

Final Essays

Due Date: Saturday, December 18 (end-of-day)

Final Essays Checklist

- This checklist is helpful when first beginning and also finishing the assignment.
- This checklist covers the most important assignment requirements. You should answer yes to all of the following questions.
- The instructions are explained in more detail in the next two pages.

General Format

- Have you written essays on two different problems?
- Did you compare two different philosophers in both of your essays?
 - In other words, did you write on a total of four different philosophers in your completed assignment (2 essays x 2 philosophers = 4 philosophers total)?
 - Are these philosophers based on the problems listed below?
- Is each essay 600 – 1000 words in length?
- Did you use paragraphs in each of your essays?
- Are you using a 12-point font?
 - If you're kind, you will also use Times New Roman font.
- Are both essays numbered (matching the problem numbers listed below)?

Final Essays Content

- Did you address all of the round bullet points (“•” and “°”) listed for each problem?
- Do you have at least three important quotes in each of your essays?
 - **Quote** = exact word-for-word re-typing of a passage from the text that is placed within quotation marks (“...”).
 - **Important quote** = a passage that directly helps you answer one of the bullet points listed in a problem.
- Do you have at least one quote from each of philosophers you are discussing?
- Did you explain each quote in your own words?
 - Don't assume the reader understands the passage the same way that you do.
 - If the meaning of the passage is so obvious that it doesn't deserve explanation, then pick a more interesting passage to quote.
- Are you using MLA citation format?
 - MLA citation format = philosopher's last name and page number in parentheses after quote.
 - Example MLA citation: “So what treatment do I deserve for being such a benefactor?” (Plato 33).
 - Are the page numbers the same as the course textbook or course PDF?
 - You should only be using either the 7th, 8th, or 9th editions of the textbook.
 - **If you are using the 7th edition of the course textbook, have you noted this at the top of your mid-term?**
- Reread your essays when you have finished a complete draft. It makes a huge difference!

Stuff That Doesn't Matter

- Your essays can be single-spaced or double-spaced, whichever you prefer.
- You may use “I” in your writing. Just make sure to justify your beliefs.
- You do not need a works cited list, since you should only be using the course readings.
- You can submit both of your essays in one file or upload separate files.

General Instructions

- Use standard formatting: Times New Roman, 12-point font, regular margin sizes.
- Upload a docx, gdoc, or pdf to Canvas assignment “Final Essays.”
 - Submit to the Canvas assignment page. No email submissions are accepted.
- Two essays. Each essay should be 600 – 1000 words.

Two Short Essays	40 pts each x 2 = 80 pts
Total Value of Assignment	= 80 pts

Citations

- **Each essay should include at least three important quotations.**
 - **Quote = exact word-for-word re-typing** of a portion of the course reading, that is placed with quotation marks (“ ... ”).
 - **Important quote** = a quote that directly **helps answer one of the listed questions**.
 - Parenthetical citations = the name and page number provided in parentheses after a quote or paraphrase of the text.
 - There should be citations for every reference to a substantial point made by an author. But paraphrased citations by themselves do not count as one of the three minimum quotes.
 - You may re-use up to 200 words from one of your previous writing assignments in this course in each of the two essays. In other words, you could re-use a combined 400 words from two of your previous discussion posts.
- **Use standard MLA parenthetical citations**
 - whenever you quote the text or
 - whenever you paraphrase the text.
- Example MLA parenthetical citations
 - **“This is the quoted passage” (Author’s Last Name ##).**
 - “So what treatment do I deserve for being such a benefactor?” (Plato 33).
 - Don’t use the editors’ names in your citations.

Sources

- If there is an outside source that you think would benefit one of the answers, then ask me about using it BEFORE writing your essays.
- **Outside sources are not permitted.**
- No Works Cited Page needed (since you should only use our assigned course readings).

Working with Others

- You’re encouraged to discuss the assignment with classmates before you have begun writing your essays.
- Once you begin writing your essays, do not share your essay drafts with classmates, though you may ask/email questions to me. I will provide feedback and address any major confusions.
- You’re encouraged to make use of the writing center at any point in the writing process.

