**UCOR 2500—SIKES**

**Final Paper Guidelines and Topics**

AUDIENCE

You should write your paper with an audience in mind. Imagine you are writing this for a reader completely unfamiliar with this class and most likely unfamiliar with the works we read. The reader would be an educated one, so you can assume some basic knowledge about the major philosophers of the Western tradition, just not that any of the details of their works would necessarily be known. Do not refer to the class and you do not need to footnote class discussion. You also need to write in an “objective” tone; don’t refer to subjective feelings and opinions about the topic as the basis for your argument. Your thesis and conclusions should be ones that are, for the most part, universally true, and the arguments you make in the paper should demonstrate why. You can use personal anecdotes to illustrate what happens for the most part to us all (universally).

You may also use the philosophies studied and their arguments to interpret some question you have about life, politics, the environment, or a work of art, literature, film, etc. If you do this, you would need to make sure that you weave enough philosophical interpretation and argumentation from the texts into your analysis of your question.

**Question and Thesis.** *For details on this, see “Creating a Strong Thesis” under Lessons in Angel.*

* Begin by thinking of a philosophical question you have from our discussions or readings that you want to answer or explore in the paper. You need not always “answer” your question in the paper; sometimes a thorough exploration of why the question arises to begin with is already a good philosophical meditation.
* The question should center on a problem that is relevant to at least **three** of the philosophers we studied, **one** of which must be from the second half of the course (Abram, Sartre, Beauvoir).The question should be of vital philosophical importance to you and others.
* The thesis is a statement that frames the question you will deal with in a way that shows the reader why they should care about the topic you will be discussing. It is a concise statement of the argument, interpretation, or point of the paper. Do some free-writing beforehand on your question in order to discover what your thesis will be. Start writing the first draft of your paper once you have a clear and distinct idea of what your thesis is. I am happy to help you develop your thesis during office hours or by email. Please get in touch!! Or, you can use the writing center as a resource.

**Guidelines.**

* The paper needs to **bring in analysis** with **textual citations** of THREE texts studied so far, one of which must be from Abram, Sartre, or Beauvoir. If at least three of the philosophers are not adequately analyzed, this will negatively affect the grade of the paper. Conversely, if you are able to discuss more than three in some detail, this will positively affect your grade!
* Papers must be between 5-7 pages, double-spaced. Less than 5 pages will negatively affect the grade for the paper. More than 7 pages, however, will not positively affect your grade. Stay within the stated parameters for the paper length.
* Turn in your paper on canvas.
* LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Be prepared to turn your paper in on time.
* A bibliography must be included. You can find the bibliographical references for all of the texts used in this class on the first page of the syllabus. Points will be taken off for not having a bibliography.
* Your paper should have a title.

**Grading Criteria.** *For a complete description of the grading criteria, see the “Guidelines for Writing Philosophy Papers” under Lessons in Angel.*

Papers are graded on three criteria:

* *Strength of thesis.* Does the paper pass the “So what?” test?
* *Strength of argument.* Does the paper give enough evidence, textual or otherwise, to argue the thesis convincingly?
* *Writing.* Is the paper proofread? Are there grammatical, spelling, or stylistic problems? Is the paper well organized? Is it written using clear and precise language?

**Again, feel free to email me with a thesis or idea for a paper that you want to work on! Or drop by office hours as listed on the syllabus. If I am not in my office, please call: 206-619-4458.**

CITING AND REFERENCING THE TEXTS

I will allow you to use any format for citing and referencing you are familiar with as long as you are consistent.

For those who do not have any style, here is a short guide to use if you want. It is based on the Chicago reference style.

**Bibliography**. Include the bibliography for all the texts cited at the end of the paper. Cut and paste the citations from the syllabus on Angel. After each bibliographical entry, note an abbreviation for each text that is used to cite text and page within your paper.

*Example*:

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (Citadel, 2000). Cited in text as EH, followed by page number.

Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, tr. Walter Kaufman (Touchstone, 1971). Cited in text as IT, followed by page number.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

Whenever you quote the text, you need to give a citation reference. Even if you paraphrase (say exactly what another text says, but in your own words), you need to give a reference. When you cite, you need to punctuate correctly, and make sure that the whole sentence reads in a grammatically correct fashion.

*Example:*

Thoreau writes, “Be it life or death, we crave only reality” (W, 64).

* Note that the punctuation goes after the parenthesis, not inside the quotation marks.

*But what if there’s a question mark at the end?*

*Example:*

Thoreau writes, “Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself” (W, 90)?

*What about a paraphrase?*

*Example:*

Thoreau says that he went to the woods so that he could live deliberately and feel the intensity of life in all its glory and horror, however it may be (W, 59).

*What if I paraphrase an argument in a text that covers two or three pages?*

*Example:*

In the chapter on solitude, Thoreau again revisits the theme of awakening. First he speaks of his awakening of sense and spirit in nature and then impresses upon us each the need to find our own perennial source for awakening in our lives.[[1]](#footnote-1)

*In this citation I use a footnote and the abbreviation* Cf*., followed by the text abbreviation and pages to indicate that I want the reader to see the pages indicated for more detail about what I’m discussing.*

1. Cf. W, 84-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)