

Cognitive Systems 303 – Essay 1

Due: Cohort A: Sep 12
Cohort B: Sep 14

Goal: Write a short essay (≤ 400 words) giving **three reasons** to support or refute one of the following points:

1. Science is a form of art.
2. Consciousness will one day be understood scientifically.
3. Machines will be smarter than humans within 30 years.
4. Women will have a higher status in society than men within 50 years.
5. Consciousness is an inevitable result of evolution.
6. We will eventually be able to understand the language of any alien species.
7. Economics is a legitimate science.
8. There are commonalities in the cognitive architecture of all animals on Earth.
9. The advent of the digital age makes public libraries obsolete.
10. Movie actors will one day be completely replaced by computer-generated models.
11. We can train ourselves to be much smarter than we currently are.
12. Space exploration is worth the cost
13. The arts cannot be studied scientifically.
14. Educational television is good for children's development.
15. Sexual selection has been a significant force in human evolution.
16. Men and women have differences in their cognitive abilities.
17. AI systems will one day be as capable as humans.
18. An artificial vision system will eventually be able to see in the same sense that humans do.
19. The Cognitive Systems program is well designed.
20. There is nothing really big left to discover in the disciplines of Cognitive Systems.
21. Science has shown that humans are basically irrational.
22. Logic is important in understanding cognition
23. Women are at a disadvantage in science.
24. Mental imagery is useful to humans.
25. Video games are harmful to children's development.
26. Space exploration is worth the cost.
27. The media creates, rather than reflects, a society's values.
28. The choice of one's university affects one's future earning power.
29. Being a "nice guy" is good for improving one's odds in romance.
30. There are things in the world that cannot be understood by science

Students can choose topic, and whether to support or refute.

Pick your top three candidates (1st = highest). Send your request to TA by Sept 7th, 11:59pm.

Marks (out of 12):

Content (0-6): Start with 0 marks

- +2 for each good example (up to 6 marks)
- 0 for each absent / unconvincing example
- 1 for each bad example / error in reasoning (up to -3)

Style (0-6): Start with 6 marks

- 1 for each problem of organization (*up to -3*)
- 1 for any other problem [e.g., conciseness] (*up to -3*)

Typographic Format

- Font: Times New Roman, 12 point
- Margins: 1-1.5 inch, all sides
- Lines: Single-spaced; **numbered**
- **Limit: 400 words** (*References not included in word count*)
- **No figures**

Suggested Organization (also see example essay)

- Brief opening paragraph – introduce question/issue, perhaps clarify definitions
- 3-4 paragraphs, one reason per paragraph
- Brief concluding paragraph
- **No bullet points**
- For more suggestions on organization/style, see wiki (ask TAs)

Sources

- Can base reasons on sources if you wish, although no need to if the reasons are obvious. If sources are used, please reference. *References themselves aren't part of word count.*

Submission Process:

- Upload your essay to turnItIn (pdf format) by **midnight before the day it's analyzed**
 - **if late, 100% off**; just send in what you have
- Your assigned code name should be on the upper right hand corner of every page.
- **Include title on the top of the first printed page. *Word count at top right-hand side.***
- **Include line numbers on your essay.**
 - For instructions on displaying line numbers in Microsoft Word, see:
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word/HA010429571033.aspx>
- **Submit pdf files only. ***No .doc or .docx files*****

Access Process:

- Essays will be available on the COGS 303 website before **noon** of the due date
 - look at the essay for your group ahead of time
 - if interested, can also look at other essays