**Writing Assignment 1**

*The goal of the assignment is close, careful analysis. The assignment must be 1-2 pages, single or double spaced and typed in 12pt font. There is a grading rubric posted in the assignment section of the course website; please also turn in a copy of the rubric to the document when you submit your assignment on Canvas. Think strategically about your grade on this assignment by going through the grading rubric carefully before you make your submission.*

**Part One: Why take this course?**

Familiarize yourself with the course website. Read over the syllabus –including the course schedule and learning goals documents– and reflect on what you would like to get out of this class. You may also want to peruse the assignments and reading summaries pages of the website, in order to get a better idea of we will be doing. **Your task is to identify some personal learning goals and align them with the course objectives.** Spend a paragraph or two completing this task. You needn’t include an introductory or concluding paragraph. Get right to the business of executing the tasks necessary to complete the assignment itself.

The point of this exercise is for you to think [metacognitively](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVE21QhY-lI) and [self-regulate your learning](http://www.expertlearners.com/srl.php). This is also an opportunity for you to familiarize yourself with the course and honestly self-assess what to keep in mind as you take on this challenge (and *whether* you should take it on). You should write about whatever will help you think through why you are taking this particular course and how it supports your education. In doing so, you should explicitly address the following questions. Specificity is encouraged, whenever possible.

* What do I already know about the content and skills involved in this course?
* What would I like to know more about? Which philosophical skills would I like to develop?
* What do I expect to find most challenging? What strategies are available for coping with that challenge?
* Why would this course be important to me (my academic career or, more generally, life)?

**Part Two: Preferred theory?**

Critically assess the theories discussed in the Timmons reading. Which theory is the best and why? **Your task is to (1) identify a strength in your preferred theory and (2) make an argument that your theory should be preferred over the others on the basis of that strength.** Spend a paragraph or two completing this task. You needn’t include an introductory or concluding paragraph. Get right to the business of executing the tasks necessary to complete the assignment itself.

**Part Three: Cultural Relativism & Argument Reconstructions**

This part of the assignment requires that you become proficient in a specific philosophical skill of argumentation: reconstructing arguments in valid premise-conclusion form. Refer to the Vaughan and Woodhouse readings available the course website. There is also a handout on argument reconstruction and a supplemental reading on basic concepts in logic. Reconstructed arguments must be in valid premise-conclusion form. Simpler reconstructions are preferred (2-3 premises).

Rachels makes three arguments about *the consequences of taking cultural relativism seriously*. **Your task is to identify all of these arguments and reconstruct them in premise-conclusion form, so this question has many parts.** No written explanation is required for this part of the assignment.

This part of the assignment requires that you read ahead of the schedule. However, you do not have to read the entire article to complete this part. In the middle of the article, under the heading, “*the consequences of taking cultural relativism seriously*”, Rachels presents three arguments. You should focus and read this page or so very carefully, instead of the entire article.