

Phil 12
Winter 2006

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 9. Present your answers totally in your own words—do not quote material either from the website or the lecture powerpoints.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. You may draw upon sources (books, journals, or the internet) for an example. If you do so, you must provide a reference to the source you used.

A-01. Describe what a confounding variable is, what is meant by internal validity of an experiment, and the relation between the two. Describe an experiment, actual or one you make up, in which a confounding variable has not been controlled for. In addition, identify one or more extraneous variables that are not confounds, and explain why they are not. (Be sure to explain what causal hypothesis was being tested and how the experiment tested that hypothesis.) Recommend a strategy for controlling the confounding variable and explain how it would do so.

A-02. Approximately 500 UCSD students have developed a severe rash. There do not seem to be any new cases, but you are still concerned to identify the cause. One factor that many people suspect is the soap in the library bathrooms. Propose a study for testing this hypothesis and explain why it would be the best procedure to follow. Also explain the limitations of your proposed study.

A-03. It has been observed that students who take Phil 10, Introduction to Logic, tend to do better in college than other students. But is taking Phil 10 the cause of the higher GPAs? Design a study to test the claim. Discuss all the critical factors involved, including how possible confounds are controlled for and identify under what conditions you will be able to conclude that taking Phil 10 causes better college performance.

A-04. Design a within subjects experiment to test whether eating breakfast (as opposed to skipping breakfast) leads people to perform better during the day. Discuss all of the critical factors involved in designing the experiment, including how possible confounds are to be controlled for and identify under what conditions you will be able to conclude that eating breakfast leads people to perform better during the day. Explain the advantage of running this as a within subjects experiment.