Phil 12
Fall 2015

First 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 by Noon on Thursday, November 12. Papers should be submitted electronically to your TA in .doc or .rtf format. If this is not possible, you may deliver them to your TA's mailbox by Noon. The goal of this paper is to explain clearly the central concepts employed in the question you are to address. Assume that your audience is a fellow student not in this class. To explain the material to that person you cannot just use the concepts we have developed in class but must *explain* them. Present your answers totally in your own words—do not quote material either from the website, the lecture powerpoints, or anyone else. You may use diagrams or figures (be sure to give credit if they are not your own), but you must explain fully what each is supposed to illustrate.

A01: Suppose you want to discover whether wealth is a predictor of moral rectitude (how morally upstanding someone is); that is, you want to know whether wealth and moral rectitude are correlated. In order to begin your research, you will have to come up with operational definitions for wealth and moral rectitude. Explain why that is necessary. Then give *two* operational definitions of *each* variable, stating a strength and weakness of each operational definition. Make sure to discuss the strength and weakness in terms of construct validity. Keep in mind that both moral rectitude and wealth are going to have to be score variables; you will need operational definitions that allow you to render them numerically.

A02: Suppose you think that the climate of a country is correlated with its research productivity: a country with a better climate is less productive, since people would like to do something other than their research on nice days. You decide to find out whether there really exists a correlation between the climate and research productivity in of a country. In order to begin your investigation, you will have to come up with operational definitions for your variables. First, explain why this is necessary. Then, provide *two* operational definitions for *each* variable (goodness of the climate, research productivity), stating a strength and weakness of each one. Discuss each of these in terms of construct validity. Keep in mind that both variables must be score variables, so you need operational definitions that allow you to render them numerically.