

34-112 (01): Philosophy and Human Nature (Guetter)
Winter 2018

Research Assignment

Directions: Produce an original, cogent argument on any one of A1 – A4 below. Impress us with your ability to locate and incorporate relevant and reasonably current philosophy journal articles (= ‘secondary sources’) into your work.

- A1. Socrates complains that the body is an impediment to knowledge. Do you agree? Why or why not? In your response, take account of the relevant evidence in the *Phaedo*.
- A2. Marcus considers living well to be consistent with Fate. Do you agree? Why or why not? In your response, take account of the relevant evidence in the *Meditations*.
- A3. Montaigne regards honesty as virtue. Do you agree? Why or why not? In your response, take account of the relevant evidence in the *Essays*.
- A4. Rousseau thinks reason is seriously over-rated. Do you agree? Why or why not? In your response, take account of the relevant evidence in the *Discourse on Inequality*.

Length: 4 – 6 double-spaced pages

Primary source: As indicated in the question

Secondary sources: 3 – 5 (see Rule 2a)

Required method of citation: [MLA style](#), but include a separate title page (see Rule 4b)

Due: 23 Mar; *Deadline:* 26 Mar, 1.00p (see esp. Rule 8)

Lateness deduction: 10% per solar day, until both versions are in (see Rule 7)

The Rules

1. **General.** Develop an original, textually informed, and philosophical (*vs.* literary, historical, scientific, religious, etc.) response to any ONE of the choices indicated above. Your ‘assessment’ (see Rule 4a) should take the form of a cogent or sound argument. FYI, the premises in a *sound* argument guarantee the truth of their conclusion, but in a *cogent* one they establish only that their conclusion is likely. Note: You are permitted to narrow the question, but not to broaden it.

2. **Evidence.** a) Two sorts are required: *primary* (= the author(s) and reading(s) indicated in the question) and *secondary* (= scholarship in related research literature). For 100-level courses, you are expected to include three to five secondary sources in addition to the primary one(s); for 200-level courses, it’s four to six. Dictionaries, encyclopedias, webpages (even those by university professors), newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and the like are prohibited because they carry little to no weight, at least when compared to peer-reviewed articles written by experts in the particular field of research – and that’s why you’ll lose marks if you include them.

 b) Many students get quite angry when they realize – inevitably too late to do anything about it – that if they’d only remembered this Rule 2 they could’ve avoided losing *all those marks* under the ‘quality of research’ parameter (see Rule 5 below). Your paper constitutes a research task whose leeway while considerable does not extend so far as to permit you to include in your supporting evidence what has here been categorically defined as out of bounds, or to exclude what has here been required. *Think long and hard about this: It’s a big part of my job to make scholarly demands of you and an even bigger part of yours to do everything in your power to fulfil them.* This rule in no way precludes you from surprising us with your inventiveness in fulfilling those expectations.

3. **Length.** For 100-level courses, four to six double-spaced pages in a no-nonsense font (e.g. Times New Roman 12) and 1" margins all around; for 200-level, the page count is six to eight. (See illustration in Rule 4c below.)

4. **Format.** (a) First half of paper = analysis, description; all your ‘research’ is to be confined to this half, including explanations and/or examples of points expressed in the primary material; secondary sources are often quite helpful for this purpose. Second half of paper = assessment, evaluation; your own argument is restricted to this half. Because ‘your own argument’ = *your* point plus *your* reasons, if you agree with A’s argument then it falls to you to say why you think A’s reasons are such good ones. If the reporter’s job is to describe things accurately but the editor’s is to express a well-reasoned opinion about something that’s already been reported, then be a *reporter* in the first half and an *editor* in the second.

 (b) *Small but significant tweak.* Steal a bit of space from the first half of your paper for a vitally important sub-section: the ‘Abstract’. Divide its 50-word limit into no more than two sentences, one expressing *your* point and the other expressing *your* supporting reasons. The abstract is a summary of your own argument (= your intellectual *results*) rather than about what you’ll be *doing* in the paper. (If you don’t know what an argument is, find out before you lose lots of marks under the ‘quality of own argument’ parameter just because you didn’t.) In this way, the abstract – in effect a ‘report’ on your own argument – naturally belongs in the first half of your paper. Note that MLA format reserves some space for name, course, title, etc. on the first page of the body; for our purposes, move that information to your title page and use the resulting freed-up space for your abstract. *Papers lacking this two-sentence abstract will not earn a grade higher than B+ no matter how excellent they otherwise are; it’s hard work, but once you actually do it you’ll see why it was worth learning how to do.*

Abstract

✓ In this paper I will argue that X. My main reason is that Y.

In this case, X and Y are statements, and as such it makes sense to ask whether or not they are true, but not whether or not they exist.

compare:

✗ In this paper I will discuss X, which will be compared to Y.

Here, X and Y are subjects or topics but not statements, and as such it might make sense to ask whether or not they exist, but not whether or not they are true. This sort of paper uses words to say things (maybe interesting, maybe not) without ever actually arguing anything. Only an argument even attempts to make a point.

Warning: Any such paper will fail to meet the expectations of this course unless your ‘discussion’ is in fact an argument.

✗ A thinks X. A’s main reason is Y.

This is a descriptive report on A’s argument rather than one of your own. The most that can be said, in this scenario, is that it’s true that something exists – namely that the author’s argument is in fact what you say it is.

Warning: Any such paper will fail to meet the expectations of this course because you are to invent an argument of your own rather than to present someone else’s.

