

Objective: This assignment aims to deepen your understanding of our readings by critically analyzing its structure, core arguments, and potential weaknesses.

Requirements:

- **Sources:** Focus solely on the assigned reading.
- **Length:** Limit your bibliography to 1 page (excluding citations).
- **Format:** Include the following sections for each entry:
- **Full citation:** Ensure the citation follows the citation style that you prefer (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago).
- **Format:**
 - **Structure summary:** Briefly outline the reading's main sections, organization, and flow of ideas. (1 paragraph)
 - **Core argument(s):** Identify and explain the central thesis or claims the author is making. (1-2 paragraphs)
 - **Weakness of core argument(s):** Analyze and discuss at least one potential weakness or limitation of the author's argument. This could be a gap in evidence, an alternative perspective, or a methodological limitation. (1 paragraph)

Grading Criteria:

- Accuracy and completeness of citations
- Clarity and conciseness of summaries and analyses
- Depth and insightfulness of identified weaknesses
- Effective writing and organization
- Proper formatting and grammar

Submission Example:

Annotated Bibliography Entry for Excerpt from Susan Wolf's "The Meanings of Lives"

Structure Summary: This excerpt outlines Susan Wolf's argument for a hybrid view of meaningful living, combining both subjective and objective elements. It starts by clarifying the different meanings of "meaning" and then dives into characterizing a meaningless life through the example of "The Blob." Wolf then proposes three key features of a meaningful life: (1) Actively engaging with oneself, others, and the world; (2) contributing positive value through meaningful projects; and (3) achieving at least some degree of success in these endeavors. Finally, she argues that objective good, not just perceived value, is crucial for true meaningfulness, and emphasizes the moral imperative to strive for a meaningful life beyond mere personal satisfaction.

Core Argument(s):

- A meaningful life requires both actively living and engaging with the world (subjective) and contributing to something (objectively) valuable to the world.
- Passivity, uselessness, and lack of success are key features of a meaningless life.
- Subjective satisfaction alone is insufficient; objective value, encompassing moral and non-moral contributions, is a necessary component of meaningfulness.
- We have a moral imperative to pursue a meaningful life, even in the absence of a divine purpose.

Weakness of Core Argument(s):

Engaging with the world requires that one's heart be in it (pg 6). While Wolf does flesh-out this claim by analogy to a house-wife who is merely 'going through the motions', it's not clear how much one's heart must be in something for it to count as engaging. For example, must my heart be in teaching a majority of the time for it to make my life meaningful? Half the time? Or must my heart simply be in it more than zero? We certainly don't always feel engaged with projects that clearly supply meaning to ourselves and others, so there is a bit of an issue as to how engagement and meaning are related. Do we really care if the doctor who cures cancer wants to be doing the research with regard to meaning? Perhaps the success of the doctor compensates for their lack of engagement. If so, then engagement is not as important as Wolf supposes.