

Second Essay Topics

Philosophy 25A

Write an essay of **4–5 pages** on **one** of the following topics, making sure you address each part of the prompt.

1. In *Physics* I.7–8, Aristotle provides an analysis of change, or coming-to-be. Aristotle thinks his analysis shows how change is possible, contrary to Parmenides' claims that 'what is' is *ungenerated* (F8 3) and *unchanging* (or "motionless... without starting and stopping", F8 26–27). Explain Parmenides' argument for the conclusion that coming-to-be is impossible. Then explain Aristotle's analysis of change, and how it applies to cases of both ordinary change and cases of generation. What elements does every case of change involve, according to Aristotle? What distinction does Aristotle think Parmenides failed to make? Is Aristotle's response to Parmenides successful? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. In *Physics* II, Aristotle offers a definition of nature and a theory of the types of causes that operate in nature. Like Plato, Aristotle thinks that *form* is one type of cause in nature, but he also thinks that *matter* and *motion* are types of causes. Drawing on the text in *Physics* II.1–3 and II.7, explain what these three types of cause are, and give examples of how each can be used to explain something in nature. (You do not need to discuss final causes.) How might Plato object to the idea that matter and motion are causes? Formulate a problem for Aristotle's theory of causation based on Plato's discussion in *Phaedo*, drawing on the text in 96e–99b and 100d–101c. How do you think Aristotle should respond to this problem?

Formatting: Your paper must be double spaced, in 12 point, Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins. Your title should be in bold. At the top of your paper, include only your student ID number; do not put any other information (e.g. name, date, class number, instructor name, GSI name, etc.). Remember to cite the text using the standard pagination. (When citing Parmenides, indicate the fragment number and the line number, as above.)

Deadline: Your essay is due to Lindsay by **10AM on Wednesday, June 17**. Please follow her instructions about how and where to turn it in.