

PHIL08
Ethics

Final Paper Assignment

Provide a clear and concise response to **one** of the following prompts in a 3-5 page paper (750-1250 words):

1. At the end of *Gone Baby Gone*, Patrick decides to call the police and return Amanda to her biological mother. Evaluate this decision using at least one theory from the following two groups: (A) Virtue Ethics/ The Ethics of Care (B) Kantianism/Utilitarianism. Explain whether (and why) *you* think that Patrick's decision is morally legitimate, anticipating and addressing at least one significant potential objection to your view.

2. In *Million Dollar Baby*, Frankie ultimately complies with Maggie's request for assistance in ending her life. James Rachels and Bonnie Steinbock disagree about whether the American Medical Association has a legitimate position on the role that physicians may play in providing this kind of assistance. Explain the central disagreement between their respective position, and then discuss whether you think the means by which Frankie brings about Maggie's death would be permitted under Steinbock's understanding of what a doctor is morally allowed to do. Finally, explain whether (and why) *you* think Frankie's actions toward the end of the film are morally permissible, anticipating and addressing at least one significant potential objection to your view.

3. In "Consider the Lobster", David Foster Wallace writes, "I believe animals are less morally important than human beings, and when it comes to defending such a belief, even to myself, I have to acknowledge that... I have not succeeded in working out any sort of personal ethical system in which the belief is truly defensible instead of just selfishly convenient." Evaluate this remark via the respective views of Tom Regan and Carl Cohen. Then explain whether (and why) *you* think that it is possible to defend the moral legitimacy of eating boiled lobster, anticipating and addressing at least one significant potential objection to your view.

ASSIGNMENT AIM: This paper is assigned as an exercise in developing an original philosophical response to a problem from our readings. You should maintain a high level of expository rigor (the emphasis of the first paper) as well a clear critical comparison of all relevant views. This paper differs from the first essay, in that you are *required to construct an original argument for your own view*.

FORMAT: In order to receive comments on your paper, the final version of your paper must be typed, double spaced, stapled, and submitted to me no later than the date of our final class meeting. Because this date marks the end of our course, late papers will not be accepted for comments. Comments will be provided by mail—if **you want comments, attach a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage**.

HOWEVER: I will accept papers via email until **10:00 a.m.** on the following Thursday for full credit. These papers will not receive comments of any kind, but they will be thoroughly read and graded. **THIS IS A FIRM DEADLINE—I WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY PAPERS AFTER THIS TIME.**

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA:

Organization (10%):

Your paper should begin with a brief introduction that includes a clear, easily identifiable thesis statement. It may be a good idea to briefly describe the structure of your paper in your introduction (i.e. “In the following I will discuss...”) When reading your paper, it should be clear at all times how your claims address your thesis. You should conclude with a brief restatement of the key points from your discussion.

Clarity (10%):

Your paper should be clearly written, such that your reader can easily understand your remarks at all time. You should avoid awkward sentence structure, use appropriate diction throughout your discussion, and eliminate spelling/grammatical errors prior to submitting your paper.

Concision (5%):

Your discussion should be free of irrelevant tangents, redundancies, and platitudes.

Substantive Accuracy (20%):

Your discussion should *accurately* describe the views relevant to the topic you choose. This is particularly important when placing two or more views into critical opposition.

Critical Comparison (15%):

Your discussion will require you to bring multiple philosophical views together in a coherent manner. This involves more than merely giving expositions of each view—it involves explicitly comparing and contrasting them.

Originality of Argument (15%):

You should demonstrate *some* original thought in your argument. This might come in the form of raising an entirely new argument, but it might also come in the form of raising an original objection to an argument that we have addressed in class.

Coherence of Argument (15%):

You should make sure that your conclusion actually follows from your premises. You don't need to present your argument in a formal deductive format, but you'll want to make sure that your reader understands how you've arrived at your conclusion.

Addressed Objection (10%):

Assume that your reader disagrees with you, and that he/she has at least one reason for disagreeing. Try to anticipate his/her objection, and explain why you don't think it defeats your view.

It is expected that all questions and concerns regarding this assignment will be brought to my attention BEFORE the due date.

A more thorough grading rubric detailing each of these criteria is available at www.deanza.edu/faculty/ramireztono/paper_grading_rubric.pdf