

# CauSci Newsletter 2013



## EDITORIAL

2013 has been an exciting year for CauSci. We have had a number of visitors here at UMB in the autumn, but we have also sent some of our own people abroad.

A conference on the metaphysics of free will was organised at UMB in April, and we think it was a huge success.

We are also proud to announce that the book *Causation – A very short introduction* is now published with Oxford University Press.

The UMB PhilSci forum has had a busy autumn after a short break in the spring. In addition we started the Philosophy Café in the beginning of September.

We wish you all a happy Christmas and an exciting new year!



# VISITORS

**THE SUBSTITUTE CAUSCI TEAM** While Fredrik Andersen was away in San Diego and Jorge Elias Saiden Nunez is visiting Centre for Philosophy of Science in Pittsburgh, we had three visitors to CauSci and Handelshøyskolen here at UMB.

**ALDO FILOMENO** is a PhD student from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He visited us for 4 months this autumn, funded by the research council of Generalitat de Catalunya. His dissertation is on philosophy of physics with the title *Non-dynamic constraints sufficient for regular behaviour in statistical mechanics*, and his supervisor is Carl Hoefer. Aldo has become a dear colleague here in the department, and we are planning a CauSci, LOGOS and GRECC meeting in Barcelona in 2014.

**ANDREA RAIMONDI** is a PhD student at University of Nottingham. His research is on causal mechanisms and powers, and his supervisor is Stephen Mumford. Andrea is also affiliated to UMB through his second supervisor, Rani Lill Anjum, and will be visiting us regularly.

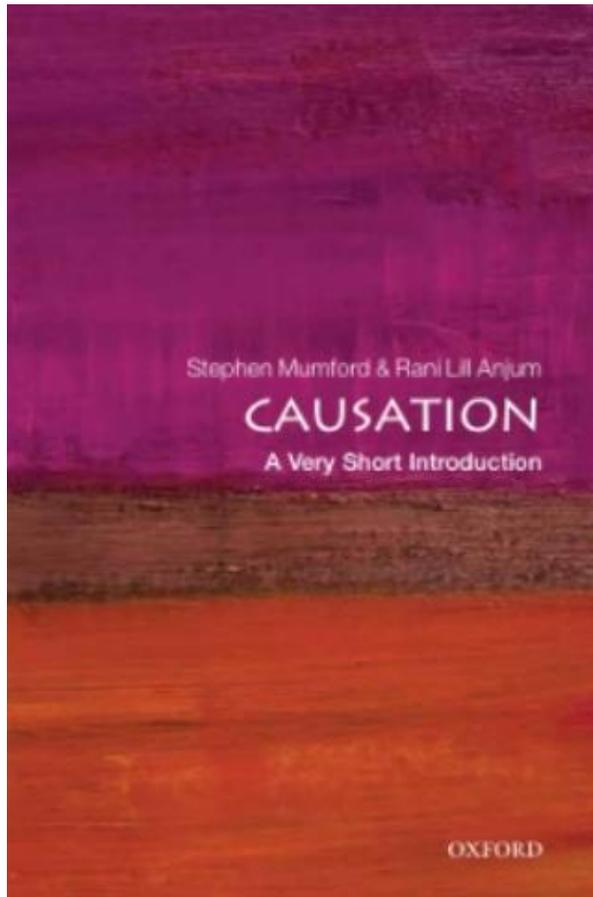
**FLAVIA FABRIS** is a PhD student at Sapienza University of Rome, but she will be spending a year or more in Exeter working with John Dupré. Her research is on evolvability, mechanism, and causation in biology. We might be seeing more of Flavia here at UMB after she goes to Exeter, as a result of a supervision agreement.

**VISITING SVT** In October the Substitute CauSci team visited SVT – *Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities* in Bergen, a visit organised by Ragnar Fjelland. SVT is an institutional partner on CauSci and they gave us a warm welcome. After giving four presentations of our work on Causation in Science, we were invited to the SVT monthly Soup Day, where staff and students meet for a lovely homemade lunch.



Photos: Andrea Raimondi (top left), Aldo Filomeno (top right), Flavia Fabris (bottom right), visit at SVT (bottom left)

# NEW BOOKS



## CAUSATION – A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION

By Stephen Mumford and Rani Lill Anjum, Oxford University Press 2013.

Causation is the most fundamental connection in the universe.

Without it, there would be no science or technology. There would be no moral responsibility either, as none of our thoughts would be connected with our actions and none of our actions with any consequences. Nor would we have a system of law because blame resides only in someone having caused injury or damage.

Any intervention we make in the world around us is premised on there being causal connections that are, to a degree, predictable. It is causation that is at the basis of prediction and also explanation.

