

Cognitive Science 7
Introduction to Cognitive Science
First Paper Assignment
Due in class Monday, May 3, 1999

(Note: No late papers will be accepted under any circumstances. Please plan accordingly.)

Instructions: Write a short paper (three to five typed, double-spaced pages) on one of the following topics. Your paper will be evaluated exclusively on the strength of the arguments and evidence it provides in support of your central claim, or thesis. Please feel free to consult with me as you progress; if desired, I will read and respond to outlines and drafts.

1. Is there such a thing as cognitive science? Or, in other words, is there a coherent identity to cognitive science above and beyond the particular identities of the contributing disciplines of psychology, computer science, philosophy, anthropology, and neuroscience? Regardless of how you respond to this question, make sure to take into account the arguments on both sides of the issue, and to incorporate insights from the relevant literature.

2. What is compositionality, and is it an appropriate criterion to place on accounts of mental representation? While you should take relevant readings into account, please do *not* limit yourself to simply *summarizing* one or more arguments on either side of this issue. Your task is to engage these arguments, and others you discover, in an effort to determine the truth.

3. Should computationalism remain one of the shared assumptions of cognitive science? In your response, please take into account arguments both for and against computational models of the mind, without confining yourself to simply endorsing someone else's point of view.