

PAPER TOPICS I

CONFIRMATION THEORY

These are suggestions only. Feel free to invent your own! You might like to run them by me, if you do.

1. State Hempel's special consequence condition. What reason is there to require that any theory of confirmation satisfy the special consequence condition? What reason is there not to require this? How might the special consequence condition be weakened to make it more tempting?
2. What is the paradox of the ravens? Describe and critique a particular approach (just one!) to resolving the paradox. You might or might not end up endorsing the approach you choose, but either way, be sure to investigate thoroughly at least one of its weaknesses.
3. Explore one (and only one) approach to ameliorating the worry that Bayesian confirmation theory is too subjective. (Some possibilities: (a) convergence theorems, (b) indifference principles, (c) empirical constraints on priors.) Does the approach work? What are its drawbacks?
4. What is the old evidence problem? Choose one attempt to solve the problem and weigh its advantages and disadvantages.
5. Define what is meant by a reserve or catch-all hypothesis. Why does it seem that Bayesian reasoners need to make use of such hypotheses? What problems does a reserve hypothesis introduce? Investigate one approach to solving the problem(s).