

Intro to Ethics (Online)

Paper Topics

Choose *one* of the following questions to respond to for your paper topic:

1. Consider the scenarios involving the unwilling moral agents of Jim and George in Bernard Williams's "Utilitarianism & Integrity". Describe the events that occur in each scenario (Be detailed your descriptions.) Explain how these events relate to the Brain in a Vat scenario in Robert Nozick's "The Experience Machine". Additionally explain how the thought experiments in each article exemplify objections regarding consequentialist judgments. Finally, using the selection from Mill's *Utilitarianism* to demonstrate how these objections might be unwarranted. Provide a detailed scenario that demonstrates your formulation of the unwarranted objections.
2. Describe Kant's line of reasoning in which he arrives at the Categorical Imperative. *(Simply stating the Categorical Imperative is not enough to satisfy this question. Describe Kant's reasoning to the best of your ability. Citing outside sources may be necessary to do this.)* What does this imply that all agents must have access to? Is this a reasonable constraint on moral agency and moral decision making? Additionally consider the Case of the Inquiring Murder once more. Provide a scenario in which it would be in accordance with laws of your country to tell the Inquiring Murder which way the victim went. Describe how this might be in accordance with the Categorical Imperative.
3. Consider Thomas Nagel's article, "Moral Luck". State the Control Principle. State the conditions for moral luck and how moral luck results from the Control Principle. Describe Nagel's four kinds of moral luck. Give examples for how each of these would violate the Control Principle. When viewing Nagel's position as a response to Kantian ethics, what is the most fundamental way in which we should evaluate moral judgments? Moreover, how does moral luck affect consequentialist judgments? Provide scenarios for instances in which moral luck might complicate both Kantian and consequentialist judgments (Make sure your scenarios include resolutions.)

Paper Instructions
Intro to Ethics (Online)

Submission Guidelines

- You may receive a **maximum of 30 points** for this assignment.
- When this paper is completed, submit it *via* the dropbox on the course website:
 - Submission Title – ex., *IntroEthics John Smith – Final Paper*
 - File Name – ex., *John_Smith_IntroEthics_FinalPaper*
- All files must be submitted in .doc or .docx format. Encrypted, unreadable, or any other files that are not the correct type will receive an automatic “0” for the assignment. Please consult your campus OTS for a student copy of MS Word.
- Make sure your final submission is complete and that any comments that I added after it was returned to you have been removed. You will only be allowed to submit once! All submissions are *final*!
- I will receive drafts of your paper *via* the dropbox named “Paper Drafts,” which can be found in the “Final Paper” folder of the Course Content. I will return all drafts with comments, using the comment function in MS Word. Additional time for the assignment be provided at my discretion. After the draft deadline there is no guarantee I will be able to review your draft.

Paper Topic Response Criteria

- Choose *only one* of the assigned paper topics for your paper. What I am looking for in this paper assignment is for you to demonstrate the same skills of critical thinking, reading comprehension, and evaluation that you have attempted to demonstrate in the Discussion Boards over the course of the semester. Read each question carefully before deciding which question to respond to in your paper. There is no need to notify me of your choice, and you may change topics at any time. However, you should clearly state which question you are responding to in the title of your essay. You must present a well-organized paper that appropriately cites relevant material for each question. To ensure that you accomplish this goal it is recommended that you submit to me drafts and/or outlines *via* the dropbox. This is only recommended. Not required.

Paper Structure Guidelines

- The first paragraph of your paper is the introduction. This paragraph is important because it contains your thesis statement. Your thesis statement is the roadmap to your paper. If you have not yet completed your composition requirement, or are uncertain about what a thesis statement is; then please take the time to visit the following website - Thesis

Statement Handout. If you have further questions regarding the matter, then you should the campus Writing Center. Additionally, the conclusion of your paper should clearly restate your thesis and how you have went about proving it. Formatting the structure of your paper this way is commonly referred to as "the Five Paragraph Essay."

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- For citations use MLA formatting style. *You must cite your sources!* Please see the listed on the syllabus or consult the Writing Center for help. You should use only the assigned material and class notes for this assignment. Make sure to place your works cited on a separate page at the end of your final paper. This page should be marked "Works Cited". If you need to cite text, then please only do so in line – **Do not use block quotes!**
 - *The length of your paper must be between 1000 -1500 words.* You must meet the minimum word count for me to consider your paper for a grade. Any work that is significantly under 1000 words will not be considered and receive a score of "0". With regards to work which is submitted that is in gross excess of 1500 words – *Quantity does not equal quality.* In the interest of efficiency, I stop reading any work that is in excess of 1500 words, once 1500 has been reached. Proofread and consider carefully the work that you write before submitting it. *I was a student long enough to know when someone is trying to full up space!*

Formatting Guidelines

- At the top of the first page of your paper (on the page not in the margin) must be:

Your Name
Final Paper (Or Paper Draft)
Intro to Ethics (Online)
Professor LaMendola
Current Semester

This should be followed by a blank and then the question you are responding to in **boldfaced type**. *Please make sure to clearly mark which question you are responding to at the top of your essay submission.* No title is necessary for your paper other than this. Include in the header (margin) of each page after the first your last name and page number; ex., "Smith 1". All text must be formatted to Times New Roman 12pt. Please make sure to use standard margins and no extra spaces between paragraphs.

