

And now for something completely different...

... as the British comedy troupe Monty Python used to say. For the next phase of the course we are going to be scientists seeking “positive,” empirically verifiable knowledge about the world¹ rather than philosophers seeking “negative” clarifications of where common sense has failed in forming premises about the world. This will require a different process of thinking and a different style of writing. It couldn't hurt to start in a different building.

A. The next essay is actually a group assignment. We will talk more that on Wednesday. What you need to know right now is who is in your group. Please arrange yourselves into the groups indicated in the grey box, immediately.

B. Pack up all your stuff. We're going to the science library and we might not be coming back.²

C. Walk with your group into the main courtyard of the science library and turn to about 2 o'clock where it says “Interactive Learning Center.” I'm told this is the best place to find an open computer terminal. You need to give them your student ID to get in and they'll give you the choice of PC or Mac. If you have to share computers within your group, that's fine. They'll probably still want one ID for each person.

- ▶ **Group Neti Pot:** Karin, Sheree, Raul, Brittany
- ▶ **Group Alexander Hamilton:** Tori, Kurtis, Ryan
- ▶ **Group Disturbing Cruise:** Eunice, Phil, Derek, Maria
- ▶ **Group Nintendo Frenzy:** Yoon, Amanda, Roman, Jessica
- ▶ **Group Dancing Robot:** Tom, Shannie, Chau, Derrick

D. Go to “tutorial.lib.uci.edu” and click “[Find Science Information](#)” on the lefthand column. Find the part that says “[Scientific Method and Scholarly Communication](#)” and read through the next set of screens. The last one you should read is “[Science Lab Concept](#).” You can revisit this later, I just want you to get a basic impression of it.

E. The other reason you are using the computer... you need to find a published article that Robert Provine wrote for other scientists. We can't get all we need from his book, which is written to a much broader audience. Go to the main library page, “lib.uci.edu”. Click “[Subject Guides](#)” then “[Psychology & Cognitive Sciences](#)” and then “[PsycINFO](#)”. Your search is “[Provine, Robert](#)”. Find an article that interests you (one per group). Click on the orange box that says “[UC-eLinks](#)” to make sure the full text of the article is available online. Once you find one that is, find the PDF file, open it, and print it.³ One copy is enough for the group.

F. At this point we will all go to the main desk of the Science Library and attempt to reserve one study room for each group. I tried to do this earlier today and they wouldn't let me. If it doesn't work out, we'll use the park.

G. Whether in the study room or the park, your group should spend the rest of the class period answering the study questions on the back of this sheet. Feel free to ask me for clarification.

¹ We are limiting ourselves to one specific aspect of the world (human behavior) and one specific aspect of human behavior (laughter); in empirical thinking it is helpful to start with what you will *not* be thinking about.

² I didn't mean for this sentence to be so scary!

³ I'll give you a print card. I didn't have time to buy them before class but I can buy them while you're searching for the article.

Q15. What are the typical obstacles a group assignment presents and how do you will your group negotiate them? *You could start by making sure you have everyone's email address written in the blank area below.*

Q16. Based on the web tutorial, your brief acquaintance with Provine's book, and the Provine article you're holding, give at least three key features of scientific writing that appear to differ from philosophical writing. Give at least two features that appear to be more or less the same. Make sure you can point to specific examples; we're going to talk about this in class tomorrow. *This is the most important study question on this sheet and it will probably take you longer than the others.*

Q17. If you were Provine and Simon Critchley just said "yo mama so ugly," what is the best comeback insult you can come up, drawing *only* from sentences in pgs. 1-12 in Provine's book.

Q18. Why does Provine study laughter, instead of some other scientific topic? Why does he call the topic of his research "laughter" rather than "humor"?