

values, norms, clarity, and parsimony. **2nd paper due October 19.**

October 26, 28: What are definitions? Why do definitions matter? How are concepts defined? Semantic fields, substitution principle.

November 2, 4: What is description? How can phenomena be described? **3rd paper due November 2.**

November 9, 11: What is interpretation? What are symbols? How are symbols interpreted? Language, signs, subjectivity, lifeworld. **4th paper due November 9.**

November 16, 18: What is explanation? How are phenomena explained using necessary, sufficient, facilitating conditions? **5th paper due November 16.**

November 23, 30: Research approaches: case study, comparison, large N. **6th paper due November 23.**

December 2, 7: Theoretical paradigms: structure (realism, Marxism, institutionalism) vs agency (rational choice, constructivism).

December 9: In-class thought experiments. **7th paper due December 9.**

Requirements and Grades

Each student will formulate a simple abstract causal statement (of the 3-word form, A causes B, where A and B are abstract concepts) and devote all the exercises to its exploration.

Students are expected to write seven papers (six 10-line papers and one 2-page paper). Final grades will be based on the one 2-page paper (40%) and the six 10-line papers (60%). No extra-credit work.

Each 10-line paper must be exactly 10 lines long (NOT 10 sentences!), with standard margins and 12-point font. The 2-page paper must be exactly 2 pages long, single spaced, with standard margins and 12-point font: no footnotes, no long citations, no bibliography. Papers will be graded on the basis of grammar, spelling, and punctuation (4 pts.); and the degree to which the two components are answered persuasively (8pts. apiece).

Papers must be sent to ajmotyl@rutgers.edu by 11:30AM on the due date. No late papers accepted.

Attendance and participation are mandatory. Students will not be able to complete the assignments without attending class and actively participating.

Assignment Schedule

Each student will formulate a simple abstract causal statement (of the form “A causes B”) and devote all the exercises to its exploration. Follow the below instructions exactly: do not write more or less than what is required.

- 1st paper due October 12: 10 lines. Topic: Formulate a simple abstract causal statement and explain both why it matters and is worth pursuing and why it does not matter and is not worth pursuing.
- 2nd paper due October 19: 10 lines. Topic: Make an empirical truth claim related to a concrete instance of your effect and provide convincing evidence of both its empirical truth and its empirical falsehood.
- 3rd paper due November 2: *up to 10 lines*. Topic: Provide two contrasting definitions of both the cause and the effect in your simple abstract causal statement.
- 4th paper due November 9: 10 lines. Topic: Describe some empirical phenomenon in two different ways.
- 5th paper due November 16: 10 lines. Topic: Provide two competing interpretations of some empirical phenomenon.
- 6th paper due November 23: 10 lines. Topic: Explain the effect in your simple abstract causal

statement using necessary, sufficient, and facilitating conditions.

- 7th paper due December 9: 2 pages. On p. 1, argue that your simple abstract causal statement is valid; on p. 2, argue that your simple abstract causal statement is invalid.