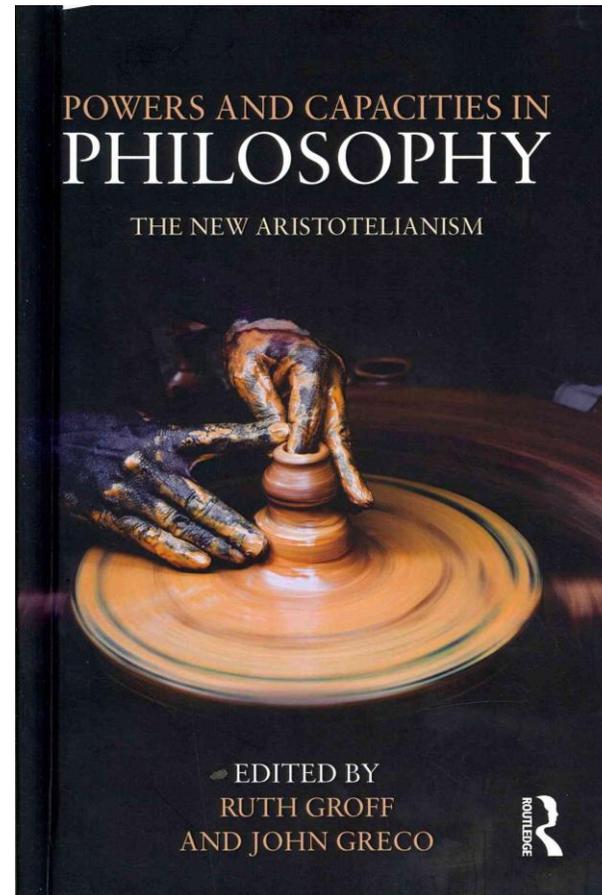
This *Very Short Introduction* introduces the key theories of causation and also the surrounding debates and controversies.

<https://sites.google.com/site/ranilillanjum/research/causationvsi>

### Why causation?

1. **The problem: what's the matter with causation?**
2. **Regularity: causation without connection?**
3. **Time and space: do causes occur before their effects?**
4. **Necessity: do causes guarantee their effects?**
5. **Counterfactual dependence: do causes make a difference?**
6. **Physicalism: is it all transference?**
7. **Pluralism: is causation many different things?**
8. **Primitivism: is causation the most basic thing?**
9. **Dispositionalism: what tends to be?**
10. **Finding causes: where are they?**

A very short afterword



## POWERS AND CAPACITIES IN PHILOSOPHY – THE NEW ARISTOTELIANISM

Edited by Ruth Groff and John Greco, Routledge 2013

The volume brings together original essays by leading philosophers working on powers in relation to metaphysics, philosophy of natural and social science, philosophy of mind and action, epistemology, ethics and social and political philosophy.

The concern is to show how a commitment to real causal powers affects discussion at the level in question.

The book will be of interest to philosophers working in any of these areas, as well as to historians of philosophy, political theorists and critical realists.

**Introduction** Ruth Groff **Part I Metaphysics** 1. *The Power of Power* Stephen Mumford 2. *Limitations of Power* Alexander Bird 3. *Emergence, Causal Powers, and Aristotelianism in Metaphysics* Eleonore Stump 4. *The Ineliminability of Dispositions in Hume's Rejection of Causal Powers*, Lynn S. Joy **Part II Philosophy of Science** 5. *Causal Powers: Without Them, What Would Causal Laws Do?* Nancy Cartwright and John Pemberton 6. *Dispositions for Scientific Realism* Anjan Chakravartty 7. *Powerful Particulars Revisited* Rom Harre **Part III. Mind and Agency** 8. *Powers, Structures and Minds* William Jaworski 9. *The Will as a Rational Free Power* E. J. Lowe 10. *The Power of Agency* Brian Ellis 11. *Whose Powers? Which Agency?* Ruth Groff **Part IV: Ethics and Epistemology** 12. *Dispositions and Ethics* Rani Lill Anjum, Svein Anders Noer Lie and Stephen Mumford 13. *The Power, and Limitations, of Virtue Epistemology* Duncan Pritchard and Jesper Kallestrup 14. *Powers and Reasons* Linda Zagzebski **Part V: Social and Political Philosophy** 15. *Emergence and Social Causation* Tony Lawson 16. *Gender Essentialism: Aristotle or Locke?* Charlotte Witt 17. *Rules, Goods and Powers* Kelvin Knight

# NEW PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE MODULE AT UMB

**PHI302 CAUSATION IN SCIENCE** The module is taught at UMB, spring 2013 and 2014, by Rani Lill Anjum, Fredrik Andersen, Elias Nunez and Stephen Mumford.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY** As part of the CauSci project, we decided to offer a new module last spring. Our aim was to bring philosophers and scientists together to discuss the relation between theories of causation and scientific methods for discovering causes. The course was open to all students, from BA to PhD level, and from any discipline.

