then answer the following questions. Your answers should be uploaded in Blackboard.

1) Karl Popper says that scientific theories should be falsifiable. Imagine that Thomas says "Falsifiable? What? Why would I want that? False theories are bad so I want my theories to be UNfalsifiable! That would be better, obviously." Explain what it means for a theory to be falsifiable and explain why that is supposed to be a good thing (an example of something that is unfalsifiable and why that is not necessarily good might help you here).

2) Here are four related claims:

- 1) Alien life exists on other planets somewhere out there.
- 2) Alien life has visited Earth in the past.
- 3) Aliens were responsible for building the great pyramids in Egypt.
- 4) There are alien spacecraft right now at Area 51.

For each of these four claims, say whether you think they are scientific and whether you think they are falsifiable (and explain your answer). What do you think this shows about Popper's criterion? (In other words, does this make it look like a good criterion to you? Does it get these cases wrong in some way? Why?)

3) After reading the chapter, come up with a question that you want answered or a topic that you would like to be discussed further. This could be something that the chapter forced you think about or it could be something that you thought was particularly confusing in the chapter.