

Thesis-crafting tips:

Your claim should be as concise and simple as possible.

You should be able to identify an X term and a Y term in your thesis—two things that you are claiming have some specific relationship.

Each of your REASONS should be stateable as its own claim beginning with the X term of your CLAIM. (see smoking example).

Everything you say about every program text must have *something* to do with your claim.

The REASONS for your claim are not the texts, but your own way of organizing the concept introduced by your CLAIM.

Check your ASSUMPTIONS. The core of your essay might be arguing the validity of your assumptions.

You must be able to distinguish between your CLAIM and the supporting REASONS for your claim. Don't content yourself with a paragraph that contains all the key words or phrases.

Your claim should be a direct outgrowth of your study of the program texts. Be wary of tangential or overly broad concepts.

Don't save the world or pretend that Mathematics is the key to everything. If you feel like you're claiming some glorious or wonderful thing about mathematics, take a moment to ground your ideas in the texts and be sure you are saying something interesting, not something important.

Likewise, notice whether your claim is saying anything specific about mathematics. Most disciplines are, for instance "ways of understanding." How is mathematics a particular "way..."

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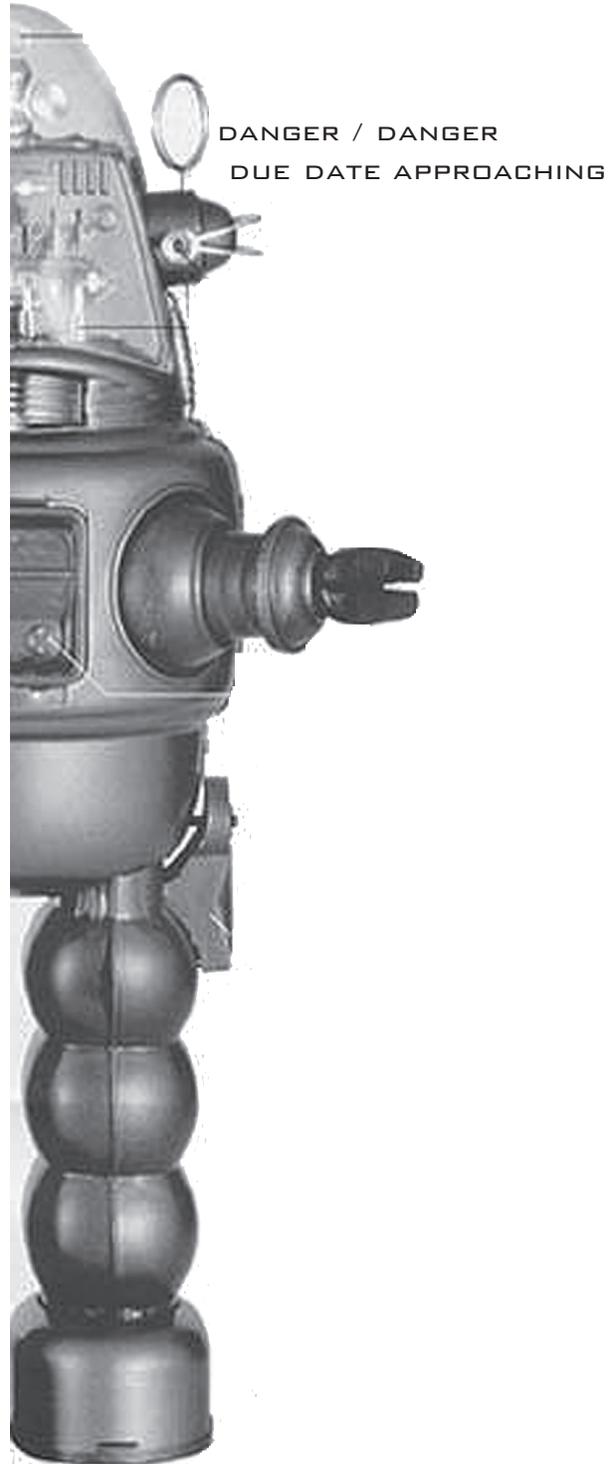
Carefully critique each others' thesis statements and any drafts of papers available.

When reading each others' drafts, attend to matters of organization and thesis strength:

Does each paragraph have a clear and strong topic?

Does each section of the essay *explicitly* state a connection to the reasons it is meant to establish and the claim it is meant to support?

Is it convincing?



First

Complete last week's workshop.

You should end by discussing the USES of mathematics that could be developed from your research topic.

Please note: After tomorrow at 2:00 PM, your brain may begin to shift into project mode—for reals!

Please see the Project Development Handout for details on what will be due on Friday of Week 9.

Synthesis Papers.

In your group, review the assignment description for Synthesis Essay two.

Locate vague or confusing passages in the assignment description and try to figure out what they might mean. Ask us for help as needed.

Locate useful "key phrases" or "hints" in the assignment description that might be useful in crafting or evaluating your work.

Together, talk through and make notes about **each** of our program texts and discuss

- what it has to do with the Synthesis topic
- how you can use it (be specific)

Godel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid

A Mathematician's Apology

The Mathematical Experience

Mathematical Excursions

Ficciones

Einstein's Dreams

Relativity (excerpts)



Theseus

Remember, a thesis is a CLAIM with some number of *supporting* claims, or, REASONS.

For instance:

X is Y

CLAIM

Smoking is unhealthy.

REASONS

- Smoking causes cancer
- Smoking rots teeth
- Smoking makes you smell bad

FULL THESIS

Smoking is unhealthy because smoking causes cancer, smoking rots teeth, and smoking makes one smell bad.

The **FOUNDATIONS** for this THESIS are the further claims or evidence that help me to support each of my REASONS.

sample FOUNDATIONS

- Smoking causes cancer by burning holes in one's lungs.
- Smoking causes cancer because cancer-causing roaches like to eat smoke and will crawl into one's lungs in order to feed.

The **ASSUMPTIONS** of the above thesis connect the REASONS to the second part of the claim (nothing yet has been shown about "unhealthy... I have *assumed* that cancer is unhealthy).

sample ASSUMPTIONS

- Smelling bad is unhealthy... woops! maybe this doesn't belong in my thesis!