**29<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY** The course starts up in the end of January 2014. For more information, see <http://www.umb.no/causci/article/new-causation-in-science-module>

## PLACE

T331, Tårnbygningen, UMB campus

## TIME

Wednesdays, 14-16

## NEW PHILOSOPHY MODULE, SPRING 2013

ORGANISED BY CAUSCI – CAUSATION IN SCIENCE – AND THE UMB  
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

### PHI302 CAUSATION IN SCIENCE

THE CAUSCI TEAM OFFERS A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE MODULE ON THE TOPIC CAUSATION IN SCIENCE. THE COURSE GIVES 5 CREDITS AND IS OPEN FOR ALL STUDENTS INTERESTED IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENCE.

Causation is a key concept in all empirical sciences. Our methods tell us what counts as causal evidence and our theories are about causal explanation and prediction. The ultimate scientific aim is to understand and influence the world around us. But in order to do this what we need to know is what causes what.

While scientists deal with the concrete details, it is philosophers who consider in the abstract what it is for one thing to cause another. The aim of this course is to bring together that abstract philosophical approach to causation with a more concrete understanding of the work actually undertaken by the practitioners of the sciences.

WE WILL LOOK AT HOW CAUSATION IS UNDERSTOOD BY PHILOSOPHERS, BUT ALSO WHAT EXISTING SCIENTIFIC METHODS ARE ASSUMING ABOUT CAUSATION. IN THIS SENSE, AT LEAST, OUR RESEARCH IS DEFINED AND GUIDED BY CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS. THIS COURSE WILL ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE A CRITICAL REFLECTION UPON SOME OF THESE ASSUMPTIONS THROUGH LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS.

#### SELECTED TOPICS

- Causation and correlations
- Reductionism and holism
- Causation as difference making
- The role of statistics and population data in detecting causation
- Causal predictions
- Causation in contemporary physics
- Causation and biological complexity
- Causal powers
- Free will and determinism
- Causation and probability

CREDITS: 5  
TEACHING FORM: SEMINARS WITH LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS, 2 HOURS A WEEK  
EXAM: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 1 FEBRUARY

COURSE RESPONSIBLE: RANI.LILLANJUM@UMB.NO

### TEACHERS



**RANI LILL ANJUM**, Research Fellow and Principal Investigator of CauSci, working on the philosophy of causation, probability and determinism.



**FREDRIK ANDERSEN**, PhD-student in Philosophy of Science, working on causation, time and space in physics.



**ELIAS NUNEZ**, PhD-student in Philosophy of Science, working on causation and emergence in biology.



**STEPHEN MUMFORD**, Professor of Metaphysics, University of Nottingham and Professor II at CauSci and HH UMB, working on the philosophy of causation, dispositions and laws.



# CAUPSY

THE METAPHYSICS OF FREE WILL: EMPOWERMENT, AGENCY AND FREEDOM, APRIL 2013, UMB

This symposium was the third international event organised as part of the CauSci project. The aim was to critically examine the ontological orthodoxies of this debate, and to explore the potential of the dispositions ontology as a better foundation for free will and agency. Including the speakers, more than 30 participants from all over Europe and USA were gathered at the Norwegian Agricultural Museum on Campus Ås for three days.

## SPEAKERS

Jonathan Webber, Tim O'Connor, Ruth Groff, Simone Gozzano, Randolph Clarke, Anne Sophie Spann, Thomas Mueller, Thor Sandmel, Sara Bernstein, Mark Bickhard, Charlotte Alderwick, Niels van Miltenburg, Emmanuel Baierle, Trond Skaftnesmo, Stephen Mumford, Rani Lill Anjum



# PHILOSOPHY CAFÉ

LUNCH WITH PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

This autumn CauSci has entered into a new and exciting collaboration with the university library. Together we organise the UMB Philosophy Café, which is intended as a more popular platform for philosophical discussion than the interdisciplinary PhilSci forum. The events have attracted audience from student, staff, and even locals from Ås.

The Philosophy Café starts with an introduction lecture, followed by an open debate. Topics this semester have been:

- What is Normal?
- Can Everything Be Measured?
- Do You Have Free Will?

For more info about the Philosophy Café, see: <http://www.umb.no/causci/article/filosofikafe>

