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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Tal Scriven

805-756-2041; phil@calpoly.edu

Influential Philosopher to Talk Jan. 29 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Philosopher Bas van Fraassen will give a presentation at Cal Poly titled “Hempel’s Dilemma,” at 11:10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, in the Corporation Administration Building (No. 15), Room 135.

Van Fraassen is widely considered one of the most significant philosophers of the last 50 years. His views on the nature of science have been especially influential.

During his lecture, van Fraassen will present a new paper that deepens his theory of “constructive empiricism” and his opposition to scientific realism. According to van Fraassen, people should be agnostic about the truth of scientific claims about unobservable entities such as atoms, molecules, and the double helix. It is the job of science to give people empirical adequacy, van Fraassen argues, not the truth.

The presentation will expand upon work started in van Fraassen’s book “The Scientific Image” and later revisited in books and articles up to the present. “The Scientific Image” has been translated into six languages. Van Fraassen has published nine additional books and hundreds of articles and has had dozens of books and hundreds of articles written about him.

Van Fraassen is the McCosh Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus, at Princeton University and the Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at San Francisco State.

The free public event is sponsored by Cal Poly’s College of Liberal Arts and Philosophy Department.

Links

- Philosophy Department: <http://cla.calpoly.edu/phil.html>
- College of Liberal Arts: <http://cla.calpoly.edu>
- Bas Van Fraassen Website: www.princeton.edu/~fraassen/
- More on Constructive Empiricism: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/constructive-empiricism/>

About the Cal Poly Philosophy Department

At Cal Poly, the Philosophy Department has cultivated an environment where students acquire a foundation based on a general knowledge of the history of philosophy. The department fosters interdisciplinary work by teaching students how to think through and examine critical issues of today and tomorrow. Students graduate with critical thinking and communication skills that provide an excellent foundation for a number of career paths. Graduates typically earn high scores on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), Graduate Record Exam (GRE), and Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT).

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