

PHIL 101 Introduction to Philosophy
Writing Assignment #1 Prompt
Due 3/10/16

Guidelines

In this assignment you will carefully consider, explain, and provide your own input on one of the philosophical questions we have discussed so far in class. This is a writing assignment and should be treated as such. Do **NOT** address the tasks given below in bullet points. Instead, write an essay in paragraph form. Do **NOT** write in sentence fragments, run-on sentences, grammatically poor English, or conversational English. Your essay **MUST** have an introductory paragraph, a body, and a concluding paragraph. In addition, it should be 3-5 **full** pages double spaced (this means your essay must reach at least the bottom of the third page), with 12-point Times New Roman font and 1" margins. Do **NOT** attempt to pad the paper length by using a larger font, using wider margins, putting additional spacing between lines or paragraphs, etc. You will lose points for doing so.

A hardcopy of the assignment is due **in class** on **Thursday, March 10th**. I will not accept electronic submissions. This assignment is worth 10% of your overall grade. As stated in the course syllabus, 10% of your grade for this assignment will be deducted for every 24 hour period after the due date that the assignment is late.

Assignment

For this assignment, you are to choose one of the following philosophical questions we have discussed in class.

- Does God exist?
- Do we have free will?
- Are there moral truths?
- What are the principles of morality?

Once you have chosen your preferred question, you must address the following tasks. Please read them carefully and consult them as you write your paper. Failure to fully address these tasks will hurt your grade.

1) Explain why the question you have chosen is philosophically interesting and significant. This will involve carefully explicating the nature of the question and its implications, both theoretical and—if you think this is applicable—for everyday human life. You should use the introduction of your paper to address this point. In other words, introduce the issue to your reader by laying out what the central topic is and making clear what is at stake.

2) Explain the positions of at least two ways of responding to this question (from among the positions we have discussed in class). However, don't simply say, for example, that one side answers "yes" while another side answers "no"; clarify the *reasons* behind the particular answers given, as well as the details of each side's account. In other words, what are the *arguments* the opposing sides given in support of their positions?

3) For each of the positions you have brought up, identify what you think are their specific strengths and weaknesses. Even if you strongly agree with one position, you must diagnose what you consider its weakest link. Likewise, even if you strongly disagree with a position, you must diagnose what, in your view, is its best asset or strongest element.

4) Finally, take a side on the debate. Identify which position you think provides the best answer to the question, and, more importantly, *why* you think that answer is satisfactory, or at least more satisfactory than the alternative(s). If you don't think any of the positions we have considered in class provide a satisfactory answer or answers, then explain, *in detail*, why not. You may use this explanation to stake out your own answer to the question, if you so choose, but even if you do not do so, you must give an *in-depth* account of what, for you, is wrong with the other answers.

Good luck!