

Philosophy 272-L41
Essay Topics, Spring 2017
Due Date: End of Term, June 22nd ?

There are several things to remember: It is best for you to formulate your own topic instead of relying on my guidance. You should familiarize yourself with how to write a philosophy paper using the documents linked to my site. You will produce an argumentative paper in most cases. You should produce a paper between 7-10 pages. It should be double-spaced and use consistent documentation.

1. You can take any issue in our textbook not covered in our course readings and analyze it. This could assume several strategies. One, you could take two competing positions on the issue, i.e. on pornography, on environmental ethics, or a medical ethical issue like reproductive technologies and analyze the arguments. In the process you will compose an argumentative paper that shows why one position is to be accepted above the other or why neither is acceptable. To be sure, there are many thesis positions, including finding some claims acceptable, others not, within any given argument.

3. Compose something more akin to a research paper on any current or contemporary moral problem or issue. You could find several articles and arguments on this topic, analyze these positions and argue a case for which position is better. **You might also develop your own argument in light of any one issue in our course. Obviously it cannot repeat positions other authors have assumed but should develop an original solution to the problem.**

4. Critically apply the perspective of Deep Ecology to any one case involving the environment. This could be a recent case, the BP oil spill or any local case, such as the Coop Upgrader initiative to recycle water. As you apply this perspective you should also compare it to other perspectives, the best alternative being Utilitarianism and determine whether Deep Ecology is a viable perspective to help us solve or prevent the problem. Of course you will need to read at least one article on Deep Ecology in the textbook.

5. Confront the ethical issue of future generations. You might start by considering its value and importance in at least two articles in our textbook, Feinberg's and Gardiner's. Include an analysis of Trudy Govier's view of Future People or generations. Address its problems and try to argue a case for how it might still be possible to preserve this perspective. Of course you want to consider the implications of her argument or claims in the process.

6. Analyzing Gordon Graham's excerpt entitled "The Internet: A Philosophical Inquiry" show how his thinking works and attempt to identify not only the implications of his position but the critical questions still lingering. Does Graham adopt a clear ethical theory or position? Does this perspective limit his analysis?
7. You could take any new technology or the field of science in general and look at any ethical issue. Of course, you will produce an argumentative essay in the course of exploring and discussing the issue.
8. Case Study paper. Select a case involving some moral dilemma. After studying the documents on my website, perform positive, normative and strategic analysis of this case. Write the report so as to show the results of each type of analysis.
9. Produce an argumentative paper on any contemporary moral issue not covered in the class. Some issues include: the use of violence in sport, the use of performance enhancing substances, affirmative action, capital punishment. Such a paper requires you to think up reasons for or against a position and formulate these points in such a way to support them through the course of your paper. One important skill is to show how objections to your stance can be neutralized, disregarded or even refuted.