

Phil 12  
Winter 2007

## Second Writing Assignment

Write a short paper (1-2 pages, double-spaced, typed) on the question assigned for your section. These are to be turned in at the beginning of class on Thursday, March 8. Present your answers totally in your own words—do not quote material either from the website or the lecture powerpoints. There is no need to quote anyone else—explain everything in your own words. Clarity, precision, and accuracy are all essential for a good paper.

It is inappropriate to disrupt class to turn in your paper to your TA. Papers should be turned in before class begins. If you turn it in between the time class begins and the time it ends, you will receive a deduction of 1 letter grade. If you wait and turn it in immediately after class ends, you will receive a deduction of 1/3 of a letter grade. After the TAs leave the lecture room at the end of class, the deduction is once again 1 letter grade.

### Section A01

Ari has the hypothesis that nations in the Coalition of the Willing supported the Iraq war because of (their support was caused by) their agreement with the decision to go to war. But Ellie says that the nations supported the war because of pressure and/or incentives from the U.S. government. In general, Ari thinks that when nations go along with the U.S., it is out of agreement with policy or principle, and Ellie thinks it is because of incentives and/or pressure to cooperate. State which hypothesis would be easier to test if you had control of the U.S. government and why. In testing that hypothesis, what kind of variables (nominal, rank, etc.) would you choose for the independent and dependent variables? Why? Make sure to be clear about which is the independent and which is the dependent variable. List 4 possible scenarios in which at least one of the hypothesized causes, but no others, produces the stated effect (you can use causal diagrams to figure these out, but don't put the diagrams in the paper).

### Section A02

Ellie saw a statistic from FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Media and Reporting) that 75% of self-described Fox News viewers believed in 2003 that Saddam Hussein was at least partly responsible for 9/11. Ellie agreed with FAIR that watching Fox News causes people to believe this. Ellie then developed the general hypothesis that watching Fox News causes people to agree with the Bush administration's policies. Design an experiment to test Ellie's hypothesis. Briefly describe the relationship between internal validity and confounding variables. Describe how you controlled for one confounding variable and point out one potential confounding variable you haven't controlled for.

### Section A03

Design the best experimental study you can to determine whether ingesting caffeine is a cause of enhanced athletic performance. Discuss all the critical factors involved in designing a good

experiment, including how possible confounds will be controlled for, and defend the choices you make in designing the study. Identify the conditions under which you will be able to conclude that using caffeine causes improved performance and what you would conclude were those conditions not met.

#### Section A04

Design a retrospective study to determine whether being a philosophy major is a causal factor in individuals becoming alcoholics. Discuss the critical factors involved in doing the best possible retroactive study as well as what can be concluded from the study depending on its outcome and limitations. Be sure to discuss possible confounds that might be involved.