

Write a 1200- to 1800-word essay (4–6 pages) on the following topic. **Do not use AI or anything like it.** Take the time to work through this on your own, with reading, note-taking, and typing. The paper is due on Fri, March 28 by 9:59pm.

Read Bayle's discussion of animal minds, excerpted from his notes to "Rorarius" in the *Historical and Critical Dictionary*. The excerpts in question are available online at:

<https://colemitchell.github.io/PHIL2220/essay.html>

Your essay will focus on a particular note. You are free to select either C (pp. 1–3), E (pp. 3–4), F (pp. 4–6), or G (pp. 7–8). However, you should take the time to read all the notes before selecting. Once you've selected a note, do the following:

Section 1: Summarize the argumentation found throughout the particular note you've selected.

Section 2: For one (or two) of the arguments in this note, carefully reconstruct the argument(s) in numbered premise-conclusion form. Give the argument (or give each argument) some sort of label for easy identification.

Section 3: Critically evaluate the argument(s). Spell out at least two potential objections, and explain whether the objections succeed.

Pointers and guidelines:

- Just use standard formatting: Times New Roman or Calibri, 12-point font, double spacing, normal 1" margins.
- Do not use any other sources. Do not bother with citations or a bibliography.
- Try to make your prose style simple, clear, precise, and reader-friendly. Don't try to impress anyone with your honeyed eloquence or rich vocabulary. Don't pretend to understand something that you don't.
- Do not write any introduction or conclusion. Doing so tends to tempt students into writing "Since the dawn of time..."-style filler that only annoys graders. Feel free to start with e.g. "In Note C to Bayle's 'Rorarius' entry, ...".
- Before writing anything, get clear on which positions are being supported or criticized in the argumentation. Try to make this clear to the reader. (Be careful about distinguishing Bayle's text from quotations he presents.)
- The main purpose of the summary section is to set up the later sections. But you should also be sharpening your skills at learning something well and presenting it briefly and in its essentials.
- When doing argument reconstruction, remember the logic module:
 - The premises are supposed to provide support for the conclusion.
 - Not everything is a premise in the argument (e.g., sometimes there are mere illustrative examples, mere background information, mere concessions to the opposition).
 - Sometimes there are initial premises that support a preliminary conclusion, which in turn serves as a premise in support of the final conclusion.
 - If an argument seems invalid, consider whether there are any obvious suppressed premises and determine what changes could be made to render the argument valid (i.e., to make the conclusion logically follow from the premises).
 - Rearranging the elements of an argument—i.e., putting its propositions in a different order from that in the text—can make the argument clearer to the reader. Most obviously, put the conclusion last.
- When critically evaluating an argument, consider whether the premises are likely to be accepted by the historical participants in the discussion, or whether they stand in need of further support or defense against obvious counterexample. You can also set aside the historical participants and consider whether there is any reason to think the premises are true or false.
- Do not preface an objection with a hollow compliment: e.g., "Although this argument is well put and is very persuasive, it has a serious flaw". These people are dead and you will not hurt their feelings.
- It is sometimes useful to illustrate an objection with a concrete example, but it isn't necessary.
- Do not apply the words 'valid', 'invalid', 'sound', or 'unsound' to a premise or a conclusion. You can apply them to an argument, or you can even avoid the words entirely.
- Do not write **Descarte's**. The possessive form in English is typically **Descartes'** (although **Descartes's** is also accepted).

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.