

PHILOSOPHY 268 | HUNTER COLLEGE | SPRING 2019

# RESEARCH PAPER ASSIGNMENT

## INSTRUCTIONS

For this assignment, you'll write a single essay, **approximately 2500-3000 WORDS** in length, in which you will summarize and take a side on a live debate in contemporary cognitive science. A live debate is one that is unsettled—an issue about which at least some of the experts disagree. The debate you choose can be either one that we have discussed this semester, or a related debate that has not been one of our central topics. Your job is to make a convincing case for your side of the debate by making the best argument for it that you can in the space allotted.

You should try to choose a relatively narrow topic. It would be better to focus on a single argument for a position, rather than on the position as a whole, so that you can go into some detail without spreading yourself too thin. For example: "Why connectionism is false" is too broad; "Why connectionists can't explain systematicity" is better, since it would allow you to give a more comprehensive overview of your topic. In general, choose depth over breadth of topic.

## RESEARCH REQUIREMENT

Part of your job on this paper is to do independent research that goes beyond what has been assigned in class. You needn't have a comprehensive grasp on all of the literature that is relevant to your topic, but you should demonstrate an understanding of the major relevant debates and arguments. For example: if you give an argument without taking note of and responding to a widely known and highly influential response to this argument, I will take that to be evidence that you have not done enough research.

Some good places to start this research would include the further readings and bibliographies listed in the books we've used, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, and the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. But it's important that you don't merely rely on encyclopedia articles. Rather, you should treat them as a first step toward tracking down original research. Think of a Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article (for example) as a guide to what you should be reading, not as a source in its own right. You should also check out [philpapers.com](http://philpapers.com). And you can also ask me for recommendations.

## DUE DATE

The essay is **due on Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016**. You should email me a copy by midnight on that day. The subject of your email should be "PHILO 268 Paper". No extensions will be granted except under extraordinary circumstances, and there will be no make-up assignments. Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of one letter grade per three days.