

PHIL01
Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality

Final Paper Assignment

ASSIGNMENT AIM: This paper is assigned as an exercise in developing an original philosophical response to a problem from our readings. You should maintain a high level of expository rigor (the emphasis of the first paper) as well a clear critical comparison of all relevant views. This paper differs from previous assignments, in that you are *required to construct an original argument for your own view*.

Provide a clear and concise response to **one** of the following prompts in a 3-5 page paper (750-1250 words):

1. Dualism presents a view of the world according to which at least two fundamental, incompatible types of things comprise the entirety of the universe. Monists reject this picture of the world, claiming that the universe is fundamentally comprised of one substance. Critically discuss dualism in comparison with one monist view (either materialism or idealistic monism), and argue for the superiority of one view over the other. Your paper should address the following questions:
 - Why do dualists think that there are two types of fundamental substance? Are their arguments legitimate?
 - Why does the monist view you have chosen think there is one type of “stuff” in the universe?
 - Which of the two views do *you* think is more plausible? Why?

 2. The film *Memento* raises difficult problems for theories of personal identity. In a critical discussion, address arguments for and against the claim that “Leonard” is (metaphysically) the same person throughout the film. Develop an argument of your own in defense of one of these views. Your paper should address the following questions:
 - What kinds of philosophical theories might say that Leonard is the same person throughout the film? Are there problems with these theories?
 - What kinds of philosophical theories might say that Leonard is *not* the same person throughout the film? Are there problems with these theories?
 - What is *your* view on the matter? Do *you* think that Leonard is the same person throughout the film? Why?

 3. In the closing arguments of the famous “Leopold and Loeb” case, Clarence Darrow suggests that his clients should not be held responsible for their actions. On the contrary, he argues, “If there is responsibility anywhere, it is back of [them]; somewhere in the infinite number of [their] ancestors, or in [their] surroundings, or in both. Discuss arguments in favor of Darrow’s conclusion as well as against it, and develop your own position on the issue. Your paper should address the following questions:
 - What arguments have we seen that agree with Darrow’s conclusion?
 - What arguments have we seen that oppose it?
 - What is *your* view on the matter? Do *you* think that Leopold and Loeb should be considered responsible for their behavior or not? Why?
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FORMAT: In order to receive comments on your paper, the final version of your paper must be typed, double spaced, stapled, and submitted to me no later than the date of our final exam (8/3). Because this date marks the end of our course, late papers will not be accepted for comments. Comments will be provided by mail—if **you want comments, attach a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage**.

HOWEVER: I will accept papers via email until **10:00 a.m.** on Friday, 8/5 for full credit. These papers will not receive comments of any kind, but they will be thoroughly read and graded. **THIS IS A FIRM DEADLINE—I WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY PAPERS AFTER THIS TIME.**

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA:

Organization (10%):

Your paper should begin with a brief introduction that includes a clear, easily identifiable thesis statement. It may be a good idea to briefly describe the structure of your paper in your introduction (i.e. “In the following I will discuss...”) When reading your paper, it should be clear at all times how your claims address your thesis. You should conclude with a brief restatement of the key points from your discussion.

Clarity (10%):

Your paper should be clearly written, such that your reader can easily understand your remarks at all time. You should avoid awkward sentence structure, use appropriate diction throughout your discussion, and eliminate spelling/grammatical errors prior to submitting your paper.

Concision (5%):

Your discussion should be free of irrelevant tangents, redundancies, and platitudes.

Substantive Accuracy (20%):

Your discussion should *accurately* describe the views relevant to the topic you choose. This is particularly important when placing two or more views into critical opposition.

Critical Comparison (15%):

Your discussion will require you to bring multiple philosophical views together in a coherent manner. This involves more than merely giving expositions of each view—it involves explicitly comparing and contrasting them.

Originality of Argument (15%):

You should demonstrate *some* original thought in your argument. This might come in the form of raising an entirely new argument, but it might also come in the form of raising an original objection to an argument that we have addressed in class.

Coherence of Argument (15%):

You should make sure that your conclusion actually follows from your premises. You don't need to present your argument in a formal deductive format, but you'll want to make sure that your reader understands how you've arrived at your conclusion.

Addressed Objection (10%):

Assume that your reader disagrees with you, and that he/she has at least one reason for disagreeing. Try to anticipate his/her objection, and explain why you don't think it defeats your view.

A more thorough grading rubric detailing each of these criteria is available at www.deanza.edu/faculty/ramireztono/paper_grading_rubric.pdf