Class Notes and Homework

English 105i, Day #11:

You don't start out writing good stuff. You start out writing crap and thinking it's good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it. -Octavia E. Butler

1. Attendance

- i. How are your skeleton roadmaps and intro paragraphs going?
 - a. Do you still need until next week?
 - b. **<u>Calendar</u>**: I had "lab day" set for next Tuesday but would rather use it today.
 - i. I can work w/you on posits, intro-concepts and intro paragraphs today.
 - ii. We can push the next set of writing steps to Tuesday as it might be overwhelming to get more steps today as you're trying to master the first set for paragraph #1.

Mini-lesson -- Last meeting, someone asked about writing for nonscience classes.

- 2. So... how would you roadmap "non-empirical" or "philosophical topics" for humanities and social science courses?
 - a. Let's examine how a scientist works with the <u>processes of argumentation</u> with a non-empirical topic that's <u>impossible</u> to prove/win,
 i. <u>EXAMPLE:</u> "reincarnation."
 - a. Do we start w/a belief? I.e., "Is it fake or real?"
 - b. How might one WIN this argument? By defining the x/y variables in empirical terms: Here's how
 - a. Pick a side.
 - b. Choose an epistemology: (e.g., belief, opinion, conjecture, assumption, tradition, or verifiable empiricism)
 - 1. But, HOW do you verify (empirically) something like reincarnation?
 - c. Develop a Verifiably Empirical posit for us to go on a journey of discovery by "swapping" an unwinnable term (i.e., reincarnation) with an empirical term. Since I know NOTHING empirical about reincarnation let's posit broadly... "What, if any, empirical data exists in the anthropological literature on human life patterns?" Isn't "reincarnation" a "human life pattern" which is studied in your anthropology class...
 - Simply, we start by defining "reincarnation" as a "life pattern" w/in a field that examines "life patterns" i.e., "anthropology".
 - d. As I read and build an EXHAUSTIVE nomenclature list, I realize that life patterns are not only predictive of the past but also statistically predictive of future rates. Ex: If there were 100,000 people in the world today, could we, in one generation balloon up to 5B? In science there is not a yes/no binary answer. Rather, we can examine this mathematically with a few posits that examine:
 - 1. Average life spans
 - 2. Average number of fertile years

- 3. Mortality rates
- 4. Death rates
- 5. Procreation patterns within and between cultures.
- 6. Etc.

When we math this out, scientists would not say it's possible, in one generation to go from 100,000 humans to 5B but rather, they would state empirically that, based on the x factors (denoted above), each fertile female would have to produce 10,000 children per year. We can then calculate the statistical probability of this based on an intro concept:

e. Find an empirical intro-concept -- I found "human population growth patterns" within the field of cultural anthropology (this is the SS course). I'll relate this intro concept to the statistical probability of reincarnation (i.e., my "Y" variable"). That is, I won't use my intro concept to PROVE

reincarnation is true, just <u>WHERE</u> it is statistically PROBABLE or not.

f. The <u>REVISED</u> Posit: What, if any, causal relationship exists b/t rates of human population growth (I use population stats that I found on JSTORE and verified on Scholar to quantify the finite potential number of people

EVER reincarnated) and the statistical probability of HUMAN-to-

HUMAN or DEFINED reincarnation? (I use statistical probability as the Y-variable b/c there are well-established empirical methods for establishing "significance."). Why do I define the reincarnation as "human-to-human"? Are you starting to see why you really need that basic stats class? No AP-3 score in "gen stats" will do!

So, let's math this out...<mark>i.e., Let's roadmap it...</mark>

The Myth of Aggregation: What if you have a direct FACT: Do you need to roadmap causation? Example if you get married, then you will have a 50% chance of getting divorced. i.e, "The US has a 50% divorce rate." -- This is simply a quantifiable truth. Can't you find this statistic at the US Census Bureau? Right? So, why would I have to roadmap b/t the variables -- US population (x) and 50% Divorce rate (Y) if this is a solid empirical stat from the US Government?

What about the humanities? Perhaps a Literature Class:

Example: Shakespeare's -- The Merchant of Venice

Within Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, what, if any, causal relationship exists b/t Shylock's metaphorical loss of "an ounce of flesh" and the play's covert depiction of the antagonist as a "tragic anti-Semitic" archetype?

Next Discussion: Any question on yesterday's HW?

Lab Day! Everyone works and call me over when you need help.

<u>**Homework:**</u> Get your revised posits, skeleton roadmaps and intro paragraphs DONE!!