

Introduction to Logic
Instructor: Dr. Sheley

Writing Assignment

Compose an essay of no more than 1500 words on one of the following topics:

(Option A) Consider Robert Nozick's thought experiment of the experience machine. Compose an essay in which you address the question of whether it matters that you spend your entire life in the machine. To answer this question, consider a life that you consider worth living. Does it matter whether things actually happen? Or is it sufficient to merely have the experience. Be sure to focus your essay around the reasons you give in favor of your position. State whether your argument is inductive or deductive, and say why. Finally, consider at least one objection to your view, and respond to it. (NB: You may wish to discuss the conditions under which you would use the machine, and use the appropriate argument forms, if necessary.)

(Option B) Robert Nozick argues that he would not sign up to use an experience machine for life. While this possibility is remote for us, it could be argued that we have many technologies which function as local experience machines. Compose an essay or dialogue (approximately 1500 words) in which you address the following issue:

Consider a type of technology that you currently use, and address to what extent this technology is analogous to the experience machine in Robert Nozick's essay. Be sure to focus on features that are similar as well as different. Next, address whether you agree with Nozick's position by considering whether his argument provides reasons why you yourself might wish to limit the amount of time you spend using your chosen technology. (For example, if you agree with Nozick, does this mean that you should give up your Netflix account?) Be sure to clearly state your own reasons. Finally, consider an objection that someone might raise against your viewpoint, and respond to the objection.

Due date: The assignment will be due by _____. The assignment will be turned in on Canvas. Please also send a copy of your paper to the following e-mail address: jasondsheley@gmail.com
You may also wish to send a copy to my other address: jsheley@fullerton.edu.
jsheley@fullcoll.edu I would encourage you to e-mail a copy to yourself, as well.

Important points to keep in mind:

I recommend you begin as soon as possible, and work in short bursts every day. (For example, work in 5-20 minute blocks, and aim for 200 words per day.

If you wish, you may compose your essay in the form of a letter, dialogue, or story.

Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for every day they are late, unless arrangements are made with me in advance.

Essays are to be typed, using standard fonts and margins (e.g. 12 point font, 1 inch margins) Remember: concision is a virtue!

Answers to the exam questions must be a product of your own effort. All answers should be written in your own words. Plagiarism will be sufficient to earn a grade of F on this exam. (Plagiarism is defined here as the presentation of another person's work as one's own effort.) Please note that no outside research is required for this exam. Please also note that Internet sources are often of very poor quality, and are thus very easy to detect. Lastly, I do not mind if you talk to other members of the class about the questions, but make sure to write up your own exam independently of other classmates. Essays will be graded for accuracy, completeness, and relevance. Evidence used in support of your views needs to be explained fully. Finally, quoting the texts at length is not encouraged, since you need to explain all quotes in your own words.

Feedback: You will receive three kinds of feedback on this assignment. First, you will receive extensive oral feedback if you discuss your draft with me in my office hours. At this phase, students may also volunteer to have parts of their essay examined during class. Second, you will receive a detailed rubric assessing your performance according to various criteria. Finally, you also have the option of receiving further feedback after the assignment is handed back.