# Term Paper Proposal (worth 5%)

Phil/Psych 256, Introduction to Cognitive Science
Professor: Nicholas Ray
TA: Mitchell Ross
Due Dates:
- Nov. 22 (Draft for the Peer Share)
- Nov. 24 (Comments for peers on LEARN discussion boards; groups will be published prior to Nov. 22)
- Nov. 27 (Final draft for Nick and Mitchell, submitted to the dropbox on LEARN)

## Assignment

Construct a "plan of attack" for the Term Paper. Start by looking at the Term Paper Assignment on LEARN; this document has all of the questions and guidelines for how to proceed with your project—knowledge of which is required for the completion of this assignment.

Your Proposal should include a sample introductory paragraph which itself includes a concise formulation of the problematic at hand, an indication of what course materials you are using, what external sources you are using, and a well-written thesis. (Please see the "**Guide for Writing an Argumentative Paper**" also posted on LEARN for any help you might need.) You also need to provide a bibliography of all relevant course materials and at least **two (2)** external sources that are scholarly and peer reviewed. You may use other sources that are not peer reviewed, but you need at least two scholarly and peer reviewed sources. (Your bibliography must be properly formatted using a recognized style, e.g. APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, etc.).

You will have your draft research materials ready in time and submitted to the relevant discussion board on LEARN by Nov. 22. You will then have two days to read your peers' Proposals, and post comments. They will also post comments for you. This process should be completed by Nov. 24. Use this feedback to polish a draft of your proposal and submit your polished Proposal to the relevant dropbox on LEARN by 11:59pm ET on Nov. 27.

Information on what group you are in will be provided prior to Nov. 22, as will guidance regarding the Peer Share process and best practices. You will even be given a list of salient features of the Proposal to keep an eye out for. Your job is to help your peers write the best possible Proposal! Your polished Proposal, which will have critically integrated peer feedback, is worth 5%. Your helpful comments for your peers are also worth 5% of your overall grade; the whole Proposal process is therefore worth 10%.

## Format

This Proposal should be double-spaced in some normal font (such as Calibri, Arial, Cambria, or Times New Roman 12) with normal margins. You must have a working title. The class number/name, your name, your student ID number, Nick's name, Mitch's name, and the date should all be on the first page in the upper left-hand corner. (This can be single-spaced). You can choose to omit your name to be graded anonymously. If you choose to omit your name, please make sure you still include your ID number.

Again: please pick one of MLA, APA, Harvard, or Chicago style for citations, and make sure you use the one you pick consistently.

## Assessment

The Proposal is a holistic document, and it will be graded accordingly. It is impossible for us to assess things separately, as if your thesis doesn't have anything to do with your research question, quick survey of the relevant course material, or the external research you have thus far done.

As such, you will get a grade out of 5 for the whole. The "Guide for Writing an Argumentative Paper" on LEARN will give you a good idea of what an introduction should do, and what a thesis is supposed to be, and how to craft an argument in your paper. Think of it as a set of guidelines for how to construct a good Proposal, too!

Here are the criteria for assessment, stated as questions to which you should be able to answer "Yes!":

1. **Clarity and sequencing:** Is your writing clear and direct, and do you clearly introduce and motivate the problem to be addressed, and the material to be surveyed, before stating your thesis?
2. **Introductory Remarks:** Do you clearly introduce the problem (research question, or issue)? How do you situate your reader within existing or possible debates? Do you indicate why these debates are important?
3. **Thesis:** Is your thesis plausible and motivated by the introductory remarks? Can you argue for it in a paper of this length? Is it entering into an intellectual debate about issues associated with course material and themes? Is it appropriately contentious?
4. **Sources:** Do you have properly formatted sources that will be useful to your proposed project, including relevant course material and external sources? Is the proposed use of these sources motivated in your introduction?

## Purpose of the Assignment

The main purpose of this assignment is to show that you have a reasonable grasp of the course material so that you can come up with a workable research project. You will not be held to your introduction, your thesis, or your sources for the actual essay. You can change your mind about any or all of these things. The point is to show us that you can get a start on researching and thinking about this material in a way that will help prepare you for the actual project.