

PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

OVERVIEW

You will write one paper on an open prompt calling on you to design and defend an argument of your own invention. You will write this paper in two stages: first, a premise-conclusion outline, and second, a full draft. Late work will be penalized by 1/3 letter grade per day.

Turn in your outline and paper via Canvas. Include a word-count. To ensure fair and unbiased (anonymous) grading, the paper itself must not contain your name, but should contain your student matriculation number. Papers that do not conform to these standards will not be accepted.

Your papers should be directed at an “interested but untrained reader”. Write as if you were trying to explain the target arguments to an intelligent friend who knows little about our course topics. Use your own words, and keep things simple and clear; your goal is to help your friend understand, not to impress her with your vocabulary or sophistication.

STAGE 1: OUTLINE (DUE: 6 OCTOBER)

Your task is to create something new – an original philosophical argument. In 300 words or less, offer a formally valid argument in premise-conclusion form on behalf of a substantive philosophical thesis. Its conclusion should bear on central course themes.

I strongly recommend you meet with me to discuss your outline early on in its development.

STAGE 2: FULL PAPER (DUE: 24 NOVEMBER)

Having composed an outline, you will now turn it into a full paper.

Write a paper of no more than 14 pages or 4,200 words in which you offer, develop, and defend an original philosophical argument on behalf of some substantive philosophical thesis concerning central course themes. Offer a valid argument in premise-conclusion form on behalf of your thesis. Explain and motivate (offer evidence for) each premise of your argument and defend at least one premise against what you take to be a strong objection. If you wish, you may also compare or contrast your argument (or its premises) with those offered by other philosophers. But your main task is to do something *novel*.