

STP514: Philosophy of Science Policy.

Fall 2022.

Project proposal.

Proposal due date: no later than Monday 10/31

Your writing assignment for this course is a project of at least 16 double-spaced pages or equivalent to 4000 words (but no more than 5000 words). In preparation for the project you will need to prepare a project **proposal**. I will read your proposal and arrange to discuss it with you individually in order to ensure you have a viable project.

The **project** should engage with one or more of the central topics of the course, for example:

- Why has the “value-free ideal” for science come to be challenged by philosophers? In what ways does inductive risk call for the legitimization of non-epistemic values in the assessment of scientific research? Is such a claim problematic? Perhaps it doesn’t go far enough in addressing the problems with the value-free ideal? Or does it go too far?
- Should we endorse the socialization of medical or other forms of scientific research? What impacts does industry have on the choice of medical research agendas and knowledge of the safety and efficacy of drugs? Should medical (or other forms of) research be more regulated or less regulated? Do patents promote innovation? What about the incentives to address problems that affect the poorest and less industrialized communities, such as neglected diseases?
- Does dissent in science and engineering enhance or inhibit research and policy-making? What do controversies such as climate change or genetically modified organisms tell us about epistemically “litigate” and “illegitimate” forms of dissent? To what extent is dissent and categorizations of “risk” a matter of evidence or a matter of values? How does the way that scientific information is communicated affect the progress of science and technology?
- Some argue that in dealing with controversial ethical issues in biomedical research, making compromises can corrupt the testimonial evidence provided by experts and undermines the epistemic standards in bioethical advice to policy-makers. In dealing with controversial issues in science and technology, should we take the “middle ground”? Is it more important to reach a consensus by making compromises or to prolong debate and dissent even when there might be considerable social and ethical costs?
- Can scientific research and technological developments dissolve intractable ethical disputes about emerging technologies and forge consensus about controversial forms of research? Or does it damage the democratic benefits of diverse viewpoints that may enhance democratic institutions?
- How should conflicts over environmental problems be solved? Should they be treated as political, ethical, aesthetic, spiritual, etc., problems to be addressed

through engagement, debate and deliberation? Or are they best considered as problems of risks and benefits to be decided in ways that draw on economic methods?

- What are the best methods to make public policies? Is it reasonable to adopt evidence-based approaches similar to methods used for clinical trials in medical research? How do we know what policies are effective outside the original context in which test are conducted? What are the benefits and drawbacks of adopting standards of evidence from one domain to be used in another?

You will be expected to develop an *argument* that defends *your* position on the topic of choice. This means you should not merely describe what scholars have written about the topic but to critically engage with the literature and offer an independent response to it. I will expect you to support your claims using evidence based on your citations and by referring to a case or cases. These can be the cases discussed in the readings or case(s) you would like to write about that haven't been discussed in the readings. But please make sure that the case can be used address issue central to this course and to support your arguments clearly.

In preparation for this project, you should submit a **proposal** of **not more than 3 pages** (single spaced) to me (fisher@kaist.ac.kr) by **Monday 10/31 (week 10) AT THE LATEST** in which you: -

- Identify the topic/philosophical issues you want to explore
- Identify case(s) that will help to support your arguments
- Offer you main objective in this essay, in other words, what you want to argue (this might be tentative at this stage).
- Provide an outline structure (tentative thematic headings with a brief description of the theme you expect to address in each section).
- Provide a bibliography of relevant sources so far (which can of course draw from the syllabus and other relevant sources).

The **final deadline for the completed project will be Friday 12/16**. But please forward a **draft** of your project to me by **Monday 12/12**. This will help me (and you!) to prepare for the **assessed presentations on your project** in our final class on **Wednesday 12/14**. After the final class, you can have two days to make amendments to your project in light of any feedback from the class on your presentation.

Do let me know if you have any questions. I provide below grading criteria for assessed written work to help you in composing your projects.

1. Argument: Has the student developed a clear, *well-supported argument* in response to the topic? How well is the argument sustained throughout the main part of the project? Has the student shown awareness of potential problems with their argument and attempted to respond to them? Is the argument convincing?

2. Independence: To what extent has the student shown the ability to formulate an independent position (i.e. developed an argument showing the ability for independent thought) on the topic?

3. Understanding: Has the student sufficiently understood the topic in order to meet the project aims successfully? How well have they understood the reading material?

4. Relevance: Has the student focused on what is important in order to effectively address the aims of the project? Have they referred to the relevant required and additional readings in the essay? Has the student avoided irrelevances, unnecessary digressions, extended quotations*, etc. (*You may use *short* quotations from the text if really necessary but *only if really necessary* and I expect you to *explain* what the author has said in the quote. Your project must not consist of long and/or numerous quotations.)

5. Clarity: How well can the student communicate their ideas in writing? You won't be graded down for spelling or grammatical mistakes. However, if these mistakes affect your ability to communicate your ideas in writing, then this *will* have an impact on your grade. Write as clearly as possible and make sure you *explain* points that require explanation.

6. Structure: How well has the student organized the project? Is there a clear introduction that succinctly and accurately describes the thesis? Does the conclusion succinctly summarize the main arguments supporting the thesis? How well is the argument organised throughout the main part of the project? Do topics follow logically as the argument develops? Do section headings help to organise the project and are related issues dealt with in the same part of the project rather than at various different parts? Does each paragraph clearly identify the sub-topic or issue to be addressed therein?

7. References and bibliography: I expect the project to be properly referenced with a full bibliography. **I will assume you know how to do this.** If you are not, please ask. I prefer the MLA (Modern Language Association) or Chicago style of citation, which may not be familiar to you. If not, please check. But most important is that you do **cite accurately and thoroughly** (to **avoid plagiarism**) and to be **consistent** in using whatever style you choose.

Plagiarism warning.

Any attempt to reproduce someone else's ideas (whether those of another student, from a book, journal, the internet or any other source) and to present them as your own is a serious academic offence. I expect you to present your own ideas in your work, and should you wish to mention the ideas of others will require a reference and bibliographic entry.

Please ASK if you are in any doubt concerning what constitutes plagiarism.