

Essay Guidelines

Please indicate on your essay if you want comments (you can just say “want comments” or “comments please”). I like writing comments but only if people read them.

Essays should have two parts:

1. Summarize the significant points, and note some of the evidence (if any) given in support (one paragraph should be enough).
2. For essay 1, see the website. For essays 2-6, react to or critique the video by relating it to theory or evidence from this class (readings, lecture, or other videos) or other evidence you know about, or to experiences from your own life (one or two paragraphs). Must have intellectual content for full credit (see below).

What to include for part 2

I will sometimes suggest things to think about for particular videos, but your response does not need to address those particular things. Your response may do one or more of the following:

- Support or refute the ideas in the video with evidence not discussed by the speaker.
- Critique the video by pointing out questionable assumptions made by the speaker, or other factors not considered, that might negate or change the conclusions.
- Relate the ideas in the video to other ideas (from readings, other videos, or lecture) discussed in class. The aim is to encourage you to make connections, and to see general principles across different examples or types of evidence.
- Come up with a new idea or hypothesis related to the video that derives from evolutionary thinking.

Many people relate the video to their own lives. This is wonderful. But to make it a 5-point essay, rather than a 3 or 4-point essay, you need to push the discussion beyond that. Here are two examples, drawn from the Pizarro video, to illustrate what I mean:

Ok: Noting that women in your experience seem to be more prone to disgust than men. *Better:* Suggesting an evolutionary argument as to why. *Better:* Supporting the argument with evidence from class or outside reading.

Ok: Noting that your Uncle Jack became a more (or less) conservative germophobe after some disgusting experiences. *Better:* Using this to discuss how experience might be expected to affect disgust sensitivity, or why it might modulate the relationship between disgust sensitivity and conservatism.