

24.223 Argument-Summary Prompts

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Instructions: Please write a roughly 1000-word (3-ish pages) argument summary that responds to one of the following prompts.

ChatGPT and AI: You can use whatever methods you like to brainstorm and outline, but once you start writing your draft, all your writing must be your own. **You must write your draft, from start to finish, in Google Docs.** When you submit your paper, you will **share editing privileges** with me for your paper, so that—if needed—I can use Draftback to verify that you wrote it yourself, rather than using an AI to write it.

The goal is to explain the core of the argument to an *intelligent but uninformed audience*. You may presuppose the basics of Bayesian epistemology, but don't presuppose that your audience has done the reading. Rather, imagine that you're trying to explain one of the key points of the paper to your friend.

Your summary should be *focused* in the sense that it should only explain the bits needed for your intelligent-but-uninformed friend to understand the main argument you are trying to summarize.

You may consult (and build off of) handouts used in class. Don't quote them.

Papers should be submitted over email to kmdorst@mit.edu by sharing editing privileges with your Google Doc. The due date is **11:59pm on October 10**. Late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each late day.

Prompts:

1. Tversky and Kahneman argue that the *conjunction fallacy* shows that people don't reason like Bayesians. What's the basic finding, and how do they respond to some of the main objections to this conclusion? (E.g. the objection that 'bank teller' is interpreted as 'bank teller and not a feminist'; or the objection that people might understand the question 'what's most probable?' differently than they have in mind?)
2. Mandelkern and Past-Kevin argue that the conjunction fallacy can be explained by an *accuracy-informativity tradeoff*. How does the basic argument go?
3. Hedden argues rational Bayesians would exhibit (a form of) hindsight bias. What exactly does this mean, and what is the argument he gives for it?
4. Past-Kevin defends the Bayesian explanation of hindsight bias by arguing that it correctly predicts that people will be more inclined to exhibit it when their priors are ambiguous, and less likely when their priors are clear. How does this argument go?