

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAPER 1

Pick a prompt of your choosing from Section A below and write a short essay on the same (700 – 900 words).

Refer to Section B for other important details.

Assignment Deadline: Friday, October 25, 2019 at 11:55 pm.

A. ESSAY PROMPTS:

1. In *Value of Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell makes the following claims:

“If all men were well off, if poverty and disease had been reduced to their lowest possible point, there would still remain much to be done to produce a valuable society; and even in the existing world the goods of the mind are at least as important as the goods of the body” (Russell 19).

What bearing does this claim have on the value of philosophy? Discuss and evaluate with reference to all the relevant readings including that of Plato’s.

2. Can we prove the existence of God through reason alone or do we need experience? Analyse and discuss with reference to your readings. In your analysis, defend an argument which you think is the strongest.

3. Is Rowe justified in arguing that the existence of evil in the world provides us with strong reasons to believe in atheism? Assess and discuss his argument with reference to the reading. A strong response would assess the strengths and the weaknesses of Rowe’s argument.

4. How does Descartes defeat the challenge of Pyrrhonian Scepticism (refer to the presentation for details)? A strong response would take into account Descartes’ (a) goals and aims underlying the *Meditations*; and (b) the particular nature of his epistemic method and the reasons why he excludes other methods.

5. Even if we have had some experience of causes and effects in everyday lives, why can we not claim to have *knowledge* of these causes and effects? What in Hume’s epistemic project allows him to make this claim?

6. Is Kant able to restore epistemic certainty to our everyday beliefs about the world? Assess and discuss, with reference to the text, why it may or may not be the case.

7. What reasons do we have to say that emotions have any epistemic significance? Why have they been considered as epistemically subversive throughout history?

B. GUIDELINES

1. Be mindful of the way in which some crucial philosophical terms are defined in your readings. For example, “atheism”, “a priori”, “a posteriori”, “analytic”, “synthetic”, “rational”, “empirical” – these are all terms that have specific meanings in your readings. It is key part of any philosophical activity to pay attention to the specific meanings of the terms.

2. In writing your essay you may use both the main textbook (“The Originals” / “TO”), or any other reading material posted on iLearn, and/or any of the lecture presentations for assistance.

However, do not plagiarise! (Any plagiarism would be detected by the Turnitin plagiarism detection software online and would be penalised.) Always try to use your own words and give credit (by using citations) where necessary. If you have to quote something directly always provide a citation. You must make use of both in-text citations, and provide complete citations under a “Works Cited” section at the end of your paper. A good formatting and citation style is the MLA. Refer to the following link for both formatting citation rules:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html

3. In order to be able to cite properly, you should download your main textbook in PDF format because the online version does not have any pagination whereas the PDF version does. You will need the pagination in order to be able to cite appropriately.

4. You must upload your essay in form of a PDF through the Turnitin submission link on your iLearn course-page (see above for the submission deadline).

6. Please include your full name and the relevant essay prompt on the first page of your essay. You may include page numbers if necessary.

BEST OF LUCK!