

# Second essay assignment

PHIL 102, Hendricks, Spring 2018

## DUE DATES:

Peer feedback (all of the following takes place on Canvas):

- Draft for peer feedback due Tuesday March. 20 by noon
- Peer feedback opens Tuesday, March. 20 at 5pm (that's when you can see the others' work you need to comment on)
- Peer feedback must be completed by Friday, March 23, 5pm (Canvas)

Final essay due: Wednesday, March 28 by noon (Canvas)

## Essay topics

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 Fri. March 16.**

**1. The following are very similar in structure so I just made them two versions of the same topic. Choose either 1(a) or 1(b) (not both!).**

1(a). Think of a moral decision someone might have to make in their everyday lives (so, not necessarily a wider social issue as in 1(a)). This could be a real decision someone you know has to or had to make, or a made up situation. Compare/contrast how a utilitarian who agrees with Mill would approach it, and how a Kantian would approach it. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach to this particular issue.

1(b). Find a moral issue that is being discussed currently in the public sphere (such as in the news, on blogs, on social media), and compare/contrast how a utilitarian who agrees with Mill would approach it, and how a Kantian would approach it. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach to this particular issue.

- Note: you do not have to do extensive research on this issue. You can speak in general terms about it even if you don't know a lot of details. If at some point you find you would need more data to answer the topic fully, you can just say which data would be need and why you would need it.
- This is similar to 2(b), below, but that one is focused particularly on poverty, and on Singer/Nussbaum. If you wanted to talk about Utilitarian and Kantian approaches to an issue having to with helping people in need, that would fit here under 1(b).

For both 1(a) and 1(b):

- Explain the issue or the moral decision you're using an example, in enough detail to support the application of utilitarian and Kantian approaches to it later in the essay.

- Be sure to provide enough about the views of Mill and Kant to justify your claims about how a utilitarian or Kantian would address the issue (and remember the audience you should be writing for—see below, under format instructions).

**2. This one has two options as well, both being similar in some respects. Choose either 2(a) or 2(b).**

2(a). Singer and Nussbaum argue for different ways we could help those who are in need. Discuss how both Singer and Nussbaum argue for their different approaches, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. (this is a more theoretical question)

2(b). Find in the public sphere (in the news, on blogs, on social media, or elsewhere) an example of a place in the world (could be your local neighbourhood!) where people are in need of help (whether because of poverty, disease, famine, or other reasons). Explain the issue, and compare/contrast how Singer and Nussbaum would argue that we should help. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach to this particular issue.

- Note: you do not have to do extensive research on this issue. You can speak in general terms about it even if you don't know a lot of details. If at some point you find you would need more data to answer the topic fully, you can just say which data would be need and why you would need it.
- Be sure to provide enough detail about the views of Singer and Nussbaum to justify your claims about what they would say about the issue (and remember the audience you should be writing for—see below, under format instructions).

### **Specific requirements**

Page length, margins, etc.: Your essay should be between 1200-2000 words, which should be about 4-6 pages in length, 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/>

### Organizational structure

Your essay must have the following elements:

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.

### **General advice**

For various kinds of advice on writing essays for this course, see the "writing help" page on our website for a document with guidelines for writing essays, and a rubric with things we look for when marking them: <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.

### **What to submit for peer feedback**

We will be doing peer feedback on the Canvas website, as for the first essay. Go to that site (<http://canvas.ubc.ca>) and click on "Assignments" on the left menu. Click on "Peer review for first essay draft" to submit your work for feedback by others.

What should you submit by March 20 at noon? **You have a choice between the following things**—whatever you would most like feedback on, and what you're willing to share with two other students who will be reading it.

### **Choose either 1 or 2 as what to submit for peer feedback**

1. Intro, thesis & outline: Like the first essay, you could submit:

- a draft of your intro paragraph with your thesis statement
- an outline that has the topic sentences for each of your body paragraphs

One value in doing this is so that you and reviewers can compare whether what you plan to write actually links up well to the thesis, whether there are gaps in what you would need to write about to support the thesis fully, and whether the order of the paragraphs makes sense.

2. One or two paragraphs about a philosopher's view: Write no more than 350 words, in one or two paragraphs, where you describe some aspect of the views of one of the philosophers you'll discuss in your essay. One value in doing this is to try to head off mistakes in your interpretation of what the philosophers say (if there are such mistakes, that can affect the rest of your argument!). Another value is that others can comment on the degree of depth you're giving in explaining the view, since you are supposed to write as if for an audience of people not in the class and who haven't read the texts. This also gives you a chance to practice and get feedback on balancing quotes versus paraphrases in explaining a philosopher's view.

### **For both options:**

Do not put any identifying information on what you upload! Including: don't upload a late work form to this because then those doing peer review of your work will see it.

Submission of your work for peer feedback is due by Tuesday, March 20, 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 March 20 at noon because peer reviews will automatically be distributed at 5pm that day. 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, March 23, 5pm. You can view comments by others as soon as they are done (even before that deadline), and to count as on time they must be done by that deadline.

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

## **Submitting the final version of your essay**

To submit the final version of your essay for marking, by the due date of noon on Wednesday March 28, go to the Canvas site for this course (<http://canvas.ubc.ca>) and click on "Assignments" on the left menu. Find the assignment called "second essay" and submit your essay as an attachment in MS Word or Open Office format (with the extension .doc, .docx, .odt, or .pdf). If you use Mac Pages you can export those documents into MS Word or PDF 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 work

- 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."
  - If you are submitting a draft for peer review late, don't include your late paper form with what you submit because then the other students can also see it. Just email Christina separately with the form.
  - If your draft for peer review isn't submitted by noon on March 20, it will count off your peer review mark for the course (unless you have a justifiable excuse for submitting late; please talk to Christina!)
- 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 a justifiable excuse for turning in your essay late. So, for example, if you turn it in after noon on Wed., March 28, and before 5pm Thurs. March 29 it's 5 points off (out of 100). You should contact Christina before turning in a late essay, if at all possible.