Phil 5330 Fall 2014
Final Paper Assignment

Instructions: Write an argumentative paper of 2,000 to 4,000 words (roughly 4-8 single spaced typed pages). The general guidelines is the extremely vague claim that your paper must critically engage some question or cluster of questions relevant to Bayesian Epistemology. The particular word count is not important (for example, if your paper contained some mathematical manipulations) but it is important that it be a fairly substantial effort.

Due Date: You must submit your paper to me by email before noon on Thursday, December 11th. Any easily readable format such as .pdf or .doc is okay.

Reading Drafts: I am happy to talk about your papers during office hours or if you make an appointment to meet me in my office. I am also happy to read drafts of papers, on a time-permitting, first-come, first-served basis. For example, if you get a draft to me by Wed the 3rd, it is likely that I can get it back to you by Friday or Saturday.

Example topics: As I mentioned, anything relevant to the class is acceptable for the paper. If you are at all not sure if your proposed topic is appropriate, please come and talk to me about it. You don't want me to read your paper when grades are due and decide that it was not appropriate.

Sample questions include any of the essay questions you have seen so far on the homeworks (just extended a bit more). Here are some further examples:

1) What is the relationship between credences and full beliefs?
2) Can it ever be rational to have credences that violate the probability axioms?
3) Can causation be defined probably just by thinking about probabilities and screening off conditions?
4) Can Bayesian Epistemology properly model deliberation or changing your mind? Could that be squared with the rule of conditionalization?
5) Could there be an objective measure of confirmation?
6) Is the rule of maximizing expected utility a descriptive claim? Or a normative one?
7) Is it ever rational to violate the expected utility principle?
8) Should you take both boxes in the Newcomb problem?
9) What, if anything, can representation theorems show us?
10) Is there a defensible version of the dutch book argument?
11) Can diachronic dutch book arguments give us diachronic rationality requirements?
12) Can accuracy considerations properly measure epistemic utility?
13) What are subjective probabilities??