

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

Please print your essay and bring it to class on Thursday, June 15th. **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 and defend some particular definition of organism or species. Make sure you consider at least some alternative views and explain why your view is better. A reasonable way to do this is to see how your concept applies in particular cases and defend the answer though this is not required.

Alternatively,

- 2) Some authors' view of the organism category is that we do need a specific answer to the question of what is an organism. Call this the "realist" position. An alternative view would be that we don't need the category of organism at all. Call this the "eliminativist" position. A third view is that we can continue to use the term "organism" but what counts as an organism might change with context – for example, with the particular kind of study that you are doing and what you are interested in. Call this view "pluralism". There are analogous views about species (realist, eliminativist, and pluralist positions). Defend one of these views about either the category organism or species.