Your assignment is to write **a literature review** of Francis Bacon’s “A Guide to the Interpretation of Nature.” There is no official word limit for this analysis, but you should strive for 1200 words.

**The due date for your assessment is November 16th, 5 pm. All assignments must be sent as an email attachment to** [**brian.baigrie@utoronto.ca**](mailto:brian.baigrie@utoronto.ca) **and to** [**Andrew.oakes@mail.utoronto.ca**](mailto:Andrew.oakes@mail.utoronto.ca)

How to Write a Literature Review for HPS210S

A literature review is a description of an academic work relevant to a particular field or topic. It asks you to summarize **and** evaluate a text (whether of a book, a journal article, or a chapter of a book). The object is to show your reader that you have read, and have a good understanding of the assigned text, including what questions are being asked, what thesis is being asserted, and what methods and methodologies are appropriate and useful.

It is very important to note that your analysis should not be simply a summary of the text, but should take the form of a *critical* discussion, showing insight and an awareness of differing arguments, theories and approaches. To be critical does not mean to criticize in a negative manner. Instead, it requires you to question the information and opinions in a text and present your evaluation or judgement of the text. Evaluating requires an understanding of not just the content of the text, but also an understanding of a text’s purpose, the intended audience and why it is structured the way it is.

Here are the steps in writing our critical analysis:

* Prepare by reading the Bacon article thoroughly; understanding what you are being asked to review is critical.
* As you read, make notes of the following: (a) What is Bacon’s thesis? Is his thesis novel in the sense that it opposes some customary practice or belief? (b) What is the philosophical context of his argument? (c) What are his motivation(s) for taking his position? (d) Does he have a solution to the issue(s) that he is addressing in his article?
* As you read, take note of any supporting evidence that he advances on behalf of his thesis? In particular, note if Bacon makes appeals to persuade the reader that go beyond the evidence that he offers. In short, does he make any appeals other than to the evidence?
* During the writing stage, ask yourself constantly about the effectiveness of Bacon’s writing.
* Be sure to include in your answer all relevant information about the article (the title, the author, and perhaps a brief summary at the beginning. Include a clear and distinct statement of Bacon’s argument early in your review. (“Bacon argues …”). If the main point is covered early in your answer, then additional paragraphs should describe the evidence that Bacon has marshaled in advance of his position. Be prepared to describe these main supporting points/evidence and to evaluate then.
* Bear in mind that a critical analysis is different from a summary. It may include a summary, but should go beyond this. Remember that the purpose of a critical analysis is to evaluate. What about this text is worthwhile, useful, important, significant, valid, or truthful?