

# PHILOSOPHY 100

*Fall 2017*

*Essay Assignment #3*

Due Monday, November 13

**General Instructions: Attach this page to the front of your paper. Do not put any plastic covers on your paper. All papers must be properly word processed or typed with 1" margins on the top, sides and bottom. Use double-spacing and no larger than 12pt font.**

**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. What is the starting point of empiricism taught by John Locke? What did he mean by the *tabula rasa*? How did Locke try to solve the epistemological problem? What was the problem with Locke's solution that Berkeley pointed out? To what extent would you agree with Locke's theory of knowledge?

## *Berkeley's Idealism*

What did Berkeley find wrong in Locke's account and what position did Berkeley end up with? If a tree falls in the forest and no person is there to perceive it does it make a sound? What is Berkeley's response to this? To what extent would you agree with Berkeley's Idealism?

## *Hume's Skepticism*

Explain "Hume's fork" and how his analysis of causality threatened to undermine the possibility of science and thus the promise of the Enlightenment? What was Hume's response to the skepticism that results from examining the problem of causality. To what extent would you agree with Hume?

## *Kant's Copernican Revolution in Philosophy*

Explain how Kant tries to save the Enlightenment with his "Copernican Revolution in Philosophy." How does Kant try to bring Rationalism and Empiricism together? What is the revolutionary conception of the human mind introduced by Kant? To what extent would you agree with Kant about the mind?