

LSA 33:144/Psych 31:174 Mind and Behavior:
Natural Science and Cognition after Darwin

Brief Essay 3

DUE: April 22

(Please provide two copies of this essay when you turn it in.)

Write a 2 - 4 page essay in which you:

Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of animal models and computer models of human nature.

Suggestions:

Consult the textbooks and the suggested reading posted on the class website (and cited in the textbooks) for examples of animal models and computer models of various psychological phenomena and for discussion of the issues they raise for efforts to understand human emotion and cognition. Relevant material from sources not assigned in this class is, of course, appropriate for inclusion in your discussion.

You should consider what value animal, computer (and perhaps other, e.g., theoretical) models have for understanding human nature and consider which of the two types of models (animal models or computer models) are more likely to contribute what such understanding requires. Describe what the two types of models might contribute and explain why you think one or both or neither of these types of models provides what is required for understanding humans (and their relation to – the rest of? –the natural world).