<u>ESSAY GUIDE</u>

Philosophical skills 2023

Format
The exam for this course consists of a written essay in which you respond to an essay question you have formulated yourself.

The essays should be 1800 words (with a 10% margin on either side).

Since this is a full essay, you should make sure to include:

a. An introduction that frames and clearly states your chosen essay question and the claim you will defend in response to said question.
b. A substantial explicatory section which provides the definitions of the central concepts of your essay question, as they are given in the primary materials.
c. An evaluative section that advances your own argument.
d. A conclusion which summarizes the content of the essay and points toward further questions or perspectives.

Parts b. and c. can be integrated into the same sections of the text, what is important is that you make sure both elements are clearly present in your work. Keep in mind that subsections with subtitles often help the reader follow the development of your argument, as does signposting along the way.

A good guide for how to write a philosophy essay can be found in A. P. Martinich *Philosophical writing: An introduction*. 4th ed. (London: Blackwell, 2015). I recommend chapter 4 'Composing' in particular.

Writing process
I strongly recommend that you try to finish a first draft with at least a week to spare before the deadline. Once you have a draft, get a friend to comment on your essay and then *reverse outline* your argument: make an outline of the argument as you now think it is presented in the essay. What is the main point you are trying to make? Go through the essay paragraph by paragraph and ask yourself: how does this section contribute to my overall argument? Is this the best place for it? Should it come sooner or later? Is it too short or too long? This will help strengthen your work considerably, as you edit the essay in the final week.

Citational practice and plagiarism
Both direct citation and paraphrase of specific points needs to be supported by page references, either in text or as footnotes. All essays need a bibliography at the end. Use and consistently apply one of the standard academic citation systems (MLA, Chicago, Harvard, etc.) and do not plagiarize.

If I suspect that parts of your essay have been written by a chatbot (AI language model), I will invite you to have a conversation with me about the

argument in your essay. If, after this chat, I am still not convinced that you have written the essay yourself, I will report this to the exam committee which will then conduct an official plagiarism investigation.

Layout
Please write in a standard font (Arial, Times New Roman, or Garamond), 12 pt. with 1,5 spacing and justified to the margins. Make sure your name and student number are clearly stated on the header and that you note the final world count on the last page.

Late submissions
Late submissions are penalized with one grade point per day unless you have contacted me at least three days in advance of the deadline to officially request an extension.

If you have any further questions about the format, send me an email: m.l.krogh@hum.leidenuniv.nl.