

Prof. Moore  
Philosophy

## Term Paper Requirements

The paper is to be a critical examination of one or more of the arguments presented in the assigned readings. All drafts of the paper must be typed, double spaced, in 10 or 12 point type with normal margins. The paper should be at least 8 pages and no more than 15 pages long. State the position that you are defending clearly, preferably early in the paper and be sure to consider probable objections to the arguments you give. Each paper should contain Parts I-IV.

- Part I.** Choose an article that has been assigned as course material and clearly present (explicate) the author's position and arguments (if the author gives a number of arguments then pick one or two that you consider to be the most central). Be sure to explain what conclusion(s) they arguing for and what evidence or support they give for their conclusion(s). Note: this is the most important part of the paper because it lays the groundwork for the rest of the assignment.
- Part II.** Give, in your view, the most damaging criticism of the argument or position explicated in Part I. Be sure to develop your criticism in some detail. Where exactly does the author go wrong? What empirical claims (matter of fact claims) do they make that are false if any? Do not use the shotgun method — don't briefly mention five or six problems, develop one or two in detail.
- Part III.** How would the author defend their argument(s) against your critique in Part II? Put yourself in their shoes and try to think how they would argue to save their position. You should push the debate beyond class lectures and readings — i.e. *in this part don't merely explain material that we have already covered.*
- Part IV.** Present and defend your views on the subject that you have chosen to write about. Do you agree with the author? If so, why? If not, why not? Whatever your views be sure that you give reasons or arguments in support of them — remember opinions are only a starting point.

This assignment is intended to be primarily an independent piece of scholarship; some additional readings will probably be necessary, but comprehensive knowledge of the literature is neither expected nor desired. The point is to struggle through the issue you choose in a philosophically sophisticated way, making sense of the issues involved and the arguments that surround them, and defending a position which you find tenable on the basis of those arguments.

More Information: For more information about writing philosophy papers and essays see p. 60-79 in A. Weston's *A Rulebook for Arguments*. Also, see the "Writing Philosophy" handout in your course packet.

Please see syllabus for due date.

Plagiarism: If you consult sources and borrow either direct quotes, paraphrased arguments, or ideas you must footnote or endnote your sources with complete bibliographic information.

## Guidelines for Grading Written Work:

- A The high honor grade goes to papers which,
- demonstrate a clear and insightful attack or presentation of the problem;
  - develop a logical, coherent argument and a sequence of related paragraphs which lead to clear conclusions; provides reasons for claims;
  - show a firm grasp of classroom sessions and assigned readings and an ability to use the right information in the right place in substantial enough amounts;
  - adds something to what has been said about the problem in the classroom;
  - are correctly written in a technical sense.
- B The honor grade goes to papers which,
- make some kind of sustained attack on the problem
  - develop an argument but one which may be less subtle or well-reasoned than an A- paper;
  - show a more than adequate grasp of all the course materials but are less masterful; in their use and application of them;
  - make thoughtful use of what has been said in class without necessarily adding something new;
  - have only minor technical flaws.
- C The average grade goes to papers which,
- make a vague or unimaginative attack on the problem;
  - develop an argument which is not well-reasoned and has logical flaws and inconsistencies; argument not adequately supported;
  - show an adequate or less than adequate grasp of the course materials; miss significant relevant material, particularly in the readings - tends to summarize or narrate rather than argue;
  - make somewhat incomplete or even careless use of classroom work;
  - merely 'plays back tapes' of classroom work and assigned reading;
  - may have some major technical flaws or not be well written.
- D The passing grade goes to papers which,
- make little or no attack on the problem;
  - do not develop a reasoned argument but rather a collection of isolated points;
  - seems unfamiliar with relevant material from readings and lectures;
  - are poorly written with numerous technical flaws.
- F The failing grade goes to the paper that is indescribable in any of the above terms.