

Philosophy 2330: Science and Society
Fall 2019
Sixth short essay assignment

Please upload your essay into Blackboard (listed as assignment “essay 6”) before class on Monday, Nov 25th. **ALSO** please make your essay anonymous by putting your R# at the top of the page and **NOT** your name.

Carefully reread chapter 5 of Philip Kitcher’s *Science in a Democratic Society* (and any earlier chapters you might have to reread) and answer the following questions about it. I expect that a good essay will be 500-700 words.

Kitcher believes that Science should serve the purposes of citizens of a democratic society. Very briefly say what he means by this. What does Kitcher think the role of Science in a Democratic society is?

Kitcher thinks that science should aim not to find out ‘the whole truth’ but rather, should study ‘significant truths’. What does he mean by this? (Your answer should involve the notion of a ‘well-ordered science’ – carefully and slowly explain what that means.)

Two obvious views about who should get to decide the agenda of Science are 1) just let the expert scientists themselves decide and 2) just let everyone directly vote. Kitcher thinks that his own view is better than either of these. Why, what are the problems with these views?

Finally, discuss whether you think Kitcher is right about all of the things you just mentioned above. How do you think the research agenda of Science be set? In the United States today, the public at large has very little interaction with the research agenda of scientists. If you think this is a good thing, say why it is better than what Kitcher proposes. If you agree with Kitcher, describe some ways that you think we should change to make things better.