**Writing Assignment 2**

* *First philosophy papers are notoriously difficult. The point of this assignment is to give you a lower stakes opportunity to familiarize yourself with the standards of serious philosophical writing before you begin working on your paper. However, for this assignment, you are only practicing the exegetical part of paper writing: explaining the view of a philosopher. You are not yet presenting an argument of your own.*
* *There is a grading rubric posted on the course website; append a copy of the rubric to the document when you submit your assignment on Canvas. Also, think strategically about your grade on this assignment by going through the grading rubric carefully before you make your submission.*

**Kant, “The Moral Law”**

***PART 1*: Your task is to explain Kant’s universal law formulation of the categorical imperative.** Your explanation should be one or two paragraphs (about 5-9 sentences, each). In order to complete this task, you must also explain all necessary details for the account, such as the distinction between perfect and imperfect duties. What are the two ways in which rational agents test the universality of their maxims? How do these two ways test the consistency of one’s maxim? How do these two ways correlate to different kinds of duties? Be as clear and precise as possible in your explanation, explicitly laying out each step, and defining technical terms, (such as “maxim”,) whenever necessary. Make the “consistency tests” as explicit as possible. Kant is difficult to understand; you may find the supplementary materials on Kant (posted on the course website) useful. However, if you consult any sources, you must include proper citation.

**Mappes, “A Liberal View of Sexual Morality and the concept of Using another Person”**

***PART 2*: Your task is to write a short paragraph (4-6 sentences) of exegesis of the main view expressed in this article**. Explain how Mappes applies Kantian ethical theory to sexuality, in order to support his view. This requires that you explain the main elements of “voluntary informed consent” and the main conclusions Mappes draws from his Kantian principle.

***Part 3*: Your task is to explain how one of the examples from the Mappes article would fail Kant’s universal law formulation of the categorical imperative*.*** This part of the assignment requires not only an understanding of the reading, but also the ability to apply a concept from one reading to another. Your explanation should be a short paragraph (4-6 sentences). Although Kant has many different formulations of the categorical imperative, the different formulations are expressions of the same underlying principle and should therefore sustain the same conclusions.

**Reminders for exegetical writing**

* Review the readings posted on the course website on philosophical writing, especially Pryor and Woodhouse.
* Use a standard citation method (e.g., MLA or Chicago). For grading, I care far more about thoroughness and consistency than formatting. *Every descriptive claim* about the course material must be cited.
* Accurately describe arguments as completely and precisely as you can, in your own words; you should avoid repeating either the author’s own words, or the words used in lecture to describe the author’s argument. Seek instead to describe as clearly as possible the conclusion the author defends, and what steps are required in the author’s argument for that conclusion. Simply put, *make the argumentative structure explicit.*
* Sufficiently explain each of the philosopher’s premises. Think of each as a conclusion in need of argument and provide supporting reasons from the text, e.g. though experiments, for justification. Examples can be helpful.
* Stick to the sentence guidelines for each task; they are imposed to encourage parsimony.