

Second Paper & Presentation Instructions

1. Assignment: Write an essay of 2400-3600 words (~8-12 pages), on some topic from the second or third unit of this course.

(You will also deliver a 15 minute presentation of your paper to the class before the final draft is due, and give feedback to each of your classmates on their own paper presentation.)

2. Due Dates: *Part one: The in-class presentation:* First, you will present your paper in class, during your assigned time slot, between Monday 11/27 and Wednesday 12/6. (Note: You should also have a completed rough draft of your paper before this time.)

Part two: Peer feedback: You will then provide feedback to each of your classmates on their paper presentations. Ideally, you will do this immediately after each presentation. But, all feedback is due no later than 11:59pm on Friday, 12/8. (These comments will hopefully be of some use to you as you improve and revise your paper for submission.)

Part three: The paper: The final paper is due on Tuesday, 12/12, at noon. By that time, please upload your paper to Blackboard. (Click *PHIL 403* → *Assignments* → *Paper #2* → Scroll to *Assignment Submission*, and click *Browse My Computer*)

3. Late Penalty: Late papers will be penalized. A paper turned in by 11:59pm on 12/12 receives -10 points (out of 100), and -2 points for each additional 24 hour period.

4. Paper Topic: You may select any thesis you like. The only requirement is that it must deal with some issue from unit two (i.e., the DDA) or unit three (i.e., the DDE). (Of course, it should go without saying that, as a philosophy paper, it must be an *argumentative* paper where you attempt to *persuade* your reader to adopt some position; e.g., defend or refute some view or argument, or offer a solution to some problem, etc.). I encourage you to discuss your thesis with me during office hours, well in advance of your class presentation.

5. The Presentations: During your assigned time slot, you will deliver a 15 minute presentation of your paper to the class. You should plan to spend roughly 8-10 minutes presenting your topic, thesis, arguments, objections, etc. The remaining time will then be devoted to audience Q&A. This presentation will constitute 8% of your final grade, which will be based on my assessment of the following three things:

- Clarity

Your presentation should be as clear and organized as possible. Your audience should be left with a clear understanding of the topic which you intend to write on, your thesis, as well as the major objections, solutions, etc. that you plan to write about.

- Preparedness

It should be apparent that you have given considerable thought to your paper in advance. Though your paper is still in rough draft form at this stage, make sure that it is not *too* rough. There should be evidence that you have already worked out your objections, solutions, etc., and have become immersed enough in this topic that you can easily respond to questions from the audience, and so on.

- Content

Finally, a portion of your grade will be based on the actual content of your paper. Have you sufficiently *motivated* the issue that you plan to write about it? (i.e., Why should we care about this issue? Why should I, as a reader, give you a few hours of my life to read what you have to say?) Is your thesis *interesting*? Does it contain elements of *originality*? And, most importantly, is your argument for that thesis *clear* and *persuasive*?

Once again, I strongly encourage you to **practice your talk out loud, in advance**. Ten minutes is NOT a lot of time. Try to boil down your thesis and its defense to only the most essential, easily-digestible elements, and practice just presenting those. (Be sure to time yourself as you do.) Then, based on your time, add or subtract material as needed.

6. Presentation Feedback: For each of the other presentations, you will provide some feedback to your classmates on their presentations. To do this, visit Blackboard. (Click on *PHIL 403* → Then click the link for *Discussion Board (Presentations)* → At the Discussion Board, now select the presentation you wish to comment on; #1, #2, etc.)

At minimum, you must post **at least one comment** (providing thoughtful constructive criticism and/or feedback) **for every presentation** other than your own. But, ideally, you will even enter into a *discussion* with your classmates, spanning multiple comments.

Here are some suggestions:

- Evaluate the presentation's content and provide some constructive criticism. For instance: Was their thesis (or their replies to objections, etc.) *clear* and *persuasive*? Was it *well-motivated*? i.e., was it clear that this is an issue that we, as readers, should care about? (Why or why not? Support your evaluation.)
- Do you have any suggestions for improvement? For example, do you have any ideas about how your classmate might refine one of their examples, or more persuasively reply to some objection? Perhaps there was some portion of their thesis that was under-developed, for which you have a suggestion about how to develop it more carefully?
- Is there some issue that you think should have been addressed, which was not addressed? Or perhaps something WAS addressed that seemed irrelevant to the main thesis? Etc. Discuss that.
- You may also consider providing your own brief summary of your classmate's presentation, from your perspective. What was their thesis? How do they plan to argue for this thesis? And so on. (It can sometimes be very helpful to read someone else's summary of your own work. It can give you a sense of which points stuck out to your audience (and which ones did not), and of whether or not you were understood correctly, etc.)

You get the idea. In short, you are trying to *help* your classmates to write a better paper, to get a better grade on it, and to generally become better philosophers. And, in return for all your effort, you will get 15 sets of help and feedback on YOUR paper, to help you do the same. What a deal!

Your online peer feedback will constitute 4% of your final grade.

7. Grading Rubric: As with the first paper, for the final paper, I will again be looking for three things when I assign grades: (1) Clarity, (2) Critical Reasoning, and (3) Originality.

8. Academic Dishonesty: Also in accordance with the first paper guidelines, any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will automatically receive an F for the course.