

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT COLLOQUIUM

—presents—

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“MODELS IN UNDERSTANDING”



Abstract: Many scientific realists hold that the epistemic acceptability of scientific representations depends on their accuracy. Science aspires to truth and when it is successful it delivers truth. I argue that such a conception is at odds with science's practice of developing and deploying models. Models are epistemically efficacious precisely because they selectively and judiciously depart from truth. By exemplifying features they share with their targets and diverging from their targets elsewhere, they provide epistemic access to the exemplified features and make their roles manifest. Their inaccuracy thus enhances understanding.

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