

Science, Philosophy and Physical Geography

Robert Inkpen, Graham Wilson



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This accessible and engaging text explores the relationship between philosophy, science and physical geography. It addresses an imbalance that exists in opinion, teaching and to a lesser extent research, between a philosophically enriched human geography and a perceived philosophically empty physical geography.

The text challenges the myth that there is a single self-evident scientific method that can, and is, applied in a straightforward manner by physical geographers. It demonstrates the variety of alternative philosophical perspectives and emphasizes the difference that the real world geographical context and the geographer make to the study of environmental phenomenon. This includes a consideration of the dynamic relationship between human and physical geography. Finally, the text demonstrates the relevance of philosophy for both an understanding of published material and for the design and implementation of studies in physical geography.

This edition has been fully updated with two new chapters on field studies and modelling, as well as greater discussion of ethical issues and forms of explanation. The book explores key themes such as reconstructing environmental change, species interactions and fluvial geomorphology, and is complimented throughout with case studies to illustrate concepts.

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