

PHIL 205-13: Ethics

Silent Debate

Due Dates:

First Checkpoint: April 23rd

Second Checkpoint: April 28th

Third Checkpoint: May 2nd

Final Checkpoint: May 5th

Description of Assignment:

Though we have just begun our unit on applied ethics, a handful of particular ethical concerns have already come up in our discussions of ethical theories. There are also many particular ethical conclusions that we have not covered, but would nonetheless follow from some of the ethical principles that we have considered. Your task in this assignment is to give a brief defense of one particular ethical conclusion. The particular ethical conclusion does not have to be one that we have covered in class.

The assignment will be split into **four stages**.

For the **first stage**, you are to select a particular ethical conclusion that you would like to defend and find another member of the class who is willing to argue for the contrary position on the same issue. For example, you could choose to argue that capital punishment is never morally permissible; your partner would then have to argue that capital punishment is morally permissible in some cases. You should indicate to me, by the date above, the topic you have chosen and the classmate with whom you will be debating.

For the **second stage**, you are to offer a brief argument, in writing, in support of your ethical conclusion. This argument can be one that we have covered in class, though it need not be.

In the **third stage**, your partner is to offer a response, also in writing, to your initial argument that explicitly addresses your points, and you are to offer a similar response to his or her own.

In the **fourth stage**, you are to offer a brief reply to the concerns that your partner has raised for your initial argument, while your partner replies to your objections to his or her own.

The stages of the assignment will be due in increments, as indicated by the checkpoints listed above. I think it will be easiest if, at each of the checkpoints, each student's work is transferred via email to his or her partner, with me, the instructor, listed as a recipient. That way I know what exchanges have actually taken place. If I do not receive an email from each student on the date of each checkpoint, I will assume that he or she has not completed that part of the assignment.

You will be graded, then, on (1) your initial argument, (2) your response to your partner's argument, and (3) your reply to your partner's objections to your own argument. Each student's written work should total approximately three double-spaced pages. It is perfectly fine to use arguments, counter-arguments and replies from the texts that we have read, but if you do, please indicate the name of the book or article and the page number at which the points may be found.