

PHIL 1050-08 Introduction to Philosophy

First Out-of-Class Assignment

Due Date: Tuesday, October 11

Description of Assignment:

As November approaches and Election Day grows near, we can expect to see candidates from all sides engaging in an increasing number of public debates and presenting or reiterating various *arguments* for their positions on important issues.

Your task in this first out-of-class assignment is to track down one such argument explicitly articulated by some political figure for some particular conclusion relevant to the Presidential election. Preferably, the argument should be found in an article written in a reputable print newspaper or its online equivalent. If there has recently been a public debate between candidates, then a transcript of that same debate would also be an excellent choice for material. Other sources may be used upon my approval.

Once you have found an argument made by a political figure that includes enough information for you to properly analyze it, you must then, within two double-spaced pages:

- identify the general form of the argument using the types listed in the Weston text,
- outline the premises of the argument as much as they are outlined in the article,
- point out any missing premises that might complete the argument,
- and, finally, evaluate the argument.

The evaluation portion of your paper should answer the following questions:

- Is the argument valid? Does it follow *any* of the valid forms listed by Weston?
- Does the argument commit any of the fallacies covered in the Weston text?
- Which premises are the weakest? Which premises could use more support than what is given in the article or debate?

Because of the constraints of space, it is not necessary for you to completely “fix” the argument you have chosen, or go into much detail about how it might be argued against. The purpose of this assignment is only to prove that you can identify and evaluate arguments outside of philosophical texts. Also, make sure to include with your submitted paper a copy of the original article or debate-transcript so that I can see what you are drawing from.

If you have any questions about choosing your article or about the organization of your paper, contact me via email.