

# Philosophy 366 - Fall 2016 - **Refined Thinking** - Description and Marking Rubric

There are three pieces of refined thinking that you will prepare during the term. While generally short they are expected to be of high quality and *force you to engage with the themes of the course and what it means to think both philosophically and seriously about these themes*. Each piece of refined thinking will contribute 20% of the marks towards your final grade.

**Task (x3):** Choose one of the in-class discussions that you extended as a draft and polish it, adding further research and refinements for a specific position and against the strongest alternative(s). Think of it as a well-informed, provocative, and thoughtful blog post of at least 1,000 words: the in-class discussion question should “itch” in an interesting philosophical way and your responsibility is to “scratch” it. You have already submitted the rough thinking for this writing so you must take this beyond what you provided previously. You are expected to include useful visual aids (e.g. pictures or charts) where it makes sense to do so and to pay attention to providing professional looking layout and formatting. **This “paper” must be submitted as a PDF emailed the course instructor in accord with the instructions in the syllabus.** Some research is expected so citations/references are to be included in any standard format so long that that is clear and you use it consistently. **See the syllabus for due dates.** Refined writing should be named with the following convention: <LastName>-Refined<#>.pdf. Where <LastName> is your last name and <#> is the number of the discussion that the refined writing is based on. So, if I was submitting refined writing originating from discussion 6 the file should be named “Simpson-Refined6.pdf”.

**Evaluation:** The rubric below outlines the criteria on which you will be assessed. Each criteria will be given even weight for a total score out of 40. Writing that does not hit or surpass the minimum word count of 1,000 (include a count with the submission) will not be considered. You must include the original draft with the accompanying comments with your submission or the submission will not be considered.

	Incomplete (0-5)	Needs Improvement (5-7)	Satisfactory (7-8)	Accomplished (8-9)	Outstanding (10)
Continue & Extend	The writing does not follow in any direct way from an in-class discussion, possibly either offering its own topic entirely or seriously misunderstanding the original topic/discussion OR the writing does not follow from the original draft and/or the comments given by the instructor on that draft.	The writing follows from the in-class discussion and the draft but does so in a trivial way. Writing that mostly just adds content to the original submission without reworking the original content is likely to be assessed here.	The writing that is based on the originally submitted draft has been reworked and there is writing that extends the content in the directions/ways suggested in the comments on the original draft.	Moving beyond “satisfactory” the writing extends beyond the suggestions of the instructor by bringing in useful new ideas while further grounding the content that is worth carrying over from the draft.	The writing shows an integration of old and new content to the point that it stands alone as its own piece of writing.
Connect & Synthesize	Connections to new material and the course material are lacking, likely either missing entirely or being referred to in a way that makes the connections difficult to follow.	Connections to new material are present but these connections are either too few OR they are poor selections because their relevance is tangential at best OR they are poorly used.	At least THREE outside sources are drawn on and <i>all</i> the relevant sources from class are drawn on. These sources are not just referred to but are worked into the writing such that it is clear that they are understood and used appropriately.	More than FIVE outside sources are incorporated and all the relevant content from class is drawn on in a ways that show they are well understood and that further the arguments being made.	There are many outside resources, each of excellent quality and used to maximum effect in the writing. It is clear that the author understands the arguments and the consequences of any facts that they are incorporating.
Critical & Reasoned	The writing is non-critical, possibly because it is mostly a summary of the in-class discussion without offering further insight or challenge or it just asserts positions without providing the proper framework of argumentation to make those positions reasonable to hold.	The writing begins to take a critical stance and offer reasons but these are underdeveloped and/or incomplete such that assumptions required for the argument to go through are unstated or unreasonable.	The writing takes a critical stance that considers the topic at hand from more than one useful perspective. The reasoning provided is generally complete and mostly holds together on its own.	The writing takes a critical stance that considers the topic at hand from key perspectives. The reasoning provided is complete and holds together on its own. Important here is that the writing starts to become persuasive on the basis of its arguments.	The argument is masterful, considering the relevant positions from more than one perspective and providing a reasonable assessment of each. Further, the argument exposes its own assumptions and builds those into the critique, leaving no stone “reasonably” unturned.
Clear	The argument in the writing is difficult to follow and/or hard understand.	The argument in the writing can be followed but not easily. There are possibly jumps in logic/reasoning, superfluous ideas that distract from the core argument, significant misuses of jargon, or visuals that are distracting or confusing. Lack of basic formatting such as paragraphs and line spacing.	The argument in the writing can be followed easily on a first read through and is complete.	The arguments in the writing are easy to follow even though they engage with non-trivial topics. Formatting such as section titles and lists are used to add clarity. Visuals are used were relevant to represent complex ideas and these add clarity rather than distraction or obfuscation.	The arguments in the writing are easy to follow even though they engage with non-trivial topics. Further, the writing has a professional quality to it in terms of the language, layout, and visuals.