

PHILOSOPHY 100

Introduction to Philosophy

Spring 2017

Essay Assignment #2

Due Monday, February 27

Write a 3-4 page essay on one of the following topics. In your response explain some of the key terms and cite some key passages from the text.

Indian Philosophy

Explain the fundamental teaching of Hinduism expressed in the *Upanishads*? What does Nacitekas learn about death in the *Katha Upanishad*? What is the dilemma faced by Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and how does Krishna's response summarize the teachings of the *Upanishads*. To what extent do you think the teachings of the *Upanishads* are relevant for us today?

Buddhist Philosophy

Explain the Buddha's teaching of the "Four Noble Truths." Explain the central Buddhist teaching of dependent origination (*pratityasamutpada*) and why it is a rejection of the teaching of the *Upanishads*. How might the central question of Buddhist philosophy be explained through the Buddha's teaching known as the *Fire Sermon*? How is the Mahayana Buddhist teaching of emptiness (*shunyata*) from the *Heart Sutra* just a restatement of the central teaching of Buddhism? Explain the Mahayana ideal of the Bodhisattva and how this notion also raises the central question of Buddhism. To what extent do you think the teachings of Buddhism are relevant for us today?

Chinese Philosophy

What is the central concern of Chinese Philosophy and what is the context in which classical Chinese philosophy developed? Explain the difference between the Confucian response to this problem as expressed in the *Analects of Confucius* and the Daoist response as expressed in the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*. To what extent do you think the teachings of these ancient Chinese philosophies are relevant for us today?

Grading

Maximum Points

1) *Writing*

20

Grammar and spelling, composition and style. Your essay should be well organized. There should be an introduction, development of a theme, and a conclusion.

2) *Exposition*

50

The essay should reflect an adequate understanding of the texts. Your exposition of the texts should include some citations from the primary text material.

3) *Reflection*

30

Your own thoughtful reflections on the topic.
