

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2

Short Essay: 15% of your final grade

Due Date

11:59 PM, Sunday, October 27

Papers must be turned in via the Turnitin assignments on CCLE.

Topic & Structure

Causal Completeness, Dualism, and Downward Causation cannot all be true together— this is what we called the “Fundamental Trilemma of the Mind.” This writing assignment is an opportunity for you to test your understanding of these ideas, and to defend your own solution to the trilemma. (These positions are defined somewhat differently in different texts; see the accompanying supplement for the official definitions to focus on.)

Your job is to write a 500 word (approximately 1.5 page) essay, which consists of six paragraphs— no more, no less. The following table gives the outline which you must follow. The percentages indicate the relative importance of each paragraph (which we’ll also use when grading the papers). Be as clear and precise as you possibly can.

Paragraph 1.	Briefly describe what you will do in this essay; be as descriptive as you can with as few words as possible.	5%
Paragraph 2.*	Explain <i>Causal Completeness</i> (<u>without</u> assuming that <i>Dualism</i> or <i>Downward Causation</i> are true or false). Illustrate with an original example (i.e. not one discussed in class).	15%
Paragraph 3.*	Explain <i>Dualism</i> (<u>without</u> assuming that <i>Causal Completeness</i> or <i>Downward Causation</i> are true or false). Illustrate using the same example from Par 2.	15%
Paragraph 4.*	Explain <i>Downward Causation</i> (<u>without</u> assuming that <i>Dualism</i> or <i>Causal Completeness</i> are true or false). Illustrate using the same example from Par 2.	15%
Paragraph 5.	Explain why <i>Causal Completeness, Dualism, and Downward Causation</i> are mutually incompatible— that is, why all three cannot be true at the same time. You can start with any one of these and derive the incompatibility in whatever way that you think is best.	25%
Paragraph 6.	Which two of <i>Causal Completeness</i> (CC), <i>Dualism</i> (D), and <i>Downward Causation</i> (DC) do you find most plausible, and which one would you reject? What kind of view results from this combination? (i.e. Physicalism, Interactionist Dualism, or Epiphenomenalism?) Clearly identify your <u>primary</u> reason for believing this view. Your primary reason could be a <u>positive</u> reason that supports the claims you believe, or a <u>negative</u> reason against the claims you don’t believe. In other words you might give positive reasons <i>in favor of</i> CC+D, CC+DC, or D+DC. Or you might give negative reasons <i>against</i> CC, D, or DC. If you go for the negative option, you’ll at least want to briefly indicate why you find the positive views attractive.	25%

*You can change the order of Paragraphs 2-4 to suit your needs.

General notes:

- In the last paragraph, if you don’t feel comfortable describing your own position, then play devil’s advocate and defend a possible position that someone *might* believe.
- Either way, don’t just give your opinion or say that something “seems true” to you— describe the primary idea or piece of evidence that supports your position. You are encouraged, but not required to use facts and arguments discussed in class.
- When describing the different principles here, be careful to state each principle independently of the others (and independent of any other views); only combine them when you show how the principles lead to the conclusion. For example, suppose I defined downward causation this way: “downward causation occurs when a non-physical mental event causes a physical event.” This is not a good definition, because it mixes together downward causation with dualism. A good definition would keep the two ideas separate, for instance: “downward causation occurs when a mental event (either physical or non-physical) causes a physical event in the body.”

Quotation Policy

- (1) Do not quote any source, with the following exceptions:
 - a. Boxed definitions from the handout. But do not quote the “core idea” text,
 - b. Individual words or terms used by an author.
- (2) Instead of quoting, describe the author’s position in your own words.
- (3) Remember that word-for-word paraphrase is a form of plagiarism, so when you describe someone’s view, use your own phrasing. (Ask your TA if you aren’t sure what a word-for-word paraphrase is.)

Citation Policy

- (1) Use at least two readings as sources for your discussion. Citations from the handouts and outside readings do not count toward the two source minimum.
- (2) Cite two readings within the body of the text.
- (3) External sources are allowed, but discouraged. Of course they must be cited.
- (4) If you quote material from handouts, you must include a citation and bibliography entry.
- (5) Otherwise, you can use ideas (but not exact phrases) from handouts and lecture without citation.
- (6) Do cite all readings (or external sources) which you use, in the following way: at the end of the series of sentences in which you make reference to that reading write (Author Date, Page) e.g.“(Huxley 1874, p.13)”.
- (7) Any sources that are cited in the text must be listed in the bibliography. Any readable and complete bibliography style is acceptable.

Evaluation

Your paper will be graded along four dimensions:

- (1) Understanding. Have you correctly described the views and claims at issue? Have you done so without mixing in your own opinion?
- (2) Clarity & Precision. Have you expressed yourself in a way that is both clear and precise? Have you avoided ambiguity and merely suggestive language?
- (3) Dialectic. Do you understand how the various claims interact logically? Do you understand why some are compatible and others are not? Does your assessment of the claims make sense?
- (4) Writing policies. Have you followed the citation and quotation policy? Are your sentences really under 18 words long?