

As far as the strict requirements of the 5 page paper goes, please adhere to the following criteria:

- ☐ 12 point font, Times New Roman *only*
- ☐ 1in margins
- ☐ Double spaced
- ☐ No original research (i.e. use only the cluster of authors/papers that we have read for class)
- ☐ No title page. Just put your first and last name at the top of the paper.
- ☐ You are free to use any citation style that you wish
- ☐ Submit it via Canvas on or before **March 4th at 10:10am**.
- ☐ Do not use a pay-for-paper website or anything kind of cheating. Plagiarism will result in an immediate 0 for this paper, potential removal from the class, and other potential academic consequences. [Keep this in mind](#).

For your first 5-page paper, you are to do the following:

- ☐ Choose a topic / author that we have examined in class thus far.
 - ☐ Typically, choosing an author topic is easiest when you have either of the following motivations:
 - ☐ **Defending:** You think that a criticism of a view is faulty or able to be rebutted by the author / view being attacked. Your thesis is to state and explain this. In other words, you would be defending a position from a criticism. For example, if you think that Gibbard has the resources to address one or more of Schroeder's criticisms, then *that* would be your thesis.
 - ☐ **Attacking:** You think that a view / author is making a serious philosophical mistake and your thesis is to state and explain what that mistake is. In other words, you would be attacking a position as a critic. For example, if you think that there is something wrong with Moore's position that we haven't discussed yet (or examined in detail), then *that* would be your criticism
 - ☐ There are other ways to formulate theses, but these two methods have been useful to me. When in doubt, come to my office hours!
- ☐ Figure out a thesis that you can argue for in a short paper such as this.
 - ☐ For a short paper such as this, you're likely to use around 2 - 3 pages to properly state what the view is that you are attacking / defending. If you are defending a view, you will have less space as you will need to both state what the view is and what the criticism. This would leave you with 2 - 3 pages to state and argue for your *original* thesis. Given these limitations, it would be beneficially to focus on a rather modest thesis.
- ☐ Originality matters.

- ❑ Your thesis must be something that is unique to you. You may not, for example, state a view that you know is attributable to another philosopher, even though we have not looked them. Part of doing philosophy is being able to be creative, and coming up with a thesis is just that. What do *you* think is right / wrong about a view? The answer to that question is your thesis.
- ❑ Argue for that thesis.
 - ❑ It is not a rule that you must adhere to the following, but it is usually to everyone's benefit that you state what your thesis is in the first paragraph of any philosophy paper. Yes, I mean something as simple and clear as, "In this paper, I will argue that so-and-so's theory-of-something is faulty because of reason X."
 - ❑ State clearly and in the appropriate places (see next bullet point) what your evidence is that you are using against a particular person's views. If you think that you have isolated an ethical intuition that a theory leaves out, then help motivate that intuition via cases. If you think that you have found a logical inconsistency in the view that you are criticizing, then say that and explain how what the author says is inconsistent. Remember this Melanson-ism: being specific is terrific!
- ❑ Structure your paper to support your argument.
 - ❑ By this, I mean that the way that you write your paper can actually help the reader to understand why you find fault in someone's view. For example, a standard way to write a philosophy paper is to follow a structure like this:
 - ❑ Paragraph 1: Give 2 - 3 sentence explanation of why this topic is an interesting philosophical topic. State a view that attempts to address that topic. Then, state your thesis about that view.
 - ❑ Paragraphs 2 through 2+n. Use however many paragraphs are needed to explain the view that you will eventually be arguing against. If you are writing a defending thesis (see above), then remember that you will need extra space to (i) state the original view, and to (ii) state the criticism of that view.
 - ❑ Remainder paragraphs. For the remainder of the paper you will be explaining what you find problematic in paragraphs 2 through 2+n. Any and all evidence you have, and your explanation of why that evidence is problematic, go here.
 - ❑ Remove the fluff. After you have a draft, it is helpful to go back through your paper and see if you can delete any sentences / paragraphs without losing any clarity or precision in your paper. If you can, then get rid of them! If you cannot, then ask someone unfamiliar with the topics of the paper to read through the paper and see if they have any questions. If they do, then you will likely need to add more to your paper.
 - ❑ In essence, a solid philosophy paper is one which explains things so well, that a moderately intelligent 14 year old could read the paper, and would understand the claims made within.