

Philosophy 2330: Philosophy of Science
Spring 2022
Fifth short essay assignment

Please complete your essay and upload it into Blackboard before 11:59pm on Thursday, April 21st.

You are to write an argumentative essay of roughly one to two pages (500-800 words) with a conclusion relevant to our discussion of science and values in class and in *A Tapestry of Values*. Below are a few of the many acceptable topics you could write about. In all cases, if you think the answer is really easy and obvious and can be explained very simply, then you should not write about it.

- 1) Is it permissible to be motivated by values (religious, political, moral) when doing science? In what circumstances? What is the difference between the cases of Lysenko and Colbern described in Chapter 1 of *A Tapestry of Values*?
- 2) Are there scientific questions that should be given much lower priority? Or maybe that should not be studied at all? What do you think of examples like studying cognitive differences between men and women? Or studying CRISPR techniques which will likely lead to genetic engineering?
- 3) How should we determine what research should be funded? Are these scientific questions best left up to scientists? Should the tax payers have a say since it is their money? How?
- 4) When (if ever) is it permissible to trade off accuracy for some other value (like efficiency or cost) when doing science?
- 5) When regulatory agencies make decisions like whether a chemical substance should be banned or a vaccine should be mandated, how should they make these decisions? Are they scientific questions? Value judgments?
- 6) Does dealing with scientific uncertainty necessarily commit you to making value judgments? [For example, look at Douglas's argument that it does in Chapter 5. Is this a good argument?]
- 7) To what extent is it possible for values to be separated from scientific practice? Assuming it is possible, would that be a good thing?