

Reading notes instructions
PHIL 230, Hendricks, Fall 2014

Each small group in the class (groups arranged the second week of class) will have a page on the class wiki where they will post notes on the readings. Each member of each group will sign up for **two days** during the term, and they will be responsible for posting reading notes on the texts assigned for those days. Be sure to check the course website for the most up-to-date reading schedule—go to “reading and assignment schedule” on the top menu: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil230/>

There are several purposes for this assignment:

1. To give you practice in reading part of a complex philosophical text and concisely state one or more of the main points and arguments for them. You’ll need to distill the writing into a condensed outline of an argument (or more than one outline, if you wish).
2. To give students a forum for raising questions, making critical comments, or just thinking of topics they’d like to discuss further with their group members or the class. This class is big enough that not everyone’s ideas can get discussed in the big group. The wiki provides a place for you to ask questions or raise things for discussion that you can then raise to your group on the day we discuss the reading, or later (and the group has a written record of what you asked or commented, in case they want to remember it later).
3. To provide notes on one or more main arguments in many of the texts without everyone having to write their own, so you have a list of notes to refer to later.

What should be in the notes

You should choose one or more of what you take to be important points in the passages assigned for the day you sign up for. You can choose just one of the readings to do this for, if there is more than one assigned for that day. Then:

- (a). Write an outline of the argument in premises/conclusion form. Number the premises so they are easier to refer to in your comments, or when the group discusses the argument. If you want, you can do this for more than one of the main arguments in the passage assigned, but that’s optional.
 - Be sure you give enough information in the premises and conclusion to make the argument clear to someone who hasn’t read the text for awhile—people may be looking at these much later, studying for exams, etc. So while the outline should be concise, it also has to include enough information for this purpose.
 - Give page numbers or section numbers so that others can go back and find where this argument is in the text. If it spans quite a bit of the text, give page numbers or section numbers for each premise and for the conclusion. If it’s all on one or two pages of the text, you can just give the pages at the top of your notes.
- (b). Give at least two comments, questions, criticisms, on the argument you’ve outlined and/or on any other part of the text assigned for that day.

- At least one of these should be something that your small group could discuss (or more than one would be nice too!)—I’ll try to give the groups time to talk about these notes on the day the texts are assigned, and you’ll be in charge of asking the questions/bringing up the topics for them to discuss. So what you say in your comments should be at least one thing that the group could really talk about, not just factual questions that could be answered by a web search or asking the instructor. Raise a question or give a comment about which there could be more than one valid position or view.

How to submit your reading notes

Go to the class wiki page (<http://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:PHIL230-CH>), which is embedded in our main course page (see “wiki” on the top menu: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil230>).

Then find the wiki page for your group by clicking on the link for “reading notes pages,” and enter your reading notes under the appropriate heading. **Be sure to put your initials on your notes**, or your name if you don’t mind that being there, so we can tell easily who wrote what! We can check the edit history, but this will be easier.

Due dates & late penalty: Reading notes are due before 3pm on the day you’ve signed up for (not 3:30, because I don’t want anyone to be late to class because they’re finishing up their notes!). If you submit your notes after that time, without a valid excuse, you will receive 1 mark off per weekday (and 1 total for a weekend), for each set of notes that are late. Valid excuses for late notes may require documentation. You must turn in a **Late Work Form** for any late work, including reading notes. You can find that on the course website under “assignments,” and can send it to Christina via email (c.hendricks@ubc.ca).

Marking criteria/checklist

As noted above, reading notes can earn up to 10 possible marks each. Factors going into the calculation of your mark:

- Have you outlined one of the main arguments in the passage, or something rather peripheral?
 - Sometimes it may be hard to tell; don’t hesitate to ask Christina before you do your notes if you’re not sure.
- Have you put the argument into premises/conclusion outline form, and are the premises numbered?
- Have you given the page or section numbers for where the argument can be found in the text? (see above for explanation)
- Does the outline adequately capture the argument in the text?
 - There may be more than one way to list premises for a conclusion, but we will be looking for whether what you’ve outlined is an argument at all, whether your conclusion is, indeed, the conclusion of the argument you’re outlining, and whether you’ve captured all and only the reasons supporting that conclusion in your premises.
 - Whether or not you’ve given enough detail in your premises and conclusion to make the argument clear to someone who hasn’t read the text in a long time also factors in here
- Have you given at least two comments, questions, criticisms, and is at least one of those something that your small group could discuss? (see above for explanation)

