Review of Science and Psychology by Wilton and Harley
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Science and Psychology by Wilton and Harley is based on a final year option course delivered over many years by Richard Wilton in the Psychology Department at the University of Dundee. I took this course in the final year of my undergraduate degree in 1990. I distinctly remember the enjoyable classes and the robust argument and debate that took place in the “Reading Room” of the Scrymgeour Building. Not only did I find the course thoroughly enjoyable as an undergraduate, but it also stimulated me to engage with issues fundamental to the basic science that underpins modern experimental (cognitive) psychology. I believe I call upon the knowledge established in this course almost every day in my work as an experimental psychologist.

Science and Psychology is essentially a written form of Wilton’s course, providing informed, well thought-through, philosophical perspectives on a significant number of principles and issues related to the scientific nature of experimental psychological research. Each chapter in the book comprises of a series of discursive texts – a hypothetical exchange between the authors and the reader, where questions are raised and answered with explanation. These exchanges act as exercises in the philosophical consideration of topics such as theoretical development, power, scope and simplicity, and of course, testability of theory. The book also engages with issues more specifically associated with psychology, such as causality, intentional states, free will and consciousness leading the reader to consider implications beyond psychology, for example, within the legal system. Throughout the text, examples are used to illustrate the arguments that are developed in the book. These are not cutting edge (important historical examples from physics, astronomy and chemistry are included, as well as references to maze running rats, Skinner boxes, and pigeon pecking), but they are effective in illustrating the important and often complex points under consideration. The language is simple yet functional. There is little jargon and the explanations are thorough without being labored. The Figures are rudimentary. There are questions at the end of every chapter to allow the reader to assess their understanding of the preceding content. The authors recommend that the book be read as a novel, starting at the beginning and finishing at the end. This is how I read the book, and having done this, I can see it makes sense to read it that way.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and I found it to be excellent. I appreciated revisiting the philosophical discussions surrounding issues that I engage with directly in my work. The issues that are raised are important and are directly relevant to those involved in scientific research, especially within the field of experimental psychology. I recommend this book to undergraduate and masters students who may be considering a scientific research career (particularly in experimental psychology), or indeed, those who are already committed to such a career path and wish to take a moment to reflect upon what it is they are trying to achieve in their work as a scientist. Reading this book will almost certainly cause you to reconsider issues you thought you had already sorted out, assess those issues in a different light, and perhaps even result in a change to your current philosophical perspective.
Trevor A. Harley is Dean of Psychology and Chair of Cognitive Psychology at the University of Dundee, Scotland. He was an undergraduate at the University of Cambridge, where he was also a PhD student, completing a thesis on slips of the tongue and what they tell us about speech production. He moved to Dundee from the University of Warwick in 1996. His research interests include speech production, how we represent meaning, and the effects of aging on language. About the Author. Trevor A. Harley is Dean of Psychology and Chair of Cognitive Psychology at the University of Dundee, Scotland. He was by Richard Wilton (Author), Trevor Harley (Author). See all formats and editions Hide other formats and editions. Amazon Price. New from. "A fascinating and important book. It made me revisit key questions regarding the fundamentals of science and psychology in a way I have not done since taking Dr. Wilton's class on the subject a decade ago. For students, this book is the perfect philosophical companion to research methods classes, while for academics it is an excellent way to reacquaint themselves with the roots of their discipline. However, the book also offers something of great value to the general audience: a detailed and accessible account of how science works.", Dr Juliet R. H. Wakefield, Senior Psychology Lecturer, Nott. Trevor Harley Author Page, Dundee, United Kingdom. 118 likes. I am a psychologist and writer. I am author of the best-selling psychology text "The..." I was looking for a book I could recommend to a psychology or computer science undergraduate that they could read and get a good understanding of the basic issues. This book is aimed, or appears to be aimed, at philosophy undergraduates who already know something. I'm still searching for the perfect introduction. Science and Psychology 1st Edition. by Richard Wilton (Author), Trevor Harley (Contributor). ISBN-13: 978-1138693807. Trevor Harley holds the Chair in Cognitive Psychology at the University of Dundee, and was previously Head of Department and Dean. He is now a science writer and journalist. He completed his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at the University of Cambridge, and worked for many years on language, mental illness, and consciousness. He is author of several books, including The Psychology of Language, now in its fourth edition. Product details. Paperback : 176 pages. Science and Psychology 1st Edition by Richard Wilton; Trevor Harley and Publisher Routledge. Save up to 80% by choosing the eTextbook option for ISBN: 9781315529271, 1315529270. The print version of this textbook is ISBN: 9781138693791, 1138693790. Science and Psychology. By: Richard Wilton; Trevor Harley. Publisher: Routledge. Print ISBN: 9781138693791, 1138693790.