

## Week 2 Practice Philosophy Research

Using PhilPapers.org, Google Scholar, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP), and/or *Philosophy Compass* (check the syllabus for resources), find three to five sources relevant to the topic you plan to write about. No more than one of them can be an SEP article. The others should be articles from peer-reviewed journals or chapters from books published by scholarly presses. Consult a peer or me when in doubt about a source.

Read these sources, and write a Philosophy Practice assignment for two of them. Each consists of three paragraphs:

1. A paragraph summarizing a single important point that the author of the article said and the key argument in your own words. Do not waste space summarizing unnecessary material.
2. A paragraph indicating what you think is wrong or defective in the argument, and why. Alternatively, indicate how you think the argument goes right but could be strengthened or clarified in certain respects.
3. A paragraph in which you try to imagine how the author might respond to your objections or calls for strengthening or clarification. Imaginatively put yourself in the author's shoes: what would he or she say? Try to come up with the smartest response they might give.
4. (Optional) Indicate how you might plausibly respond in turn to their responses to your philosophical concerns.

If you can finish a draft before the class, please bring two copies to class.

Pick one of those two sources, and prepare to give a 10 minute presentation about it, to your group. Your goal should be to teach the others in your group about the topic of the source you read, as if you were going to lead a class discussion of that source. Your presentation should answer each of these questions:

1. What is the philosophical conversation that this source is participating in? That is, what background context will your group need to know in order to understand the central claims of the source?
2. What is the source's main thesis, or theses? That is, what is the new thing it says that it's trying to convince you of?
3. Why does the author think that their thesis is interesting or important, in light of the philosophical conversation it's a part of?
4. What is the source's main argument, or arguments? That is, what does it say to convince you that its thesis is true?
5. Does the source consider any objections to its argument? What are they and what are the replies?

Your presentation can also include a discussion of the question you raised in your assignment, as well as the answer that you imaginatively developed on behalf of the author. You may create a visual aid for your presentation (a paper handout or PowerPoint deck), but you are not required to do so.

Listen to your colleagues' presentations actively, thinking about their ideas while they are presenting them. Take notes, summarizing their ideas and jotting down any questions or related thoughts you have.

First, try to figure out what philosophical question the paper being presented on discusses. Write that question down here:

Then, for each presentation, formulate two questions:

1. Formulate a helpful clarificatory question (which could be a detail or could be the big picture).
2. Formulate an interesting philosophical question--that is, a question that engages with the philosophical content of the presentation.