Philosophy 3334: Philosophy of Biology
Summer 2017
Second short essay assignment

Please print your essay and bring it to class on Tuesday, June 13th. **ALSO** please make your essay anonymous by putting your R# at the top of the page and **NOT** your name.

Choose one of the following two prompts. You are to write roughly one to two pages (500-700 words) answering the relevant questions.

1) Explain what "the circularity charge" refers to in Mills and Beatty's "The Propensity Interpretation of Fitness". Carefully explain how Mills and Beatty define the fitness of a trait and explain why they think this definition is superior to more standard definitions typically found in biology textbooks. Do you think they succeed in avoiding the charges of explanatory circularity?

Alternatively,

2) Give three examples of biological objects with functions. How would Millikin explain what their functions are? Give an example of a non-historical definition of function. Why does Millikin think that her definition of function is superior? Do you think her definition of function is superior?