

PHIL 101 Introduction to Philosophy
Writing Assignment #2 Prompt
Due 4/14/16

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, April 14th**. I will not accept electronic submissions. This assignment is worth 15% 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. **Do NOT choose the same question that you chose for Writing Assignment #1.**

- Does God exist?
- Do we have free will?
- Are there moral truths?
- What are the principles of morality?
- What is a just society?
- What is the relationship between the mind and the physical world?

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) 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).
- 4) As we have seen in class, philosophical issues are often related to one another. One's view on the relationship between the mind and the physical world, for example, may inform one's view of whether or not we have free will. Or, one's view on the principles of morality may affect what one believes makes a society just. Determine, then, what implications the position you took in Task 3 has for any of the other philosophical questions above (you must discuss at least one, but may discuss more if you so choose). Explain *in detail* what exactly you believe your position on the first topic implies about the other, and why.

Good luck!