

## Final Draft Assignment

Instructions: this assignment is due by noon on **December 13**. You should email your final paper to me. It does not count as turned in until you get an email confirming that I have received it. It should be at least 1500 words. If you have any questions about how to complete the assignment, please let me know.

The topic of this paper is your choice (as long as it has to do with philosophy) and should be on something new. That is, in writing this paper you should focus on something that we have not talked about in class. Part of doing this will involve finding new texts to talk about. In particular, in at least one point in your paper you should discuss a philosophical text not assigned in this class.

That said, if there is some subject we touched on in class that you found interesting, and want to research further, that would be fine. For example, it would be acceptable if you found some new texts by philosophers that talked about when it was acceptable to break the law and discussed those. But it would not be ok just to talk about the dialogue from Plato that we talked about in class. The majority (if not all) of your paper should be new things.

Here are several suggestions for picking a topic area:

- If there is some non-philosophical subject area that interests you, there is usually a sub-branch of philosophy devoted to that topic. For example, if you're interested in biology, there's philosophy of biology. If you're interested in business, there's business ethics. And so on. This doesn't just extend to academic interests. There's philosophy of film, philosophy of sports, etc.

- There are a number of areas in applied ethics that are interesting to a number of people, so I suspect you will be interested in at least some of them. For example, there are issues regarding eating meat, euthanasia, abortion, affirmative action, organ donation, and so on.
- This website here [http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/browse?module\\_0=obo-9780195396577](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/browse?module_0=obo-9780195396577) contains a number of topics in philosophy (and, as a bonus, a number of helpful readings on each topic).
- You could play around on a site like the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (see <http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>) until you find something that looks interesting.
- There are a number of textbooks that collect together classic and influential essays in philosophy. You can usually find the table of contents for them online and see if anything in them looks interesting.
- Perhaps you have some philosophical question you always wondered about. Now would be the perfect time to look into it more.

Here are several suggestions for finding readings, once you have picked a topic area:

- One way is to find anthologies that deal with the topic you're interested in and then go to the library, find them, and see if any of the articles in them look interesting. Usually they will have the word "guide", "companion", "readings" or "anthology" in the title, so you can try googling e.g. "guide philosophy of mind." Some examples of presses that produce them are Blackwell, Oxford, Cambridge, Routledge, and Continuum, so you could also try googling e.g. "Blackwell philosophy of mind."
- Another way is to search the internet for syllabi on the topic you're interested in. Usually, you'll be able to find some, and they often have readings that are especially important and influential for the topic you're interested in.
- If you can find an article on your topic in an online encyclopedia like the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (see <http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>), it will often have a bibliography with a bunch of

articles on your topic. I would recommend reading through the article; it will probably talk about various arguments in it, so then you can see which arguments you find interesting, and look up the authors of those.

- Another resource is PhilPapers (the website is <http://philpapers.org/>) which is searchable and has a huge collection of philosophy articles.

Once you've found the title of an article that sounds interesting, here's how to get access to it.

- Sometimes the article you're looking for is part of a collection in a book. In that case, you should check and see if the library has the book.
- Often, the article won't be part of a book, but will instead be printed in a journal:
  - If you're on campus, usually you can just do a google search for the article and find and download a copy of it.
  - If you're off campus, or you're having trouble getting access to the article through just googling it, you should go to the library website. The library website offers two ways to search for articles. One is by clicking on the tab that says "articles" and entering the article title and information. The other is by clicking the tab that says "eJournals," searching for the journal the article was printed in, and then entering the other bibliographic info about the article (when it was written, etc.) to get the article.

Here are some tips for writing this paper (tips from previous assignments also apply):

- In writing your introduction, you should just get right to the point. In other words, you don't need to start out talking about the dawn of humankind. It would be better to tell me in a concise manner what your thesis is (in addition, you may have to introduce the topic a tiny bit so I can make sense of your thesis).
- It's a good idea to give me a road map in your introduction. That is, you should say something like "in my first section, I will ... In my second section, I will"