

Philosophy 2330: Science and Society  
Spring 2018  
Fifth short essay assignment

Please print your essay and bring it to class on Friday, Nov 9th. **ALSO** please make your essay anonymous by putting your R# at the top of the page and **NOT** your name.

You are to write an argumentative essay of one to two pages (roughly 400-600 words) on something related to chapter 2 of Neil Levy's *What Makes us Moral?* Anything you talk about will almost certainly also be related to Clark chapter 9 and so you should consider that as well. This is an argumentative paper. You must describe and defend some particular thesis. A good paper is clear, easy to read, and provides good arguments for its conclusion. But exactly what you write about is quite open ended.

Here are some sample issues to consider:

- 1) The concept of morality – does morality have to involve categorical imperatives? Does it have to be intrinsically motivating?
- 2) Human altruism – do humans ever act altruistically? Or is everyone “really” selfish all the time? Does altruism require the proper motivation? Or merely the proper outcome?
- 3) What is the connection between altruism and morality? For example, can there be moral virtue in being selfish?
- 4) What is the connection between biological altruism and our ordinary concept of altruism?
- 5) Is evolved morality “real” morality?
- 6) If we have evolved differently, would morality be different?
- 7) .... – there are many more possibilities here.

Note that you might think that some questions are very easily answered. For example, some people think that it is just part of the definition of an act being altruistic that it is done for the sake of others. If you think so then it is likely that you will write a poor paper if you try to defend this thesis. If you think that a view is obvious, it will be very difficult for you to write a good argumentative paper arguing for this thesis. So choose something else to write about.