(a) **Capitalize** words correctly. Words that obviously should be capitalized—e.g., the first word of a sentence, "I"—should always be capitalized. That's easy; don't mess it up. Words that are not proper nouns should not be capitalized. If you are not sure whether or not a particular word should be capitalized, check the reading and see how the author writes it.

(b) **Don't plagiarize**. See this for guidance: https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/shouldDo.html.

As a general rule, copying five or more consecutive words is plagiarism. But that's just a guide. Copying eight words, and then changing one in the middle is still plagiarism. One way to avoid plagiarism is to read a passage (maybe more than once), and then, without looking at it, type up the ideas as you remember them. Check that what you have written is accurate, and fix as needed. The result will be in your own words.

It is also a rule that you have to cite any idea that you take from someone else, even if you aren't quoting. In this course, this is a good idea, not because I am concerned that you may be stealing someone's ideas, but so that I can tell which part of the text you are referring to or explaining.

(c) In this course, the **quotations** that you use will be short—probably two sentences at the most. A quotation should not stand alone. It should be embedded in your own sentence. Also note the placement of the end quote (") and the period in these examples.

> Reilly and Wulfeck conclude that "children with focal brain injury demonstrate remarkable development of language despite early delays" (p. 164).

> As Darwin said, without natural selection, we leave "the coadaptations of organic beings to each other and to their physical conditions of life, untouched and unexplained" (p. 4).

> Wimsatt contended, "the proper model for the mind-body problem is interlevel reduction" (p. 215).

> Feller writes: "All possible definitions of probability fall short of the actual practice" (p. 19).

Since it will generally be obvious where the quotation is from, only the page number is needed as a citation. If the quote is in the middle of your sentence and a comma comes after it, put the comma inside the end quote and put the page number at the end of the sentence.

> It seems conceivable that "psychology could turn out to be like engineering," as Dennett approvingly quotes from Minsky (p. 268).

(d) Create **paragraphs** correctly. A paragraph should be several sentences on one topic, theme, issue, or question. When you switch to a new topic, start a new paragraph. The actual length of a paragraph can vary, but, if you need a guide, most of your paragraphs should be about as long as the paragraphs that are in the readings.

(e) Don't ask **rhetorical questions**. A rhetorical question is a question for which the person asking doesn't expect an answer (the question is just a rhetorical [i.e., stylistic] flourish). For instance, if you're driving down the highway and someone cuts you off, you might say, "What the heck is that guy thinking?" You don't expect an answer, and what you really mean is something like "that person isn't thinking and I don't like it." That's one problem with rhetorical questions. The rhetorical question is not what the writer or speaker actually means. So just say what you want to say in regular, declarative sentences. Also, asking rhetorical questions is a sign of laziness. Often, asking a rhetorical question is a lot quicker and easier than clearly explaining what you have in mind. But it's best to avoid those kinds of shortcuts. (Note that rhetorical questions are different than regular questions. That is, questions for which the person asking is seeking an answer. Those are ok.)

(f) There are numerous rules for using **commas**. Here are a few that you should know.

(i) When a sentence has an *If …, then …* structure, put a comma before the *then*—although sometimes the *then* is omitted, in which case put the comma where the *then* would be. (And it's *if …, then …*, not *if …, than … .*)

If this line of thought is compelling, then we must identify 'pain' as a type of psychological state.

If we consider the case of the eye, we can distinguish a wide variety of structures in a wide variety of organisms.

If we know anything about the nature of philosophy, we know that it is not an experimental discipline

(ii) Put a comma after an introductory word or phrase that begins a sentence. The most common words that begin these types of phrases are *after, although, as, because, if, since, when, while*, but there are many others. Importantly, what comes after the comma should be a complete sentence.

When the machine is left running alone, each of the lights is on one-quarter of the time.

On the face of it, this looks like a straightforward case of multiple realization.

Of course, we think we know what his last words were: "Et tu, Brute."

In the end, there is no particularly clear way to distinguish kinds of eyes.

To see this, let's think about the so called lottery paradox.

(iii) Use a comma to separate independent clauses that are joined by a conjunction (*and*, *but*, *for*, *or*, *nor*, *yet*). An independent clause is a clause that could, by itself, be a complete sentence. That is, it contains a subject, verb, and direct object.

I have now taught philosophy on three continents, and it is astonishing how the same questions arise in such culturally disparate circumstances.

Octopus eyes are more similar to the eyes of fish than they are to the eyes of fruit flies, but in all these cases there are both structural and functional differences.

All human societies have had knowledge and languages, yet only recently have most societies come to have science.

For this type of comma usage, make sure that the second clause has its own subject. Don't separate a subject from its verb with a comma. For instance, a comma is not used in the first sentence, but one is needed in the second.

(1) I drove to campus and went to the library.   (2) I drove to campus, and I went to the library.

Don't omit the conjunction (the *and*), and then join two independent clauses with a comma. These examples are wrong:

Mary Shelley's works are entertaining, they are full of engaging ideas.

Many knights have left their lives here, I shall soon have made an end of thee too.

In both cases, there should be an *and* after the comma. When the conjunction is missing, the result is a comma-splice.

(g) You do not need an **introductory paragraph** for any of the papers that you will write for this course. Usually, the purpose of an introductory paragraph is to explain what the author will be doing in the paper. (It's not to "warm up" the reader, and it should never just be fluff). All of the papers for this course, however, will have assigned topics. As long as you are following the assignment, I know what you will be doing, and an introductory paragraph isn't needed. Just get into the assignment.
If, however, you feel compelled to have an introductory paragraph, then it should just state *In this paper, I am, first, going to do x. Then I am going to do y. And then z.* (Probably, the paragraph should just be three or four sentences.)

(h) Re-read what you have written and check for **clarity**. Make sure that someone else (especially the instructor) will be able to understand every sentence that you write. Clarity is often achieved by keeping sentences short and simple.