

History of Ethics: The Final Project

Overview of Timeline of Required Components

I. Stages of Philosophical Writing Assignment Series

1. **Proposal Abstract (300 words) in lieu of your weekly | Due April 15th**
2. **One Minute Pitch Meeting in lieu of your weekly | To be held the Week of April 22nd**
3. **Peer Review Draft Exchange in lieu of your weekly | Due April 29th**

II. Final Paper

4. **6-7 page Final Paper | Due May 6th**

Final Paper Each student will complete a 6-7 page final paper on any issue engaging with one or more of the major figures of the course (other figures are also possible with my approval). You have autonomy in conceiving the purpose of your paper, though you should expect your paper to accomplish one or more of the following argument types:

1. **TOPICAL ARGUMENT - Frame and Enter a Topical Debate:** Enter into a conversation with an historical figure on a topical issue or question: E.g. What are moral judgments? Is Kantian moral agency possible?
1. **INTERPRETIVE ARGUMENT -Engage an Interpretive Dispute:** Engage in an existing debate in the secondary literature between differing interpretations of an historical philosopher's views. E.g. Is Hume a moral realist? How does Kant understand the possibility of evil?
2. **RECONSTRUCTIVE ARGUMENT - Reconstruct and Amend:** Try to defend an historical philosopher's view from some classic objections or problems by reconstructing a fortified or amended version of their position. E.g. How could a Kantian respond to the murderer at the door objection?

Stages of Philosophical Writing Assignment Series My approach to assignment design is motivated by the idea that inquiry is, at its best, a social enterprise. While it is understandable that many students see academic inquiry in general and philosophy in particular as a solitary endeavor, successful academic inquiry never happens in a vacuum, but involves communicative encounters with other interlocutors at critical stages. In keeping with these ideas, I've found that students show engagement with their work when they feel like it will be engaged with, and not simply assigned a grade by the course instructor. *Philosophy also takes time*, and is best approached in a way that allows for false starts and late-game changes of plans. To this end, you will complete a series of interactive assignments designed to help you along the way in conceiving, planning, and executing your final paper. This will include the following three components:

1. **Proposal Abstract (complete in lieu of your weekly 4/15) - ~ 300 words in which you articulate the following:**

- 1) **A guiding question that your paper is meant to address**
- 2) **Your tentative response to this guiding question: Can it be resolved? If so, how? If not, why not?**

2. **One Minute Pitch Meeting (complete in lieu of your weekly some time during the week of 4/22) -** In the spirit of the 3-minute dissertation, everyone will give a one minute oral pitch of the argumentative claim of the paper, and will receive one minute of suggestions from their peer. **Due to the extraordinary circumstances, you will hold the pitch meeting in 2 person Zoom meetings outside of our class meeting time.** Holding the meeting will fulfill your Weekly assignment for that week.

3. **Peer Review of a 750 Word Summary Draft (complete draft in lieu of your weekly by 4/29) -** Each student will give and receive feedback on a 750 word summary draft that gives an outline of the unfinished paper (a complete draft is also acceptable). This is an opportunity for you to get honest critical feedback from your peers at the stages where it matters most. I will pair students up and you will exchange your drafts directly via email by 4/29. You will then have 3 days to provide your peer with 1-2 helpful suggestions or critical questions.

Note: Feedback from students may be uneven in quality. However, the major value of this assignment is for *you* to occupy the role of reviewer, and to think critically about the work of others *as an avenue to think about your own work.*