Course overview
Structural realism, in one of its recently defended forms, is the view that the success of scientific theories is to be accounted for by the fact that such theories latch onto the structure of the world itself. Making this view precise requires articulating what is meant by “structure”, but this task has proved to be very difficult. One aim of this seminar is to revisit the origins and motivation for this view in the work of Poincaré, Duhem, Russell, Suppes, and van Fraassen, among others. A second aim will be to consider how contemporary structural realism is intended to address the arguments of scientific anti-realists and the arguments against the syntactic view of theories. Pursuing these aims together will allow us to identify a variety of distinct structuralist views, and to consider whether any of them is ultimately defensible.

Texts
The following texts are required for purchase and are available at the bookstore. All other required readings will be made available on the course website.


Assessment
You will be assessed on the basis of your participation in the seminar and a term paper. Your participation includes attendance, presentation of readings, and contribution to class discussion. Expectations for student presentations will be explained in the first meeting of the seminar. The term paper should be approximately 5,000 words long and on a topic related to the themes of the seminar. If you are not sure whether or not a topic is appropriate please consult with me as soon as possible in the term. Your final grade will be determined by the following weighting:

- 25% participation in seminar
- 75% final paper
Class schedule
This schedule is subject to revision. An up-to-date schedule will be kept on the course website.

Jan 9
No reading

Jan 16

Jan 23:

Jan 30:

Feb 6:
Lutz, S. (2017). Newman’s objection is dead; long live newman’s objection!

Feb 13:

Feb 20: Reading Week
No Class

Feb 27:


**Mar 6:**


**Mar 13:**


**Mar 20:**


**Mar 27:**


**Apr 3:**

**Academic integrity**
The University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Accommodation for disabilities**
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please approach Accessibility Services as soon as possible at the beginning of the term. I will make every effort to make appropriate accommodations.