(c) Here’s the structure of an 8-page paper (for a 6-page paper, eliminate one from each of ‘research’ and ‘evaluation’):

	1	2	3	4
Title page	Abstract			
	Research			
5	6	7	8	9
Evaluation				Works Cited

5. **Evaluation criteria.** Major criterion: Quality of content (80%, divided equally between ‘quality of

own argument' and 'quality of research'). *Minor criterion*: Quality of expression (20%), including such things as clarity, substance, conciseness, spelling/grammar, and eloquence; this parameter also covers lots of other things, for instance those pertinent to format (quality of Title page, Works Cited page, and section sub-titles) as well as style of referencing. *Evaluation form included below; please attach a duly filled-in copy to the physical version you hand in for formal evaluation.*

6. **Deductions.** Submission of work for credit in this course implies your acceptance of the following:

a) *It loses some marks due to lateness.* The lateness penalty is 10% per solar day (e.g. from Mon 8.31 a.m. to Tue 8.30 a.m.); note that the lateness clock doesn't stop ticking just because the University is open when you're ready to hand in your work: I or my designate (but not a department secretary) must also be physically available to receive it. So: If you miss me because I'm not on campus that day (e.g. Thursdays, Fridays), then you've just lost another 10% for each of them. The price clearly goes up very quickly.

b) *It loses some marks due to unoriginality.* A *SafeAssign* "matching score" above 25% often indicates that you're relying too much on others and not enough on yourself. Each additional 5% block beyond the limit (26–30%, 31–35%, etc.) in the body of your paper is subject to an unoriginality penalty of 5%.

c) *It loses all marks due to the particular sort of unoriginality known as plagiarism.* The crime of ACADEMIC THEFT doesn't distinguish between 'not much' on one hand and 'too much' on the other, so correct it before it's too late to avoid sinking your ship – in this course if not also beyond. The consequences are severe and uncompromising (see FAHSS template for definition). **Use your 48-hour penalty-free extension** to make any needed adjustments given the feedback from *SafeAssign*'s "Matching Score" feature. It's as easy to fix as giving credit where it belongs and thus explains why the penalty for *not* fixing it is so significant. The due date is preliminary and for a *private informational* purpose whereas the deadline is final and for a *public declaratory* one.

7. **Completeness.** Papers will remain unevaluated (while lateness penalties continue to accrue) until they are **complete**, and they are not 'complete' until they are submitted in *two* formats: (i) physical, directly to me – or, if for some good reason that is not possible, to my assistant – and (ii) electronic, directly via Blackboard (Resources > 'Research assignment upload link'; to discover the "Matching" score for yours, upload your file, click 'Submit', and wait for your *SafeAssign* matching score to be returned; it takes a little while, so be patient). It is the *later* of these two dates/times (physical/electronic) that will count for official 'submitted by' purposes. You are advised to check for unoriginality and plagiarism well before the deadline, because after that although you'll be able to submit your work you'll not be able to make any needed adjustments to it. Also, you'll find that any reason along the lines of "*But *&^%\$#@!, I've never used SafeAssign before!*" will go absolutely nowhere with me. Always upload your latest version in case of horrifying last-minute computer-related malfunctions, just to be sure you have something on file even if it's not the final and best response you were able eventually to formulate. *Note that physical papers will not be accepted unless they are **stapled** in the upper left-hand corner: no dog-ears, envelopes, ribbons, or paper clips.*

8. **Extensions.** Everyone gets two penalty-free days. Don't confuse the DUE DATE and the DEADLINE; the due date/time does not include an extension sufficient to handle all emergencies whether computer-related or not (e.g. morbidity, mortality) that arise in the last two days. That's why the time budget stipulated in Rule 6 above includes your having set aside 48 hours to make any

needed adjustments to your unoriginality score on SafeAssign. Get started, then, as soon as the choices are published so that you can absorb any delays imposed by the things beyond your control in those last two days – everyone knows they always happen at the worst possible time (the last day or two), so ***if you plan for them you won't be devastated***. On the plus side, if nothing terribly devastating happens, you'll be able to improve your work even more given the windfall of two extra days.

If you need more than that, though, you have to pay the lateness fee. Lateness continues until you provide me with a copy of the documentary evidence in support of a compassionate-grounds claim (see FAHSS course outline template).

9. ***Appeals***. Applicable only if your work was graded by someone other than me. Note that I mark final exams myself.

a) Within seven calendar days (*three* during the Intersession) of the research papers being available for return, you meet with my assistant to work toward resolution of any dispute; s/he will provide office hours during the following few days especially for this purpose. Only if you remain unsatisfied after this consultation do you have leave to petition me for reconsideration.

b) Within fourteen calendar days (*seven* during the Intersession) of the research papers being available for return, you give me a copy of your graded paper plus a cover letter in which you argue that the evaluative standards for this course were improperly applied to your work. Be specific and thorough, because you will have only one chance to make your application to the Court of Appeal (= me). Understand that if in my professional judgement the grade you're disputing was actually too high, I will reduce it to what it would have earned had I marked it myself.

Please fill in and include as *last page of your paper*.

Paper title _____

Student Name _____

Student Number _____

FOR INSTRUCTOR USE ONLY

Content: quality of own argument (40%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	A	B	C	D	F	
	35	30	26	22	0-18	_____

Content: quality of research (40%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	A	B	C	D	F	
	35	30	26	22	0-18	_____

Expression: substance, clarity, conciseness, spelling/grammar, eloquence, format, etc. (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	A	B	C	D	F	
	18	15	13	11	0-9	_____

Gross: _____

Lateness deduction: _____ solar days _____

SafeAssign unoriginality deduction: _____%

Suspected-plagiarism deduction (100%): _____

Total deductions: _____ → → → - _____

Net: _____

<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Marginal	Unsatisfactory