

PHI 234/POL 312 – PHILOSOPHY OF LAW/JURISPRUDENCE

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FINAL PAPER – DUE MAY 13TH, 2015

This assignment consists in writing a **8-10 philosophy page paper** on a topic that interests you and that is related to the course readings.

How should you proceed? [see also pass/fail assignment due April 29]

- Review the course readings and find a topic that interests you, such as, court decisions about same sex marriage; the relationship between law and morality; whether the law can be violated; how appellate courts make decisions; self-defense; the state of exception; why we punish criminals; etc.
- Narrow down the topic to a well-specified question. For example, the question whether the law can be violated is too broad, but the question whether Socrates should not violate the laws of Athens because they nurtured him, is more well-specified.
- Come up with a well-defined thesis you want to defend.
- Think of arguments in support of your thesis. Use the readings as a source.
- Think of objections and think of how you could respond. Use the readings as a source.
- Write an outline containing: well-specified thesis; arguments; objections; replies.
- Write multiple drafts and have a friend read your paper before you hand it in.
- Make sure the paper is coherently structured and every sentence is well-written.

What is a good philosophy paper? A good philosophy papers proceeds with rigor, clarity, precision and originality. Rigorous argumentation, clarity of exposition, precision of language and originality of ideas are essential ingredients for a good philosophy paper. You will be graded on the basis of those four criteria.

Be intellectually honest! In a philosophy paper, it is better to openly acknowledge weaknesses in your argument rather than be silent about them.

For more guidance on how to write a philosophy paper, check out the link below

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>