PHILOSOPHY PAPERS

Writing a good philosophy paper takes time. A good philosophy paper does not simply state an opinion, but offers arguments for the view you defend in your paper. You usually offer different arguments for the view you defend and assess the strengths and weaknesses of your arguments.

Think about the structure of your paper, before you start writing. Get in touch if you would like to discuss the structure or a draft of your paper with me.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR PAPERS

Paper addresses question
Make sure that your paper addresses. You may have interesting thoughts. However, if they are not relevant for answering the paper question, I can’t give you much credit for them. If you are uncertain whether what you plan to say is relevant, talk to me.

Understanding of course material
In paper questions you will often be asked to explain certain views we have covered in the course. To address this part of the question, you will often have to read the relevant text again. If you are asked to explain philosopher X’s view on topic A, try to explain it in your own words. An excellent paper will show clear and accurate understanding of the course material, and often presents the material by using own ideas/examples.

Argumentative reasoning
A very important part of a philosophy paper is that you provide reasons for the views you defend. An excellent paper will show that you have the ability to argue logically and that your arguments are well organized and structured. In an excellent paper you further show that you have thought about the view/problem and can offer arguments beyond what has been said in class.

Critical Evaluation
In a paper it is common that you consider several arguments for or against a view. For instance, you start with one argument, then consider an objection against the argument, and next you say what is weak about the objection. Before you end your paper you should come to an overall assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the different arguments and objections. In an excellent paper you will show by assessing the different arguments and objections that you have the ability to critically think for yourself.

Structure and presentation
A good philosophy paper has a clear structure. It has an introduction, a main part and a conclusion. You can divide the main part into sections. Each paragraph should focus on
one idea/argument. For instance, if you turn from an argument to an objection, start a new paragraph. Make the structure of your paper explicit and guide your reader.

**Use of sources**
Your philosophy papers will be based upon the ideas of other philosophers. If you refer to the views of others, by either literally quoting their views or by rephrasing their views in your own words, you have to acknowledge the relevant source. Failure to acknowledge the views of others, including online resources, is plagiarism and can lead to severe academic penalties. We use software which easily detects plagiarism. Be honest!

For helpful advice on how to write a good philosophy paper see

[http://www.jim Pryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html)