

## First essay assignment

PHIL 102, Hendricks, Spring 2018

### **DUE DATES:**

Peer feedback:

- Draft for peer feedback due Monday Jan. 22, by noon (Canvas)
- Peer feedback starts Tuesday, Jan. 23, noon (Canvas)
- Peer feedback must be completed by Friday, Jan. 26, 5pm (Canvas)

Final essay due: Wednesday, Jan. 31 by noon (Canvas)

### **Instructions for content of the first essay**

You have a choice of what to write about for your first essay. I've provided some options below, but if you would like to write about something else, you must talk to Christina first. **If you want to choose your own topic, it must be approved (in writing, such as via email) by Christina by 5pm Wed. Jan. 17.**

Possible topics: choose one (or get approval for your own by 5pm Wed. Jan. 17).

1. Choose either Plato/Socrates (counts as one) or Epicurus/Cicero (counts as one), and explain how he/they would answer one of the following questions: How ought we to live and why? [or] What is important in life, and how can we achieve it?
  - Justify your answer by explaining specific things the philosopher says in his text(s). Use quotes and paraphrases.
  - If you choose Plato, be sure to discuss some of what he says in both of the texts we've read by him (*Euthyphro*, *Apology*).
2. What might Plato/Socrates say philosophical activity is, and why it's valuable?
  - Justify your answer by explaining specific things Plato says in his texts. Use quotes and paraphrases.
  - Be sure to discuss some of what Plato says in both of the texts we've read by him (*Euthyphro*, *Apology*), in supporting your answer.
3. What might it be like to live an Epicurean life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in Canada? If you were to change your life to follow the views of Epicurus, discuss a couple of things that you would need to change, and why.
  - Justify your answer by explaining specific things Epicurus/Cicero says in his/their texts. Use quotes and paraphrases.

Your essay must have the following elements

See also the "writing help" page on our website for a document with guidelines for writing essays:

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102/assignments/resources/>

1. *Give a thesis statement in the introduction* that provides the overall claim you are arguing for in your essay.
2. *Provide arguments in the body of the essay to support your claims* that this is what the philosopher would say, being sure to point to what the philosopher says in the texts we've read as evidence. You

can paraphrase the philosopher's claims in your own words, and/or use quotes. It's best to use quotes when you are speaking about a very specific thing a philosopher says, or when the particular words used are important to your claims; paraphrasing is good for more general ideas, or if the particular words used are not crucial to your claims. These are just guidelines, though; I don't have hard and fast rules about when you should use quotes and when you should paraphrase. It's probably best to do some of both. Be sure you're citing both correctly, though (how to do so will be discussed in class).

3. *Give a conclusion that wraps up the argument* in some way. It can summarize your main points, or repeat the basic idea of the thesis, or possibly provide a nice quote that wraps everything up. There are numerous ways to conclude an essay; just be sure you have a conclusion and don't just stop in the middle of the argument in the body of the essay.

### **Instructions for format of the first essay**

**Page length, margins, etc.** Your essay should be between 700 and 1000 words, which should be 2-3 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, with margins between 0.75 and 1 inch, and font size between 10 and 12 points.

**Using quotes versus paraphrasing ideas in your own words:** It's good to have a mix of direct quotes from the text as well as paraphrasing ideas into your own words, with more emphasis on the paraphrases than the quotes. You would use quotes when it is important to your argument to look at the specific words used in a text (even in translation), in order to prove a claim you're making. You could also do so when saying something in your own words would mean you end up basically giving a quote with just a couple of words changed—in that case, use a direct quote. But for the most part, focus on explaining the author's ideas in your own words.

**Citations for quotes and paraphrases:** Any time you use a quote or you paraphrase an idea from any text (whether from readings assigned for class, or from another source), you must cite the source of that quote or idea. If you use only texts assigned for the course, you do not need to provide a bibliography or "works cited" page at the end of the paper, just the author and page number after the quote or paraphrase (or, if we read more than one work by the same author, give the author, title of the work, and page number in parentheses). But if you use anything beyond what is assigned for the course, you must provide a bibliography or "works cited" page. You may use any of the standard citation methods: e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago/Turabian. If you are unsure how to use any of these, please see this page on the course website, which has links for how to cite sources:  
<http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102/assignments/resources/> (see: "Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism")

**Avoid plagiarism:** Any use of another's words, including just a sentence or part of a sentence, without citation, constitutes plagiarism. Use of another's ideas without citation does as well. To avoid plagiarism, always give a citation whenever you have taken ideas or direct words from another source. **Please see this page on the course website for information on how to avoid plagiarism**—quite a lot of plagiarism is not on purpose, just because students don't understand the rules!  
<http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102/assignments/resources/>

**Depth of explanation and narrowness vs. breadth and superficiality:** It's usually best to focus your paper on a small number of claims and argue for them in some depth rather than trying to range widely over a very large number of claims that you then only have space to justify very quickly. This is especially the case in a short essay like this.

Audience you should write for: Write this essay as if you were writing for someone who is not in the class, has not read the texts, and has not attended the lectures. Explain your view, and the arguments of the philosophers you discuss, in as much depth as would be needed to make them clear to such an audience.

### **How to submit your essay draft for peer feedback**

We will be doing peer feedback on the Canvas website (the Blogs site doesn't have this functionality). Go to that site (<http://canvas.ubc.ca>) and click on "Assignments" on the left menu. Click on "Peer review for first essay draft" and submit the following in a text box (don't upload a separate file):

1. A draft of your introductory paragraph, with your thesis statement
2. An outline that has the topic sentences for each of your body paragraphs for the essay (what this means will be discussed in class)

The above is due by Monday, Jan. 22, at noon. If you submit after that it will count as "late" and will count against your 3% for peer review in your final mark (unless you talk with Christina and you get approval for a late submission without penalty). You must submit by Jan. 23 at 11:59am because peer reviews will automatically be distributed at noon on Jan. 23. If you submit after that you may not be able to participate in the online peer review process (unless you have an approval from Christina).

Peer review comments on others' work are due by Friday, Jan. 26, 5pm. You can view comments by others as soon as they are done, and in any case they must be done by that deadline.

See the "announcements" on our Canvas site for help in doing and viewing peer reviews on Canvas.

### **How to submit the final version of your essay**

To submit the final version of your essay for marking, by the due date of noon on Jan. 31, go to the Canvas site for this course (<http://canvas.ubc.ca>) and click on "Assignments" on the left menu. Find the assignment called "first essay" and submit your essay as an attachment in MS Word or Open Office format (with the extension .doc, .docx, or .odt). If you use Mac Pages you can export those documents into MS Word format.

### **Marking**

Criteria for marking essays: See the "Guidelines for Writing Papers for this Course," posted under "writing help" under "assignments" on the course website: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102/assignments/resources/> There is also a marking rubric posted there, that shows the categories we use for marking essays.

Late penalty: Late drafts for peer review, and late final essays, must be accompanied by a "late paper form," accessible on the main course website (and also on Canvas) under "Assignments." Late final essays will receive a 5% per weekday penalty (and 5% for a weekend), beginning after the time and day when the essay is due, unless you have an acceptable excuse for turning in your essay late. So, for example, if you turn it in after noon on Wed., Jan. 31, and before 5pm Thurs. Feb. 1 it's 5 points off (out of 100). You should contact Christina or your T.A. before turning in a late essay, if at all possible.