

PHILOSOPHY 100

Introduction to Philosophy

Spring 2018

Essay Assignment #1

Due Monday, February 26

General Instructions: 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. Submit your paper to Laulima as either a Word document or a pdf file.

Write a 4-5 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.

The Love of Wisdom

What is the point of the story Socrates tells at the beginning of the *Apology* in which the oracle at Delphi proclaimed Socrates to be the wisest of all men? What does this story suggest about Socrates' conception of the 'love of wisdom'? Why does Socrates think that philosophy is so important, both for the individual and the state? What does Socrates mean when he describes himself as a 'gadfly' that is a gift of the gods to the state of Athens? Why is philosophy so important that at the end of the *Apology* Socrates says that "the unexamined life is not worth living"? To what extent would you agree with Socrates about the importance of the 'love of wisdom'?

The Myth of the Cave

Explain how Socrates's story of the Myth of the Cave in the *Republic* illustrates Plato's philosophy. How does Plato's philosophy contrast with the Sophists' view that is summed up in Protagoras' statement that "Man is the measure of all things"? To what extent would you agree more with Plato or Protagoras

Finding the Dao

Explain the central concern of Chinese Philosophy and then write a brief explanation of the difference between the Confucian philosophy and Daoism. Then choose to expand on either Confucianism or Daoism. Focus on a couple of your favorite passages from the Analects of Confucius, the Daodejing or the *Zhuangzi* and explain how these passages express something important about Confucianism or Daoism. To what extent do you think the teachings of these ancient Chinese philosophies are relevant for us today?

The Field of Dharma

Explain the central concern of Indian philosophy and how this is expressed in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Explain Arjuna's dilemma at the beginning of the *Bhagavad Gita* and then Krishna's response. Explain what yoga is and the three types of yoga taught by Krishna. To what extent do you think the teachings of these ancient Indian philosophies are relevant for us today?

The Problem of Suffering

Explain the fundamental teaching of Buddhism expressed in the teaching of the "Four Noble Truths" in The Pali Canon. In what way does the philosophy of Buddhism reject the teaching of the Upanishads? How might the central question of Buddhist philosophy be explained in through the Buddha's teaching known as the Fire Sermon? To what extent do you think the teachings of Buddhism are relevant for us today?

The Way of Zen

Explain the central teaching of Mahayana Buddhism and how the wisdom taught in the *Prajnaparamita Sutras* is supposed to lead to compassion. Explain then how Zen Buddhism brings together the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism and Daoism. What was Bodhidharma's advice about searching for the Buddha? To what extent are the teachings of Zen Buddhism relevant for us today?

Grading

Maximum Points

1) Writing

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

20 _____

2) Philosophical Content

The essay should reflect an adequate understanding of the texts. Your exposition of the text should include *at least two quotations* from the primary text material. All quotes should be properly marked within the text and must include a reference to the text cited.

50 _____

3) Commentary

Your own thoughtful reflections on the topic.

30 _____

Handling Citations

There are a number of ways of handling citations in your papers. One could just use footnotes or endnotes. An example of using footnotes is like the following: According to Socrates, “the unexamined life is not worth living.”¹ If you are citing the same text a number of times you can also just include the text reference in the sentence like this: According to Socrates, “the unexamined life is not worth living” (*The Apology*, 38a). Notice the format of the punctuation here. The period goes after the text reference—otherwise the reference is stuck in no-sentence-land between two sentences. If you use this format then you would have to include

¹ [1](#)Plato, *The Apology*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, in *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: from Thales to Aristotle*, 2nd. ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), 38a.

the text information, which otherwise was included in the footnote, in a bibliography at the end of your paper. Notice the difference in format of the footnote and bibliography. The difference between footnote and bibliography format is not as clear in citing Plato, since he has only one name. Let's say I wanted to cite our textbook where Magee finds it "doubtful whether any philosopher has had more influence than Socrates."² If I wanted to include the text reference in the sentence it would look like this: Magee finds it "doubtful whether any philosopher has had more influence than Socrates" (Magee, p. 23). Then, of course, the reference information goes into a bibliography.

Now let's say you want to cite a longer quotation. In order to save valuable space you could then indent the quote and use single spacing. What seems most outrageous is that Socrates refuses to simply just shut up, which might perhaps have been enough of a counter-penalty to save his life. Socrates, however, has a good reason for this:

Now this is the most difficult point on which to convince some of you. If I say that it is impossible for me to keep quiet because that means disobeying the god, you will not believe me and will think I am being ironical. On the other hand, if I say that it is the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day and those other things about which you hear me conversing and testing myself and others, for the unexamined life is not worth living for man, you will believe me even less. (*The Apology*, 37e-38a)

You could, of course, use a footnote for this citation. If you include the reference within the body of the text as illustrated above then note the difference in punctuation here as opposed to the earlier example. Notice here you don't use quotation marks around the citation because it is obvious what is being cited. Also the text reference stands outside the period of the last sentence.

² ²Bryan Magee, *The Story of Philosophy: A Concise Introduction to the World's Greatest Thinkers and Their Ideas* (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2001), p. 23.

Notice in a footnote, first name comes first followed by last name, then the title of the text, and then publisher information (Location: Publisher, publishing date) comes in parentheses.

Here are examples of bibliographic entries:

Bibliography

Magee, Bryan. *The Story of Philosophy: A Concise Introduction to the World's Greatest Thinkers and Their Ideas*. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2001.

Plato. *The Apology*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, in *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: from Thales to Aristotle*, 2nd. ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000.

Notice in a bibliography the last name goes first, then a comma followed by first name, then a period and then the title of the text. Always use italics or underline whenever referring to the title of a book. Notice there are no parentheses in a bibliographic entry. Bibliographies are organized alphabetically.