

# PHILOSOPHY 100

*Spring 2017*

Essay Assignment #3

Due Monday, April 17

**Write a 3-4 page response to one of the following topics.**

## *Descartes and Modern Philosophy*

Explain the reasons why Descartes sets out on a quest for certainty in his *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Explain the demolition phase of Descartes' project that is his *First Meditation*. What is the starting point of modern philosophy that Descartes arrives at in the *Second Meditation*. What is then the epistemological problem that results from this starting point? Is it important to have certainty in knowledge?

## *Dualism vs Materialism*

Explain what is meant by the *dualism* that Descartes argues for in his *Sixth Meditation*. Explain the three motivations that led Descartes, and others who take this position, to this view of dualism. What is the argument Descartes makes in the *Sixth Meditation* for dualism? What is the mind/body problem that results from this dualism? Explain Hobbes' *materialism* and how it differs from Descartes' view. Which position would you agree with more?

## *Hobbes vs Locke on Political Philosophy*

Explain the difference between the views of Hobbes and Locke on the "state of nature" and the nature of the social contract. How are their views relevant today?

## *Rationalism vs Empiricism*

Explain the difference between rationalism and empiricism. How did Descartes try to solve the epistemological problem? Explain how John Locke established the starting point of empiricism and then how he tried to solve the epistemological problem. Why did this problem turn out to be an unsolvable problem?

## *Hume vs Kant on the Problem of Causality*

Explain "Hume's fork" and how his analysis of causality threatened to undermine the possibility of science and thus the promise of the Enlightenment? Explain how Kant tries to save the Enlightenment with his "Copernican Revolution in Philosophy." Reflect on Kant's revolutionary conception of the human mind.

<b>Grading</b>	<b>Maximum Points</b>
1) Writing	20 _____
2) Philosophical Content	50 _____
3) Commentary	30 _____