Essay Questions and Instructions

- Answer two (2) of the following problems.
- Write on two philosophers in each of your essays, but **do not write on the same philosopher in both essays**.
- Each essay should be 600-1,000 words.
- Be sure to provide **at least three important quotes** in each answer.
- Be sure to **provide citations for all quotes AND also any references to specific claims made by an author**.
- Number each essay, but do not waste space retyping the question.
- The problems are outlined in bullet points, but *your essays should be in essay form*.

Group 1) Moral Responsibility and Agency:

Problem 1) Frankfurt and Wolf on a Borderline Case of Moral Responsibility

- Explain both Frankfurt's and Wolf's accounts of moral responsibility.
- Apply each account to a borderline case of moral responsibility:
 - Explain in detail how each account would assess the example. (You are encouraged to think of different ways the example could be modified that would change each philosopher's judgment.)
 - Consider using one of the examples from the readings, such as:
 - Wolf's JoJo example, or
 - Wolf's discussion of morally insane societies, like Nazi Germany, or
 - the case of Kevin listed in Discussion Post, or
 - your own example of a borderline case of moral responsibility.
- Which account of moral responsibility do you think is better? Why?

[Answer all of the bullet points ("•" and "○").]

Problem 2) Wenzel and Wolf on Agency

- What does Wenzel mean by "situation responsiveness," and how does it relate to the concept of a "wide self"?
- Explain Wolf's concept of "self-correction" and how it relates to moral agency.
- Apply each account of agency to either Wolf's JoJo example or Wolf's discussion of a morally insane society.
 - Does Wenzel's or Wolf's account better address the example? Why?

[Answer all of the bullet points ("•" and "○").]

Group 2) Ethical Theories and Justice

Problem 3) Aristotle and Kant on the Highest Ethical Good

- Aristotle and Kant each have different views of humans' highest ethical good.
 - Compare each philosopher's view.
 - Be sure to examine important differences between the two arguments.
- Which argument do you believe provides better guidance on how to live? Why?

- Related questions that you might examine:
 - What is the biggest issue or obstacle to pursuing either highest good?
 - Would you rather live in a society that prioritized freedom or happiness?

[Answer all of the bullet points (“•”) and “°”) .]

Problem 4) Rawls, Baier, and Anderson on Justice and Society

- Examine a current injustice or an example of moral progress on a past injustice.
 - If you are writing about a current injustice, then compare and contrast how two of the philosophers (Rawls, Baier, Anderson) would understand and propose addressing the injustice.
 - If you are writing about moral progress on a past injustice, then compare and contrast how two of the philosophers would explain the moral progress.
- Which approach to the injustice is most persuasive? Explain your reasoning.
- Related questions that you might examine:
 - What does Rawls mean when he claims justice is the “first virtue of social institutions”?
 - What does Rawls think are the two most important principles of justice?
 - How does Baier understand the relationship between justice and care?
 - What are the three types of social inequalities, according to Anderson?
 - How does Anderson’s view of just inequalities compare to Rawls’s view?
 - What is the biggest issue or obstacle to applying Rawls’s theory of justice?
 - What is the biggest issue or obstacle to applying Baier’s ethics of care?

[Answer all of the bullet points (“•”) and “°”) .]

Group 3) The Ethics of Identity

Problem 5) Appiah and Alcoff on racial identities

- Compare and contrast Appiah’s and Alcoff’s hopes for the future of racial identity.
 - What does each philosopher think about the goal of reducing or completely eliminating racial identities?
- Which argument provides better guidance for the future? Why?
- Related questions that you might examine:
 - What is Appiah’s concept of intrinsic racism? What is Appiah’s critique of the “family model” of race?
 - Why does Alcoff understand social identities as open-ended? According to Alcoff, how are social identities shaped by domain-specific competences?

[Answer all of the bullet points (“•”) and “°”) .]