

## Q540 Paper and Proposal Guidelines

- **Proposal:** 1-2 pages (single spaced)
  - Identify journal that is your model (e.g. any of the journals from which readings have been drawn this semester, or see me for suggestions). The final paper should follow author guidelines from that journal, including proper reference format, etc.
  - Identify topic, the type of paper (see four kinds of paper below), briefly outline your approach (extended abstract), and identify any published sources that you intend to use.
- **General guidelines:** Unlike the reaction pieces, in which a certain amount of blogger style has been tolerated, the goal here is to work towards a professional journal-style piece of writing. Ideally, your paper will provide evidence of the following:
  - a. **Learning:** That you have learned something from the readings and topics discussed during the course, and can apply some of what we have covered to a topic of interest to you.
  - b. **Audience appropriateness:** That you can explain the concepts and arguments at a level that could be understood by someone who did not take the course, and therefore may not have read what you read, or heard our discussions. You may assume your reader has at least a basic undergraduate level understanding of cognitive science, however.
  - c. **Argumentative rigor:** That you can anticipate and defend against objections to your arguments or proposals, such as would likely be raised by cognitive scientists or philosophers who have views different from yours.
- **Four kinds of paper** (your paper may combine more than one element)
  1. **Traditional critical philosophy (target-commentary style):** Pick an argument from the published literature; explicate the argument as clearly and formally as you can; mount an argument against it. Anticipate and deal with possible replies to your objections.
  2. **Constructive philosophical piece:** Try to stake out a relatively novel position on an issue in the philosophy of cognitive science. State and explicate your thesis, give an argument for it, and defend the argument against anticipated objections.
  3. **Empirical application of foundational concepts:** Describe how a foundational issue might suggest new kinds of experimental research or modeling in your chosen domain -- e.g., what the embodied or dynamical perspectives might mean for (your) research in education, memory research, or comparative psychology.
  4. **Survey paper:** Provide an analytical survey that attempts to categorize alternative views in a given area, explaining where and how they differ, and providing some assessment of the prospects for resolving differences.
- **Final Paper Length:** By the time the topic is explained, the arguments laid out, and possible criticisms or shortcomings discussed, it is unlikely that you can do anything worthwhile in much less than 15 double-spaced typed pages (compare to typical journal article length). That said, I would rather have 12 really well-written pages than 15+ pages of rambling thoughts.