

## PHILOSOPHY 211

*Fall 2024*

*Term Paper Assignment*

Due Monday, December 16

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. Turn in by uploading to Laulima as either a Word file or pdf file. Use the following format to title your file: lastname Phil 211 Term Paper.

**Write a 7-10 page essay on one of the following topics. Your essay should show an adequate understanding of the philosophy, evidence that you have read the relevant texts, and some reflection about what you think of this philosophy and its relevance today.**

### *Plato's Philosophy of Love*

In a romantic relationship, is it better to be in love with someone or not? Why is love (*eros*) in the *Phaedrus* regarded to be so dangerous that the recommendation in the first two speeches, the written text by the famed orator Lysias read to Socrates by Phaedrus, and then Socrates first speech, that it is better not to be in love? In the third speech, the palinode by Socrates, why is love described as a divine madness? Describe here the famous fable told by Socrates about the three parts of the soul as a charioteer with two winged horses. How can the soul be led by love on the upward journey and not come crashing down to earth? How does this discourse on love in the *Phaedrus* compare with Socrates's speech on love in the *Symposium*? What is the advice given by Socrates in his discourse on the art of rhetoric (258d-264c) about how one can speak and write beautifully? What is the point Socrates makes (274c-275d) in telling the story of the Egyptian myth concerning the origin of writing and the connection between writing and painting? Why does this create a problem for Plato's written dialogues? What do you think about Plato's philosophy of love?

### *Plato and Aristotle on Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ethics, the Soul and the Meaning of Life*

Explain how the depiction of Plato and Aristotle in the famous painting, *The School of Athens*, suggests the difference between the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle in terms of their metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, the soul, and the point of human existence. Explain how Socrates's last words in the *Phaedo* expresses his whole philosophy. What is meant by happiness (*eudaimonia*) which Aristotle describes in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as the main goal (*telos*) of human existence? Explain Aristotle's idea of the virtues as a golden mean between two extremes. Which philosopher would you agree with more on these issues and why would you take this position?

### *Plato and Aristotle on Democracy*

Explain the difference between Plato and Aristotle's view of politics. What is the ideal government for Plato in the *Republic*? Explain his ranking of governments in Book VIII of the *Republic*. Why is Plato so pessimistic about democracy? In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, what does Aristotle mean by "happiness" (*eudaimonia*) which he regards as the goal (*telos*) of human existence? Why does Aristotle regard friendship as so important in achieving *eudaimonia*? In the *Politics*, why does Aristotle think that democracy can be the best form of government, and why does he think that friendship is the key to democracy? Why, then, does Aristotle also suggest that true friendship is so difficult to achieve? How are the political philosophies of Plato and Aristotle relevant for us today?

### *Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy*

Explain the differences between Epicureanism, Stoicism, and the views of the skeptics. How are these philosophies relevant for us today? Which views would you most agree with and why would you take this position?

## **Grading Rubric**

### **1) Writing 20%**

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

### **2) Philosophical Content 50%**

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.

### **3) Commentary 30%**

Your own thoughtful reflections on the topic.

## *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.”<sup>1</sup> 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” (Plato 2000, 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 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.”<sup>2</sup> 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”

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

<sup>2</sup>Bryan Magee, *The Story of Philosophy: A Concise Introduction to the World’s Greatest Thinkers and Their Ideas* ( London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2001), 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.

(Magee 2001, 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. (Plato 2000, 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. Here are examples of bibliographic entries:

### Bibliography

Magee, Bryan. 2001. *The Story of Philosophy: A Concise Introduction to the World's Greatest*

*Thinkers and Their Ideas*. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited.

Plato. 2000. *The Apology*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, in *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: from*

*Thales to Aristotle*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

Notice in a bibliography the last name goes first, then a comma followed by first name. Then a period and then year of publication, 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.