Please contact me if you have further questions for this assignment.

"Say, Saying, Said" Method
Paper Assignments
Intro to Philosophy
Professor LaMendola

What is the structure of a paper?

Introduction – Your first paragraph (Say what you're going to say)

- Issue – What is the main issue your paper is about and why is it important.
- Thesis – What position are you going to take on the issue and why?
 - The thesis is the most important, and sometimes most difficult part of the paper. Practicing writing thesis statements is an invaluable tool.
 - Netflix movie descriptions; "Striving for an economy of language"
- *e.g., In the following paper I will argue that we should stop eating at Torchy's Tacos, specifically explaining how what is served should not be considered a taco.*
 - Write in first person. Using first person does not cause bias or confusion. If anything, first person allows you to speak to the reader in an authentic, immediate and clear manner.

Road map – What will be the main sections of your paper?

- The Form – "First, I'm going to give an overview of the issue and position X; second, I'm going to explain and evaluate the first argument; third, I'm going to explain and evaluate the second argument; fourth, I'm going to give my own argument; finally, I will conclude that, based on the evaluations of the available arguments, X is not a very plausible solution to/explanation of the issue, instead we ought to adopt an approach more like Y. However, it is critical I begin discussing X."
- Example - *First I will explain how Torchy's Tacos come to be, highlighting those factors I believe lead to them serve hip taco recipes. Second, I will explain criteria for a taco and how Torchy's does not met that standard. Finally, I will explain how Torchy's at best serves 'honky tacos', but regardless we should not consider their food as genuine tacos. I will conclude with a general approach to relieving taco ordering anxiety, as well as alternative venues to purchase genuine tacos in the Houston and Austin areas. Let's begin our inquiry into taconess.*

Body (Saying what you're going to say) – Three Parts

Pt. 1 – Exposition

- The exposition can be done in two possible ways: One is to write this section in terms of the position you'll be defending, the other is to focus on explaining the position you'll be arguing against. Either way is fine. About a page to a page and a half should be dedicated to explaining precisely what the main issue is and what the points of debate are (i.e., sub-

issues). You don't need to give the particular arguments for or against a position in detailed form, but once you've outlined the contested sub-issues, you should, in a sentence, state what the main positions are on that sub-issue. In this section, you should also make clear any technical terms you or the author introduce which are relevant.

- Don't cite the dictionary. There's generally accepted definitions (which anyone can find), and there the way the assigned authors are using the terms in question. You should be concerned with the latter.

Pt. 2 - Arguments and Dialectic – Following your roadmap, the second part of paper is the nuanced bit where you must make clear to the reader the fine-grained points at hand.

- Your paper should clearly identify the following:
 - the main premises of the argument you'll be evaluating.
 - the main objection(s) to this argument.
 - what position you'll eventually side with and why
 - Specifically considered in terms of whether the objections are successful or fail

Pt. 3 - Opinions and Solutions

- Depending on how you structure your paper, your own input might be in the form of (a) analysis or original reply/counter-argument within the context of the dialectic in Body Pt. 2; and/or (b) adding an innovation to or strengthening an existing argument or response.
- However, you may also, if you so choose, introduce your own original line of argument into the issue. If you choose to do this, you should follow this structure:
 - Introduce your own line of argument for/against the main position.
 - Explain why your argument is relevant to the debate.
 - Consider objections to your argument.
 - Show why those objections don't, on balance, defeat your argument.
 - The last part might be difficult for the short papers you have been assigned. But if you have an idea, I would like to discuss it with you.

Conclusion (Say what you said)

- Restate the main issue and the position you were arguing for/against.
 - Thesis and Body Pt. 1
- Summarize the main reasons for which position X should be accepted or rejected
 - i.e., your arguments/conclusions from Body Pt. 2&3
- Suggest how your conclusion might have implications for other issues (Optional).

"Say, Saying, Said" Method
Example Paper Outline
Intro to Philosophy
Professor LaMendola

The following is an example outline using the instructions provided for papers. This is a generic outline of a term paper using the instructions provided in that sheet. You should be able to map any paper you write using onto the outline form given here.

Introduction

1. Thesis – Argue to accept, reject, and/or modify X
 - a. Explain X
 - b. Dialectic regarding the specific issue with X
 - c. Conclusion(s) about X, and/or possible solutions about X

Body

2. (a) Explain X
 - a. Statement of X using the primary source
 - b. History of X
 - c. Problem/Observation about X
3. (b) Dialectic about X
 - a. Outline the argument for X and where it goes awry
 - b. Explicitly your argument to accept or reject X
4. (c) Conclusions and solutions for the issue with X
 - a. Your conclusions about X
 - b. What possible solutions/alternatives can be given for X

Conclusion

5. Restate issue and thesis about X
6. Summarize your argument/discussion of X
7. Closing remarks about the issue