1/16/03

- Course structure and assignments
- CHA “war” call for proposals
- Discussion of Pinker’s Preface
The “Blank Slate” view:

The idea that the human mind has no inherent structure and can be inscribed at will by society or ourselves.
Is the “Blank Slate” a “straw man”?

Reactions to

- The Bell Curve (Hernstein & Murray) (correction from Pinker on race and IQ claim)
- The Nurture Assumption (Judith Harris) (“Parents don’t matter”)
- A Natural History of Rape (Thornhill & Palmer) (“Rape is natural”)
- Genes?? and reading ability?
- The Blank Slate says that the Evolutionary/biological perspective is endorsing racism, sexism, war, greed, genocide, nihilism, reactionary politics, neglect of children & disadvantaged
Parent behavior is correlated with their children’s behavior. Why?

- Parents “cause” children’s behavior (the Blank Slate assumption)
- Children “cause” parent behavior
- Genes and/or some shared environmental factor “cause” both
- Some combination of the above