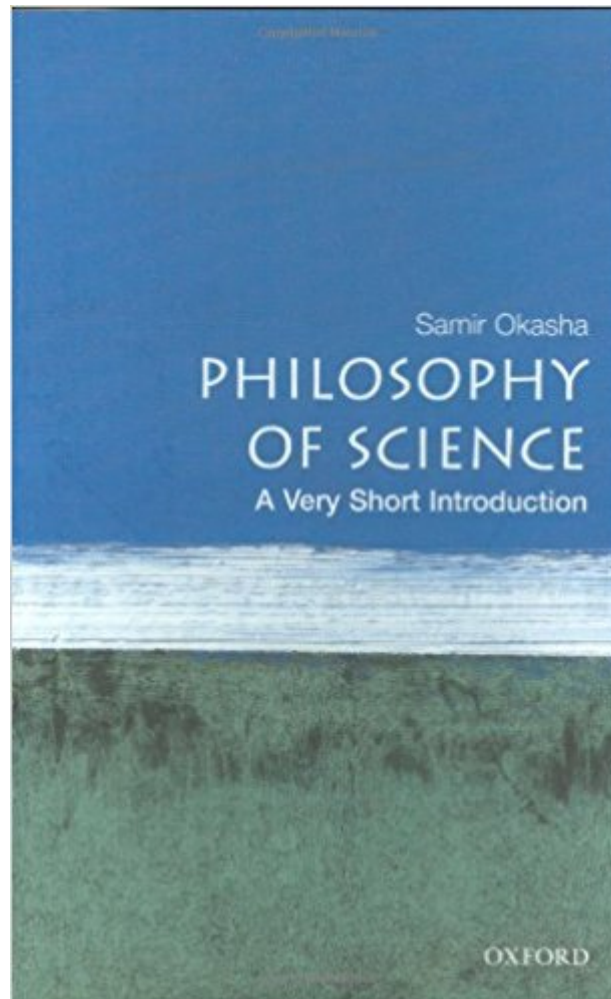


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Philosophy Of Science: A Very Short Introduction



Synopsis

What is science? Is there a real difference between science and myth? Is science objective? Can science explain everything? This Very Short Introduction provides a concise overview of the main themes of contemporary philosophy of science. Beginning with a short history of science to set the scene, Samir Okasha goes on to investigate the nature of scientific reasoning, scientific explanation, revolutions in science, and theories such as realism and anti-realism. He also looks at philosophical issues in particular sciences, including the problem of classification in biology, and the nature of space and time in physics. The final chapter touches on the conflicts between science and religion, and explores whether science is ultimately a good thing. About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, Very Short Introductions offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

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Customer Reviews

Yet another excellent entrant in the VSI series. Okasha, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of York, gives a well-organized quick tour of the main topics in the Philosophy of Science. Starting with an introductory chapter on "What is Science", he takes the reader on a tour of "Scientific Reasoning", "Explanation in Science", "Realism and anti-Realism", "Scientific Change and Revolutions". He then adds a chapter on three specific historical philosophical disputes in the Philosophy of Science: (1) the dispute between Newton and Leibniz about the nature of space

(absolute or relative), (2) the dispute among three different schools of taxonomic classification in biology and (3) the dispute among psychologists about the 'modularity' of the human mind. He then ends with a wrap up chapter on some of the disputes about science ('Scientism', or an over-reliance on 'science' as a model for all of (or the only legitimate kind of) 'knowledge'; Science and Religion; and the debate around whether Science is 'value-free'). In each case, he gives a very clear, even-handed overview of the arguments that have raged (since the 16th Century) about these topics. He is quite good at giving analogies or examples that make otherwise abstract propositions understandable. He deftly lays out (which is difficult to do) the reasons why philosophical questions about science are not resolvable by science itself, and thus why disputes over these topics continue even today (e.g., all 'empirical' scientific theories ultimately rest on concepts that are more or less 'metaphysical' - which doesn't mean that choosing among fundamental principals is simply a matter of taste, belief or faith (e.g.

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