

Instructions

You are asked to submit an essay of 1,400-1,700 words. You must include a word count, a violation of the word limit will result in a deduction. Your response essay must be clearly structured, precisely worded, validly argued, and diligently spell-checked. Be as concise as possible without compromising clarity. Because the essay you are asked to write is not long, I expect that you spend more thought on just how you want to organize your answer, as well as on rewriting the paper. There are some additional rules to keep in mind, as specified on the syllabus. The paper is worth up to 30 points. It must be submitted through <http://www.turnitin.com> *by the due date* and as a hard copy *before class on that day* in order to earn credit. For each day your paper is late, three points will be deducted from your point total, although no negative point totals will be given for the midterm papers.

Topics

Choose one of the following topics to write about:

1. Identify a school of thought that can reasonably be considered a ‘fringe science’, i.e. an enterprise right in the grey area between science and pseudo-science. Identify and defend a small number (= two or three) of demarcation criteria that at least offer a close approximation to a useful distinction between science and pseudo-science. Use these criteria to determine whether your chosen school of thought is a science or a pseudo-science.
2. Pick your favorite analysis of laws of nature and defend it against the criticisms that were raised in lecture and in the readings.
3. Kuhn is generally read as a philosopher who advocates a view of science that emphasizes *discontinuities* across theory change, rather than continuities in the development of science. Do you find his case convincing? Support your answer by giving reasons and arguments. Use most of the space in your essay to articulate these reasons and arguments, rather than to describe Kuhn’s position. You may have to read a bit ahead of time to have sufficient background to write on this topic.