

PHILOSOPHY 2790 (A01) – MORAL PHILOSOPHY
SHORT ESSAY ASSIGNMENT 3

Instructions:

Select one of the essay topics below and compose a 1000-word (approximately 4 typed pages) essay answering the question. Essays must be typed, double-spaced, and must include references where appropriate.

This essay is due in class on Thursday December 6th. This essay is worth 20% of your fall term grade and will be graded out of 100. All of the essay topics are equally weighted.

Topics:

1. Anscombe argues that, shorn of its roots in Divine law, secular deontic ethics is unintelligible. Select Rawls or Habermas and address whether the approach taken by your selection successfully evades Anscombe's criticism.
2. Rawls' Original Position is presented as a rational procedure for determining universal principles of justice. Assess the merits of the procedure's claim to universality.
3. In *Political Liberalism* Rawls describes his 'political conception' of justice as a 'freestanding' conception in that it does not depend on the truth of any comprehensive doctrine. Is he successful in presenting a freestanding conception of justice?
4. Pick an issue or policy that President Trump has argued/promoted. Analyze whether Trump is engaged in discourse as understood by Habermas. That is, do Trump's speech acts implicitly presuppose as valid the Principle of Universalization?
5. Assess the merits of Habermas' transcendental-pragmatic argument for his Principle of Universalization (Principle U).
6. In "Reconciliation Through the Use of Public Reason: Remarks on John Rawls" and "A Reply to Habermas" Rawls and Habermas debate the merits of their respective approaches to procedural ethics. Who do you find more convincing in the debate and why?
7. You may devise a topic of your choosing with the approval of the instructor.